

**DWINDLING QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A CAUSE FOR CONCERN****BY****Gemanen Gyuse: Department of Languages and Linguistics, Benue State University, Makurdi – Nigeria**  
Email: [gggyuse@bsum.edu.ng](mailto:gggyuse@bsum.edu.ng) OR [ggemanen@gmail.com](mailto:ggemanen@gmail.com)**Godwin Sunday Liam: Department of Languages and Linguistics, Benue State University, Makurdi.**  
Email: [liamgodwin62@gmail.com](mailto:liamgodwin62@gmail.com)**Abstract**

*This paper concerns itself with the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria. The researchers detailed the evolution of education in Nigeria, the concept and essence of education in general as well as the effects of a defective education on the society, using a qualitative approach. Following the researchers' observations as stakeholders in the educational sector and the views of different scholars and sources, it was found that different factors account for a defective quality of education. These factors include privatisation and commercialisation of education, poor quality of teachers, inadequate due diligence in the teachers' recruitment process, poor teacher training process, indiscipline amongst the learning youths, over-reliance on artificial or synthetic intelligence, nonchalant attitudes of parents, defective educational policies, distraction occasioned by the use of social media, poor foundation at the lower levels of education, poor attitudes of the new-generation parents, teachers' excess and unfeasible workload, and poor reading culture among others. Concerning the effects, which a failed education can have on the country, it was highlighted that defective education can produce intellectually-poor leaders, can lead to collapse of all sectors, youth unemployment, poverty and criminality. Furthermore, poor quality of education can lead to poor health and shorter life expectancy, problems with raising children and social exclusivity or isolation and lack of voice. In the final analysis, it was concluded that all hands must be on deck to save Nigeria's educational system. Children, parents, teachers, schools, communities and indeed, the government have an obligation to perform, while understanding that education standardisation is not the responsibility of only one of the above-mentioned stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** Education, Education quality, Education policy, Nigeria**Introduction**

All over the world, education, be it formal or informal, appears to be recognised as the bedrock of the society or the foundation on which every society is built. Education seems to be the only instrument worldwide that is used to prepare individuals to lead not just a successful life, but a fulfilling one. Therefore, emphasising good quality of education especially for the young ones is of prime importance as this can encourage the development of their creativity, critical thinking as well as problem-solving abilities. Segovia (2010) argues that in a world that is threatened by social collapse and factors such as environmental degradation, learning institutions are usually called upon to play key roles in transforming mindsets to develop citizens who are trained to think for the common good of the society. This implies that the quality of education in a given society determines how the society would be transformed. An egregious quality of education means a defective society while excellent standard of education means undefective society.

Following the insights above and looking at the standard of education in Nigeria or what happens in the country's educational sector today, one has to ask the following critical questions: What standard or quality of education are we maintaining in the country? Will the quality of education produced in Nigeria today guarantee a prosperous future for the country? If the quality of education in Nigeria is still high, what is one expected to do to maintain such high standard? If the educational quality is dwindling, what are the factors behind the dwindling quality and what are those practical measures to be taken to return the country's educational system back to the path of glory? This paper is, therefore, a call to action and for action. Parents, teachers, learners and schools must agree and act to save Nigeria's educational standard while the relevant government authorities must look into the fuss about the country's educational system and act accordingly.

### **Concept of education**

Before proceeding, it is pertinent to clarify and operationalise the concept of 'education', since the concept appears to have a broad meaning. Thomas (2001) considers education an intentional effort to improve individuals' knowledge, skills, goals or values while Gert (2015) looks at 'education' from a normative dimension, highlighting that in the philosophical literature, the concept is considered 'teleological', meaning it involves 'telos', which is an aim or a purpose. According to Gert (2015), the idea here is that education is not an activity, which could be understood just for its own sake, but usually because one wants to achieve or bring about something. While enquiring about the nature and requirements of the kind of education that can lead to self-fulfillment and world peace, Krishnamurti (2016) argues that the right kind of education is neither based on any ideology or system nor is it a means of conditioning the individual in some special manner (i.e., education is not all about shaping the child according to some idealistic pattern), but in the true sense of the word, education is building an individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole.

