

Non-Professionalism in Nigeria Educational Sector: The Bane of Effective Planning and Implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria

AGOHA CHIGOZIE CHIOMA

Department of Educational Management
(Educational Planning)

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt Rivers State.

chiomagozie1@gmail.com

VENERABLE DR. EMMANUEL AGOHA

Department of Religion and Cultural Studies AIFCE, Owerri

emmaagoha7@gmail.com

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Abstract

Teaching in Nigeria has gone through many stages and even today there are no problem disagreements as to whether it should be called a profession; and this has been an issue of concern among educators, teachers, administrators, organizations and the public at large. This paper thus looked into the non-professionalism of teaching and the issue of professionalizing teaching for the development of the education sector in the country. The concepts of teaching and profession were viewed; traits of professionalism; the teaching profession in Nigeria; strategies, prospects and challenges facing teaching profession were identified. The study suggested that the government should look into the problem of general dissatisfaction with the teaching profession, such as poor teacher education programme; poor salaries and allowances; poor public image of the profession, and the desire of most teachers to enter another type of work with attractive remunerations.

Keywords: Non-professionalism, Educational Sector, Effective Planning, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

It is an established fact that education is a very important for socioeconomic development. Investment in education contributes towards the human capital development, which is essential for higher income and sustainable economic growth. Amaele (2010) noted that education

provides knowledge and skills to individuals enhancing their productivity and help in improving their health and building human capacities. Education is the equipping of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, habits and attitudes with learning experience. The education system is an ecosystem of professionals in educational institutions such as government ministries, union, statutory boards, agencies and schools. Education shows us the importance of hard work and, at the same time, helps us grow and developed learning languages through educational processes helps interact with different people in order to exchange ideas knowledge, good practices.

In the area of teaching as a profession; teaching is a noble profession and an activity which consist of actions intended to induce learning through the conscious and deliberate effort by an experienced person to import knowledge, information, skills, attitudes and beliefs to an immature or less experienced individual. In other areas like Educators in various field of study there are needs to train professionals who will have the knowledge and skills to impart knowledge to people in their specialized areas. In the area of Educational Planning, it is a practice evolved by engaging people knowledgeable in varied fields of human endeavours with bearing on educational development. They include economists, biologists, statisticians, demographers, politicians, scientists, lawyers and so on. This is because educational planning activities requires knowledge and skills in each of these specialized areas. Certification in educational planning. Such training must develop in the planner, knowledge and skills in educational administration, economics of education, politics of education, educational statistics, demographic techniques, educational plant management curriculum planning, education law etc.

Meanwhile according to Agabi (2020) opined that educational planning is a decision making concern, requiring specialized knowledge and skills from a wide-range of specialized training and the question is this, do we have such professionalism in Nigerian educational sector today?

Concepts Clarification of Professionalism Non-professionalism

Yusuf, Afolabi, & Oyetayo (2014) defined a profession as an occupation or vocation that requires special skills, knowledge of some department of learning and qualification to especially one with high social status. It is a job that requires special skills or knowledge through special training with high level of education and it utilizes functional education and mental ability rather than manual or physical labour. According to Dada and Fadokun (2010), a profession entails an occupation that is dependent upon specialized intellectual study and training for the provision of skilled service to other member of society; government agencies for a definite fee or salary. Orubite (2010) posits that a profession is a paid job that requires prolonged training and liberal or formal educational qualifications. The term profession as defined by Carrsaunders cited by Mishra (2008) is an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and having the purpose of which is to supply skilled services or advice to other for definite fee or salary. NTI (2007) defined profession as any occupation which demands of all work in it, a prolonged and specialized knowledge, skills and attitude that are necessary for providing a particular services in the community. Adesina (2005) viewed that professionalization refers to building into career some control device to ensures that the practitioners are worthy members of the profession.

Okunloye (2005) defined a profession as a symbol for a desired conception of one's work and by extension of one's self (the worker), Oyekan (2000), defined professionalization as a process involving improvement in the status and practice of the occupation as the practitioner continually upgrades the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective and efficient professional practice.

Criteria for professionalization of teaching as a profession

Educational Sector is a group of institutions (ministries of education, local educational authorities, teacher training institutions, schools, and universities whose primary purpose is to provide education to children and young people in educational settings. Nigeria's education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic (three years) and tertiary (four years).

Traits to Professionalism

The search for a set of criteria by which a profession can be recognized has been on for at least a century now. Yet, there is no universal list of characteristics of professionalization that is universal acceptable. However, in literature, there are works of Okeke (2004), Ajayi (2007); Dada & Fadokun (2010); Adeyemi & Okewole (2011); Yusuf, Afolabi & Oyetayo (2014). Among these people, there are also wide variations. However, there are areas of widespread consensus, which include:

Performing an Essential Social Services

Teaching meets this criterion. The service which education performs is essential to the individual child who cannot be fully socialized into our modern society if he does not receive a full time formal education. To the society, it prepares individuals for various occupational roles and functionality as a member of the society.