From the general perspective, one can consider 'education' a sort of knowledge acquisition as well as skills and character transmission, which may take place within a structured framework such as in learning institutions, which adopt well-structured curricula, semi-structured or non-formal education, which, though structured, takes place outside the school system (e.g., sport programmes in a community), and informal or unstructured framework, which can be considered a type of learning through one's daily experiences. In this paper, whatever definition of education one may come across, the researchers' focus is on the structured or formal education, which involves early child education, primary education, secondary education and the tertiary education.

Indeed, it is possible to put down several views of different sources regarding what education is, but the few definitions above seem to have already clarified the concept of education. The sources all highlight the fact that education is about building individuals by way of transmitting knowledge, skills and character to them such that they will be able to deal with life as a whole for their personal good and for the good of the society. It is, therefore, the duty of all stakeholders (i.e., leaders in government, parents, teachers, students, curriculum designers, and the society) to start reflecting on how to enhance the educational standards in Nigeria to achieve the critical objective of helping the young generation to lead successful and fulfilled lives.

### **Evolution of formal education in Nigeria**

This section gives an overview of the history of formal education in Nigeria from the colonial period to the independence era and up to the present times. Indeed, the subject matter under discussion will be appreciated better if one understands how Nigeria's system of formal education has evolved over the years. Since the interest of this paper is not on other forms of education, the researchers will only focus on the formal education, although reference would be made briefly to the pre-colonial education.

Historically speaking, before the British conquest, Nigeria had two forms of education – religious and indigenous education. Evgeniou (2022) states that the religious education was taught prominently in Northern Nigeria where children in each Muslim community from 5 years would begin to undergo some form of Islamic religious education by a mallam with a focus on teaching the Qu'ran and Arabic alphabet. Concerning the indigenous education, Nigerian children were taught some practical skills on the basis of the needs of the local community and the society such as farming, drumming, wood carving for boys while girls were taught domestic skills.

The insights above show that before the advent of the British colonisation of Nigeria, there were some forms of education in the country. However, formal or western education began in Nigeria in the 1840s. To be specific, formal education began in Nigeria in 1842 with the activities of the European Christian missionaries, though this was only at the level of primary education (Abolade & Oyelade, 2018; Ibrahim, 2020; Olawuyi, 2004). According to Ibrahim (2020), later in 1859, secondary education began with the establishment of CMS Grammar school, Lagos. Although there were no clear reasons for the delay in establishing secondary schools, researchers such as Evgeniou (2022) and Ibrahim (2020) argue that the delay was because the western missionaries felt that allowing a Nigerian child access to secondary education would induce some critical thinking among Nigerians, which may not help in advancing the colonial policies.

Ibrahim (2020) argues that in the beginning of the western educational setup in Nigeria, the British colonial government was hesitant in interfering in the education system, because of political and financial reasons. However, the British started intervening in the educational sector by donating reasonably to the missionary societies in support of education. Shortly after the British intervention, the colonial government introduced the Education Ordinance in 1882 with the sole objective of having unhindered control on education in the country. According to Ibrahim (2020), the Education Ordinance became the colonial government's first formal pronouncement in education in Nigeria. Based on the ordinance, schools in the country were classified into Government and private school. While the government school were managed by public funds, private schools were deprived of such funds and were only receiving little aid from the colonial government's budget.