Possessing a Body of Specialized Knowledge

There are some differences of opinion as to whether teaching meets this requirement. In teaching, both the subject matter knowledge and knowledge of education theory are essential to the preparation of teachers. What is not appreciated is the fact that education differs from other professions in having the subject matter component, but in many ways the theoretical knowledge needed by the teacher is the same as that needed by the doctor. It could therefore be said that teaching meets this particular criterion.

Having a High Degree of Autonomy

A profession must be self-regulating and self-governing. The autonomy to practice the profession relates to two main factors that are inter-dependent. The autonomy of the individual professional to perceive his role and responsibilities the way he feels best in the interest of the profession and the autonomy of the profession as a whole. Teaching has not met this criterion.

Code of Ethics

Professions usually have well defined code of ethics to regulate the conduct of their accredited practitioners. The NUT has a code of ethics guiding its relationship with students, parents, community, employer, and the profession. Unfortunately, it has little or no influence in matters of policies for auditing and registering professionally qualified persons into the profession. In addition, it lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce the standards set by it.

Organization into Professional Groups

Every profession institutes and operates a professional association or organization to which it ascribes certain functions and powers such as the advancement of the professional competence and maintenance of prescribed standards. Every professional association has a self-concept that transcends that of a mere trade union. The major obstacle preventing the NUT from becoming a professional body has, however been of extended educational training for all members of the union. The implication of that NUT has no control over its members as compared to other professions such as medicine law, engineering amongst others.

Exalting Service above Personal Gains

Members of any profession are expected to regard their services to the public as altruistic, with public interest put over and above financial and other gains.

Recognition by the Public

Recognition by the public is closely linked to the nature of the service which the profession renders. It must be such that is very essential to humanity. Further still, the practitioners or the profession must have a high self-esteem coupled with this is the question of self-satisfaction demonstrated by members of the profession. This is not true of the teaching profession.

Setting its Own Standards

Standards are set and it is only when the new entrance satisfies the stipulated requirements that he or she can be registered as a member of the profession. The medical and legal professions for example, have laid down standards which new entrants must meet before they are admitted into the professions. This is not true of the teaching profession, where the NUT lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce standards set by it.

Concept of Non-Professionalism

A non-professional can be defined as an individual not having the standard of behavior or skill that is expected of in a skilled job. Unprofessional can also be described as unbecoming of a professional hence inappropriate in the workplace. Being unprofessional serves in the least interest of the teaching system, individual as well as the company.

Every organization looks for employees with a proper attitude because they bring in with them a positive spirit and also are an asset to the organization. On the other hand, unprofessional

employees are more or less a kind of burden on the organization. Non-professionalism affects the progress of both, the individual and the organization. The various effects of it are put together in the coming paragraphs.

Traits of Non-professionalism

Professionalism is something we learn as we move forward in our career. Most obviously freshmen find it difficult to develop the Some of the common traits that are associated with non-professionals.

1. Employees not following discipline during working hours is one of the common traits of non-professionalism. This includes spending hours talking on a cell phone or near the water cooler with colleagues, and gossiping about others in the workplace.
2. Not working hard to achieve the set targets is also an example of unprofessional conduits often is an outcome of the first trait.
3. Disturbing other workers, indulging in backbiting about others, doing harm to the work of others, and unnecessarily troubling someone in the office also accounts for lack of a professional attitude.
4. Rude behavior with clients or co-workers, losing one's temper easily and unwillingness to work in a team also are indicators of lack of professionalism at the workplace.
5. Discussing too much about the personal life with colleagues during the working hours is also not expected from the employees. This can also account for spreading negativity in the work environment.

No organization would want to cater to unprofessional employees. It is the responsibility of the employee to understand and do justice to the work expected from him. A professional employee is valued by any organization and is well rewarded for his work.

Effects of Non-professionalism on Education Sector

In the area of education sector, a popular trend in educational planning in most third world countries is that those who are not professionally trained are after hired to plan education. We have hand situations where lawyers are appointed ministries and commissioners of education at the federal and state levels in Nigeria, presently, the technocrats involved in educational planning are people with varied qualifications in statistics, sociology, economics etc. although, this class of people may be involved in educational planning activities, at most, they can best be described as educational planning practitioners. (Agabi 1999). The real educational planners are those with the professional training skill in the planning of education.