According to Ibrahim (2020), the implementation of the colonial Education Ordinance of 1882 turned out to be problematic since the colonial educational curricula was unfamiliar to the locals. Besides, the teaching method and medium of communication appeared to be too strange or foreign for an average Nigerian child. Consequently, the 1882 ordinance failed and in 1887, another ordinance was promulgated, paving way for a more effective educational system by the colonial government to aid education. However, it is argued that this so-called effective ordinance was only successful in some metropolises in Lagos (Abolade & Oyelade, 2018; Ibrahim, 2020; Olawuyi, 2004). Ibrahim (2020) highlights that with the limited efficacy of the new educational ordinance, which was around Lagos, the colonial administration employed more foreign teachers, established more schools and started giving more financial assistance to the missions, to voluntary agencies and to private individuals to help in establishing more schools.

In 1914, when the northern and southern Nigeria were amalgamated by Lord Fedrick Lugard, the then Nigeria's Governor General, Evgeniou (2022) states that there was a dramatic increase in demand for schools all over Nigeria. As for Ibrahim (2020), after the amalgamation, Lord Lugard set up some new ideas, which formed major part of the Education ordinance of 1916. Ibrahim further states that since the 1916 ordinance was promulgated, it began to take care of the country's educational needs. In his argument, Evgeniou (2022) states that it was because of the sudden demand for education and the growth of formal or western education that led the colonial government to establish the University of Ibadan (the then University College) in 1948, making it the first university in Nigeria. Although Nigerians from the northern part of the country resisted the intrusion of western education, which they thought would negatively affect the Islamic religious education that was more paramount to them, Lord Lugard met with the northern leaders and convinced them that the formal or western education will not affect the Islamic tradition (Ibrahim, 2020).

Today, it is not in doubt that there is formal education in every part of Nigeria, taking place at the kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Indeed, there seem to be significant milestones in the educational sector, but it appears a unified set of educational policies in the country has yet to be implemented successfully due to regional differences in quality, the nature of educational curricula as well as funding. Besides, Ibrahim (2020) argues that today, western or formal education has suffered a lot of setbacks. Additionally, irrespective of the presence of formal education across the country, Abdullahi et al. (2014) argue that Nigeria still possesses the highest number of out-of-school learning population in the world. It is also sad that the educational standard that schools were known for has no longer been the same. According to Ibrahim (2020), even graduates of Nigerian universities are deficient in the proper knowledge and skills to acquire employment. In this regard, urgent measures need to be taken to ensure that the Nigerian educational system regain its pride of place. But before thinking of ways to help in regaining the past glory of Nigeria's system of education, it would be pertinent to see if there are some factors bedeviling the quality of education in Nigeria.

### **Factors bedeviling the quality of education in Nigeria**

This section details some possible factors affecting Nigeria's education system. Indeed, there appear to be many factors affecting the quality of education in Nigeria, but this paper focuses on just a few of them. There is no special order in the way these factors are listed, so the first factor is not necessarily the most important and the last is not necessarily the least, thus the researchers try to look at the list holistically while considering each factor a serious issue besetting the country's education and threatening the future of Nigerian children thereof.

**i. Privatisation and commercialisation of education in Nigeria**

The issue of privatisation and commercialisation of Nigeria's educational institution is a complex and worrisome one to deal with. Indeed, the Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE), which came into force since 1977 sanctions the participation of private education providers to complement government's efforts in advancing the country's educational needs, meaning that privatisation is actually a government's policy. While in a way, privatisation policy may have enormous benefits, it is not a healthy policy for the educational sector since education in any country is citizens' right and ought to be acquired without any form of hindrance. Conversely, privatisation implies denationalising education and allowing individuals not just to complement government's efforts, but to maximise profit too. This is why education is gradually becoming more or less a commodity for sale with the aim of making substantial profit.

Ironically, leaders who have suddenly found wisdom in denationalising and commercialising the country's education are the same people who enjoyed free education with even financial incentives to encourage their pursuit of education. Today, they only found wisdom in giving students loans to be repaid as if they did not have opportunities during their time to access education freely and in incentivised ways. Currently, because of privatisation and commercialisation of education, public schools have become shadows of themselves and the only viable way of providing quality education for one's child is through the private educational arrangement. Unfortunately, most of these private institutions seem not to be even standardised and some apparently possess grossly inadequate facilities for curricular and extracurricular activities. However, out of frustration, parents in Nigeria think it is more guaranteeing to send their children in such schools even to the detriment of their slim financial resources than sending them to public schools. With the conspicuous failure of the government to monitor and/or regulate the activities of these private education providers so as to protect Nigerian children's right to education as well as to help fund the investment in quality education, an average child in Nigeria today is left at the mercy of private education providers.