Unprofessionalism revealingly affects the work of the individual. Consider the example of an employee who wastes time chit chatting with other workers and creates a nuisance at the work place. This is a supreme example of unprofessional attitude that is attributed to many employees of a unit. It affects the work, not following the ripened company timings and guidelines is also a sign of lack of professionalism. Relating to work it can be anything like not

being sincere and committed towards work and the duties assigned. More of unprofessional signs have been discussed at the end of the article. All the workers as disturbs the peace at work.

In a gist, any organization will not tolerate this attitude in its employees for long and it will increase the chances of the employee getting fired from work. Being unprofessional also hampers the mindset of the individuals. Consistently being pulled up for bad behavior is not good for the confidence of the individual. This behavior thus serves in the least interest of the growth of the employee and so employees should try to cultivate discipline and organization in their work life.

It was mentioned in the earlier paragraph that employees who lack organization skills and the right attitude are a burden to the organization. If a majority of the employees are not behaving in the desired way, it does harm to the progress and image of their company. Unprofessional employees contribute less and this indirectly does harm to the profit earning capacity of the company. There will be goodwill about the organization if all the employees in it are disciplined and equally contributing. Thus you see, this behavior is of no use to the organization as well as to the individual.

Bane of-Non-Professionalism in Education Sector

1. Unavailability of seasoned lecturers, who are full time professional in their various fields.
2. Most of the higher institution lecturers are deficient in the knowledge of industrial practices.
3. Lack of linkage between theories (from the institutions) and practices (in the industries), thereby hindering the development of creative and innovative ideals in both the institutional and industrial personnel. This at the long run mars technological development and/or advancement in the country.
4. The lack of sound and creative application of knowledge on the part of the students also renders our university graduates irrelevant on the field, and as well makes the industries to just focus on routine activities and ways of doing things, which adversely affect their growth and that of the nation at large.
5. The gap between the Nigerian education system and professionalism makes it nearly impossible or very tedious for Higher National Diploma (HND) holders to become professionals in some disciplines, e.g Architecture.
6. Incapability of some of the lecturers to transfer knowledge to the students adequately: This is as a result of politicizing lecturing appointment.
7. New or emerging professional principles and standards are not promptly adopted in higher institutions.
8. Inapplicability of classroom or theoretical ideas in real-life situation on the field. This is at times because the knowledge is obsolete or lack of the required facilities on the field. For instance, in the medicine, a form of surgical procedure for gastric/colon cancer

described in the textbook/classroom is different from what is actually done on practice in practice.

Implementation Strategies

Sequel to the afore-identified problems, the following recommendations are expected to bring about synergy between the educational system and professionalism in Nigeria. Hence, enhancing the relevance of the Nigerian graduates in their various fields, taking country's education system to a greater level, reducing the rate of unemployment in the country and above all promoting technological development and advancement. Ultimately, this will bring about adequate planning economic growth and national development.

- 1) The Course Content should be decentralized in such a way that each student would learn how he/she can be innovative and creative with respect to his/her field of study.
- 2) Professional exams and certifications should be integrated into the school program, as it is practiced in the medical schools such that at the end of the programmes the students will not only obtain both academic and professional certificates but will also be academically and professionally grounded.
- 3) Professionals in various disciplines should be integrated into the education system as seasoned lecturers and education planners.
- 4) Tutelage and mentorship programmes should also be integrated into the school system for maximum result.
- 5) The government must ensure immediate commencement of work by the recently established Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria.

As the National Teachers Registration Council has been established through the enactment of Act 31 of 1993, this national body should be assisted by the State Teachers' Registration Council in every State of the Federation, to be charged with the responsibility to teachers' registration, accreditation, certification, promotion, development discipline and making regulations to control the practice of teaching as a profession.

1. The government should make provision for the professional growth of the teachers, planner/educations through periodic in-service education and this should be sponsored by the government. The teaching profession is such that requires a teacher to continue to improve and increase knowledge in his subject throughout his lifetime.
2. The government should ensure that trained and experienced personnel are available for educational planning.
3. All these however will be likened to a day dream if the government fails to allocate at least the minimum allocation (26% of the total budget) recommended by UNESCO to the education sector.

SUGGESTIONS

i) Focus on teachers in low-income and crisis-affected contexts as professionals, learners and individuals. As with any vocation, teachers need to develop strong identities as professionals. In addition to obvious factors such as recruitment, remuneration, and opportunities for advancement, teacher professionalism is also impacted by access to quality professional development.

ii) Develop, apply, measure and institutionalize standards for teacher professional development. We know from research what constitutes effective professional development. Despite this knowledge, within donor-funded humanitarian and development projects, there are no standards defining quality professional development and too few qualified providers.

Without a shared and codified understanding of “quality” professional development, teachers are often subjected to mediocre, and in some cases, malign professional development that doesn’t help them and that in fact wastes their time and donor money.

But standards define minimal competencies of providers and benchmark of quality that promise improved inputs and experiences. They need not result in excessive rigidity. Standards or teacher professional development curriculum can be customized or contextualized to adapt to local situations.

iii) Create professional development* opportunities that promote teacher collaboration.

The research on teacher collaboration everywhere is unequivocal. Collaborating with colleagues and the culture of trust and knowledge sharing that collaboration produces has been linked to increased teacher effectiveness, improved student test-score gains (Kraft & Papay, 2014), and teacher willingness to adopt new innovations (Granovetter & Soong, 1983).

But collaboration does not happen ex nihilo people must have a reason to collaborate, be oriented on how to be a productive team and collaborative groups must, at least at first, be facilitated by a “more knowledgeable other.”

To further promote teacher collaboration, there should be a design for collaboration, for example by promoting peer-to-peer classroom visits with time for feedback, strengthen peer-to-peer instruction, Promote and nurture effective and active teacher learning communities.

iv) Provide teachers with ongoing support Teacher “support” should not be monolithic, but rather a multi layered array of different types of assistance that help teachers successfully transfer learning from a professional development setting to a classroom setting. It can include administrative, instructional, resources, peer support, supervisory support and instructional support from a “more knowledgeable other.”

The research on ongoing teacher support notes that teachers who receive on-the-job support, guidance and feedback from a supervisors or a trained support person apply new skills and strategies more frequently and appropriately and adopt a more diverse range of instructional practices than teachers who do not receive such supports (Showers & Joyce, 1996)

- v) Invest in high-quality teacher educators: Teacher educators or teacher trainers, in- or pre-service, are often the weakest link in the teacher education ecosystem. Implementing agencies eagerly inventory the shortcomings associated with many teacher training colleges and ministry of Education-run in-service providers.

But implementing agencies deserve their share of blame when it comes to unqualified teacher trainers. As noted in other posts, many implementing agencies entrust professional development in critical areas such as literacy or numeracy to people who have never been teachers or whose sole experience teaching may be confined to a year in the Peace Corps.

Teacher educators need the same skills as teachers among these are deep content knowledge; different models of instructional strategies and assessment practices; learning and development of children and adults; clinical and supervision skills; the ability to model effective instructional and assessment practices; the ability and disposition to coach and support teachers and hold planned or informal meetings with teachers; and the ability to support teachers through observations, feedback, modelling, workshops, coaching, and/or planned/informal meetings (Cordingley et al., 2007).

To Ensure those who are Employed to Advance Teaching are Effective in their Work, The Paper Proposes the Following:

- Recruit professional development providers with extensive teaching experience
 - Strengthen teacher-professional development provider capacity for areas with no teacher educators offer audio/radio instruction, or didactic materials, and draw on skilled community members and other teachers to provide instruction in key areas.
- vi) Build instructional leadership at all levels of the educational system. School directors are second only to teachers as the most important school-level determinant of student achievement (Leithwood et al. 2004). They are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Yet too often we see poor instructional school leadership holding back teaching and learning.

Schools in disadvantaged areas benefit tremendously when their leaders, and the school directors, ensure that teachers are in their classrooms every day, covering the syllabus at an appropriate pace, instructing students in developmentally appropriate and engaging ways, and attempting to apply to their classes the knowledge and skills gained through professional development activities.

For this to happen, the following are recommended:

- a) Ministries of Education should establish and implement instructional competencies for head teachers and school directors
- b) Promote collaboration among head teachers and among school directors
Ensure practical professional development opportunities for head teachers and school directors.

- vii) Use of Information and Communication technology (ICT) to provide access to content, professional development and professional learning communities. Technology radio, mobile phones, TV and the Internet can offer teachers, even in low-resource environments, access to content, to curriculum, colleagues and a variety of learning experiences.

Technology, if part of an overall system focused on instructional improvement, can help reduce costs, increase impact, and offer information/skill development in previously unavailable forms. To support the wise application of ICT the paper proposes three priority actions:

- i) Offer audio-learning to support teacher development in and with particularly difficult-to reach areas and populations
- ii) Promote the use of video for teacher self-study and to share models of intended practice
- iii) Provide teachers with access to teaching and learning resources through open content and help them integrate this content into their instruction.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, considering the fact that the national objectives can be achieved using education as a tool, it follows then that the government, professionals, all agencies of education and non-organisations must work hand in hand so that the national objectives could be attained through education. Some of the issues to be addressed by the nation so that its educational objectives and planning could be fully realized by the removal of non-professionals on education sector. The need to give greater attention to the education is to reduce unprofessionalism in the national development.

The objectives of education in Nigeria are or should be grounded in the country's ideology or philosophy of life. Professional like the educational planners should be allowed to adequately do their work to avoid wastage of resources and achieve the policies and programmes in the education sector.

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