Privatisation of education in Nigeria is aimed at improving access, quality and equity in education but the policy is not quite effective (Koko & Abraham, 2008). What is most worrisome in the privatisation and commercialisation of education is that, since private individuals' aim is not just to help in providing education, but to maximally get profit from their investment, strictly ensuring the right thing must be done seems to be compromised. For instance, in some of the private education setups, school children produce wonderful grades that are not proportionate to their level of intelligence just so that parents would not be discouraged from removing their children to other schools. Sometimes, in a class of about 30 or 40 learners, one notices that the least person in a given examination would have an average of 90% and one wonders what the student with the 1<sup>st</sup> position would get. Besides, to please clients or customers (i.e., parents), no matter the level of learners' incompetence, school children now rarely repeat a class just to avoid the wrath of parents. Consequently, these ill-prepared products churned out of primary and post-primary schools seem to perform abysmally and one begins to wonder what really went wrong. The fact is that, as a result of the privatisation and commercialisation of education, it (education) has been made tradable and in business, sellers are obligated to please their customers to keep maintaining a good business relationship with them. Sadly, when this kind of mentality is transferred to the education sector, it rather kills the system of education, hence the fuss on the dwindling quality of education in the country today.

**ii. Poor quality of teachers**

The issue of poor quality of teachers appears to be partly due to the privatisation and commercialisation of education in the country, inadequate due diligence in recruiting teachers today especially in public schools and even poor teachers' training process or porous formation of graduates being churned out every year from Nigerian institutions of higher learning. To be specific:

- a. **Privatisation and commercialisation** are mentioned here as a factor behind poor quality of teachers, because in many private schools especially the ones with glaring lack of standard, it appears proprietors go for those without a tall academic qualification in order to pay less and gain more from such teachers, since experienced and highly qualified people may not want to accept the peanuts given at the end of the month as salaries. Indeed, economists and economic analysts such as Jenkins (2020) say, in business, one of the tips to maximise profits is to reduce operational cost, meaning lesser remuneration is one of the ways of reducing cost of operation. Thus, it may not be completely appropriate to blame these proprietors for trying

to minimise the cost of operating their schools, because if they also fail to activate such a strategy, many parents may not be able to cater for the tuition that may be set to manage the private institutions.

- b. Lack of due diligence in teachers' recruitment process** is also mentioned here, because in many instances, it appears employment in public institutions today depends on who the potential employee knows in government. Politicians have incredible influence on the recruitment process to an extent that letters come from politicians to managers of various institutions with the caption "employ and interview" as if employment comes before interview. This is not only applicable to other public sectors, but even educational institutions are affected by this incongruous influence from the politicians. For the fear of losing their jobs, heads of educational institutions also accept and positively treat such letters, leading to the employments of those not really qualified to teach. This act has contributed enormously in bedeviling the quality of educational in Nigeria.
- c. Poor teachers' training process or porous formation of graduates** is another aspect that affects the quality of teachers in various school in Nigeria. As a result of the political influence on appointments across our colleges of education, polytechnics and even the universities, it seems many teacher-trainers need training themselves, since most of them were not intellectually prepared to become teachers in higher institutions, but were only employed because of political 'settlements'. This does not mean all higher education teachers fall in this group. There are highly intellectually sound academics across Nigerian tertiary institutions, no doubt. Therefore, incompetent teacher-trainers cannot be solely responsible for the poor quality of teachers produced. This leads to delving into how academically unserious most of the teachers were during their days of training. During a social gathering, a university teacher once said there was a time he went to supervise one of his students in Education Department during the practical teaching programme. He said the teacher-trainee (student-teacher) simply wrote the subject on the board and stood reclusively incommunicado for several minutes. When asked why the sudden dumbness, he confessed that he really did not know what to teach. It is believed that this student-teacher eventually graduated. The question is, how did he graduate? Indeed, most of Nigerian primary and secondary school teachers passed their examinations in unscrupulous ways and they cannot give what they really did not acquire during their training trajectory.

### iii. Indiscipline amongst the learning youths

Like the other aspects, indiscipline among the learning youths is another factor bedeviling Nigerian educational system. The problem of indiscipline is multifaceted and it creates an environment that is not conducive for learning; hence students' involvement in acts of indiscipline negatively affect the goals of education (Amado & Freire, 2009; Gaustard, 2005; Yaroson, 2004). On their part, Ali et al. (2014) state that students' acts of indiscipline especially in secondary schools have become a global challenge. They state that school children tend to involve in deviant behaviours such as examination malpractice, cultism, lack of punctuality to school, aggressiveness among peers etc. All these lead to poor academic performance.

### iv. Over-reliance on artificial or synthetic intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can actually address some of the greatest challenges in education these days, as it has the potentials to innovate teaching and learning as well as accelerate progress towards global development (UNESCO, 2024). AI is intelligence exhibited by non-natural entity. In computer science, it deals with the reproduction or mimicking of human-level intelligence, self-awareness, knowledge or conscience. No doubt, the use of internet is a good technological-driven learning advancement that can shape the future of learning, especially for young minds (UNESCO, 2024). This means that artificial or synthetic intelligence is a great way of revolutionising the global educational system. However, integrating AI in education especially at the early childhood level should not be an act of replacing traditional teaching methods, but it should rather be a facilitator. Unfortunately, it appears teachers have relinquished their pedagogical roles to synthetic or Artificial Intelligence (AI). Children are usually handed a lot of home work and are encouraged to use the internet to complete their tasks. They use the internet, copy and paste all that they see and get good grades without really knowing what they did. To some extent, without the use of the internet, when one asks these children things related to the homework they passed with exquisite grades, they find it difficult to give correct responses. Thus, AI in Nigeria is rather encouraging intellectual laziness and killing children's natural intelligence.

**v. Parents' nonchalance about their children's progress**

The inability of parents to monitor their children's performance seems to be another factor causing the falling standard of education in Nigeria. Today, because most parents are working-class, they concentrate more on their jobs and forget or do not care to monitor the intellectual growth and progress of their children. Chinwuba (2019) states that many people do not realise that as parents, they have a certain responsibility in the upbringing of their children. According to her, this lack of parental supervision and pattern of behaviour among many parents have negatively affected many children, not just in the way they perform academically, but even in their moral standards and behaviour.

**vi. Defective educational policies**

A policy is a course of action or principle of behaviour or conduct thought to be desirable or necessary, especially as formally expressed by a government or other authoritative body. Education policy, therefore, should consist of the principles and policy-decisions that influence the educational sector, as well as laws and regulations governing the operation of a people's system of education (Education Policy, 2022). According to Wilson (1978), education policy can be seen in terms of social engineering. Looking at these definitions, it is apparent that when educational policies are defective, the system suffers.

In recent times in Nigeria, there seem to have been different educational policies that are not in tandem with the global expectations. For example, the government has recently prohibited children of less than 18 years from gaining admissions into Nigerian universities in an era where American or European children are even becoming professors at the age of 20. This means that in Nigeria, the child's exquisite intellectual capacities do not count, but age. Now, children who are so intelligent and who happen to graduate from secondary schools at the age of 15 or 16 will have to be idling away while waiting for an extra 2 to 3 years before gaining admission into the university. The government fails to understand that while these children are waiting, they can start indulging in social vices or involving in acts that are capable of deteriorating their academic achievements. Perhaps, at the age of 18, after wasting so much time at home, most of them may even forget the things they understood well in the secondary school. This is tantamount to the primitive ways in the past where admission in primary schools then depended on how tall one was or how capable one could make heaps or ridges. These policies are primitive and devoid of the global best practices.

Again, the same government woke up one day and scrapped certain subjects such as History from primary and secondary school curricula as if History is not important. Yet, they encourage subjects and learning objectives such as drawing and labelling grass hoppers at a time Chinese children are producing cellphones and other electronic gadgets and breaking records in the technological space. Education policy makers fail to understand that certain learning objectives in Nigeria that were offshoots of the colonial Education Ordinance were basically to enhance understanding during communication and not for future current technologically-driven society.

**vii. Distraction occasioned by the use of social media**

It appears social media has permeated virtually all aspects of human existence in recent times. Almost everybody, whether young or adult, woman or man, student or teacher etc. spends a great amount of time scrolling through their feeds on social media platforms. For school children, the distraction due to the use of social media is another negative trend affecting their level of academic concentration. Although social media can help Nigerian children to access some educational services, can help to advance micro-learning, free access to information from all fields of knowledge, access to different news portals etc., it appears to have become a great source of distraction to the youths or school children in Nigeria nowadays. For instance, during teaching, some children glue themselves to social media, viewing things that are completely unrelated to what is being taught, thereby decreasing their focus, attention and, above all, academic performance. Relatedly, some even get used to the shorthand that characterises the writing style on social media to an extent that during serious academic writing, they tend to use the same writing style, thereby rendering most of their write-ups clumsy or awkward. The distraction on social media, therefore, seems to reduce learners' academic productivity.

**viii. Poor foundation at the lower levels of education**

As a result of the failure of government to properly build and fund public primary and secondary schools, children hardly learn under a conducive atmosphere these days. This also takes one back to the issue of defective recruitment processes occasioned by the activities of Nigerian politicians. Teachers, especially in public schools, are no longer employed based on merit, but on the fact that they have political connections. Such teachers end up using their employment just as a means of getting money, rather than building the children. In rural communities, teachers even use most of the students as labourers on their farms during school hours. Children go to school in the morning and instead of utilising the time to teach them, teachers take them to farms and at the closing time, they dismiss them, thereby wasting the whole day for no single educational purpose. This happens sometimes throughout the week leaving the children empty-headed. Perhaps, this is why children in public schools rarely excel academically. These foundational problems seem to affect the children throughout their academic trajectory as they even end up passing entrance examinations to higher institutions through examination malpractice, thereby performing poorly in their various fields of study. This is a serious problem and needs serious attention by all stakeholders.

**ix. Attitudes of Nigeria's new-generation parents towards their children's education**

Another serious issue of concern is the attitudes of the new-generation parents. What is meant by Nigeria's new-generation parents is the 21<sup>st</sup> century parents who themselves are products of a failed system and who do not care about the academic growth and development of their children. One now sees the new-generation fathers sagging their trousers, adorning their ears with ear rings, plating their hair like women, drawing tattoos all over their bodies, smoking hemp, cigarette or taking hard drugs in front of their children, indulging in cultism, gangsterism, thuggery, financial fraud and engaging in other many other forms of social vices to the knowledge of their children. The new-generation fathers can even physically attack a teacher or the school management for trying to correct their children in school. This is same for some of the new-generation mothers who wear very skimpy attire while conveying their children to school. Some of these new-generation mothers smoke publicly, drink anyhow in pubs, while also speaking vulgarly and in ways not befitting of mothers. These mothers also engage in other various unhealthy behaviour without minding whether their children are watching them or not. Because of the careless lifestyle of these new-generation parents, they do not only care about their children's intellectual growth, but they inadvertently transfer unwholesome and unethical attitudes to their children, who ignorantly think the life their parents live is the model. These children end up having weird behaviour in school and can be so undisciplined, thereby weakening their academic performance.

**x. Teachers' unfeasible workload**

Another factor affecting the quality of education in today's Nigeria is the unfeasible workload of teachers. Because education is being privatised and commercialised, teachers are no longer employed enough to handle the growing population of school children since private school owners seem to look more at the profit they can make than the real provision of quality education. Nowadays, it is common in Nigeria to find one teacher handling five subjects and teaching those subjects across the entire arms of classes in a school. These same teachers are also saddled with other responsibilities in school and are required to function optimally under tight timelines otherwise, they can easily lose their jobs. Frustrated and compelled to work under such conditions, teachers seem to involve in various tricks just to be seeing doing something or producing result, which is in real sense not proportionate to what they actually do. Those at the receiving end of the unfeasible workload of the teachers and the tricky strategies activated by these teachers are the learning youths, who end up learning little and improperly. The inappropriate learning condition can significantly reduce the manifestation of their full intellectual potentials.

**xi. Unprofessionalism of teachers handling various subjects**

The issue of teachers' unfeasible workload is connected to teachers' unprofessionalism in handling various subjects in the sense that once many subjects are given to one teacher, there is always a tendency of assigning subjects to such teachers that are not related to their area of specialisation. No teacher can claim to be a jack of all threads (i.e., all-knowing). In higher institutions, these teachers read a particular course, which most of them were not even good at. How then will it be wise to assign Social Studies to someone who read Mathematics, or Integrated Science to someone who read English at either the College of Education or the university level? Because education is now seemingly becoming a commercial product in Nigeria, schools, especially private

schools no longer care about this very dangerous trend. They assign teaching subjects to teachers in which the teachers themselves are not familiar with what they are required to teach. These teachers then read the various manuals prescribed by the schools and go to the class to download their understanding of what they read without depth or vivid explanation, because they are deficient in the basic knowledge of the subjects. This appears to be responsible for why children are given many assignments that require only the use of Google to complete. Probably, people must already have been wondering why assignments are given these days without any practical reference to what has been taught. Assignments, especially in primary and secondary schools, are meant to see the learning outcomes or how well children understood what was taught. Children in primary and secondary schools are not researchers, so there is no need to give them home works that require independent research on the internet, which leads them into accessing other sites that are not good for their age.

### **xii. Forcing children to follow what is not suitable for their cognitive abilities**

It appears many children are being compelled today to study based on the dictates of their parents and not on how well such children excel in various academic fields. Children who are supposed to become sociologists in life are forced by their parents to go in for Law or Medicine. Those who should be good for Physical Education are compelled by their parents to study courses that may take them to a different profession. This pattern of not bothering about children's intellectual capacity before pushing them to study certain subjects undermines the outcome of their academic performance. They do not only perform below expectation, but parents keep influencing the people concerned at the various levels to ensure their children pass various examinations. Consequently, the results produced by these children do not necessarily reflect what they know and this is counterproductive for the educational system in the country.

### **xiii. Poor reading habit amongst learners and teachers alike**

Reading culture is quite beneficial to human beings, because it increases one's memory and slows down the rate of memory deterioration. Besides, good reading culture helps individuals to discipline themselves by obeying certain rules and standards. It also helps in improving speaking skills as it improves vocabulary. Additionally, reading makes people to think critically and creatively, leading to better academic performance. Above all, reading helps in building one's general knowledge (Alex-Nmecha & Horsfall, 2019). Unfortunately, there is a popular pejorative rhetoric that "the best way to hide something from Africans is to put it in a book", which is centered on the poor reading culture of young Africans, especially Nigerians. Although this statement seems to have been used by the whites to disparage the blacks, there are elements of truth in it since Africans, especially Nigerian youths find it difficult to read. For example, when people post something that is a bit lengthy on social media, even if such a post is quite didactic, remarks such as "the article was quite interesting, but I do not have the time to read everything due to the length" are often heard from the youths. Therefore, one wonders – if such youths cannot be patient to read a mere social media post, then how would they have the patience to read an entire textbook? This issue of poor reading culture seems to have permeated both teachers and learners alike. Looking at the benefits of reading as listed by Alex-Nmecha and Horsfall (2019) above, there is every need to be worried that the poor reading culture among the learning youths can lead to deterioration of their memory, uncreativity and unskillfulness, indiscipline and poor critical thinking among the teeming youths. This is counterproductive and can further deteriorate the already worrisome state of education in the country.

## **Effects of Defective Quality of Education in Nigeria**

Having looked at the various factors affecting the quality of education in Nigeria, it is capital to also appreciate what dangers these negative factors portend for the country and its future. Without claiming to be exhaustive, the following are some representative effects:

### **i. Defective education produces defective leaders**

When the quality of education in Nigeria diminishes, there is a likelihood of having leaders in future who may not have the intellectual capacity to think critically. That is to say, they may not possess the required tact and finesse or skills as well as confidence or capacity to think outside the box. This may translate into bad governance since the people at the helm of affairs may not have the capacity to take far-reaching decisions based on global best practices. It appears this is probably happening already in Nigeria, because nowadays, leaders seem to take decisions and make policies that are extremely at variance with the normal practices around the world. This is not to cast aspersions on Nigeria's leaders, but everyone living in Nigeria ought to begin to

wonder if the country's leaders see what is happening in other parts of the world. Indeed, without quality education, leaders will always lack the knowledge or intellectual resources that can enable them take political decisions that are intelligent and meaningful.

### **ii. Defective education can lead to the collapse of all sectors**

It appears countries that have educated people and strong educational systems have economies that are stronger, better-developed and sustainable. This means that the state of various sectors in a country shows the quality and strength of their educational system. Indeed, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one is tempted to think that due to technology or digitilisation and the transformations that come with it, the ability of a country to adapt successfully to these technological innovation or changes will, perhaps, greatly depend on its educated population. If there are no educated people or the educated ones receive defective education, the collapse of virtually all sectors remains eminent. No wonder, when the Chinese advertise their products, their catchy phrase is usually 'GOOD THINKING... GOOD PRODUCT!'

### **iii. Youth unemployment, poverty trap and restiveness/criminality**

These three items are listed under one heading, because unemployment seems to be linked to poverty and both can lead to restiveness or criminality. When people lack the required education for employment, they will remain unemployed. Even if they get employed, they may only be good for jobs that are poorly-paid. In fact, in the current era where digitalisation is gradually becoming the order of the day and knowledge quickly becomes outdated as a result of innovations, it is apparent that traditional jobs may soon disappear, leaving the uneducated people to their fate, since they cannot easily adapt to changes and find jobs that suit them. This situation can push many into poverty and with no means of survival, they can easily resort to all forms of criminality, which they may consider a shortcut or a more viable way that can take them out of their disadvantaged positions.

### **iv. Poor health and shorter life expectancy**

This point may sound unrelated to the subject matter, but it is quite pertinent. Lack of education or defective education can lead to poor health in that most of the basic knowledge one acquires through the primary school education can help one in future in maintaining one's psychophysical health. For example, the importance of taking one's hygiene seriously that one learns at the primary and basic level such as regular handwashing, sex education, need for regular exercise are basic knowledge that can stay with learners all through their life time. Good health certainly enhances one's life expectancy and without education or with defective education, one may not get this basic knowledge.

### **v. Problems with raising children**

If education helps in building people, it means people can transfer the acquired knowledge to their children or, at least, help them in attaining their educational goals. Unfortunately, uneducated parents do not have the luxury of such knowledge and cannot properly raise their children. There is a popular skit all over the social media, which depicts a situation where a secondary school child once deceived his uneducated parents that he was required to buy three texts books – 'Geo', 'Gra' and 'Phy' textbooks. Because these parents were uneducated, they did not realise their child was referring to only one textbook (i.e., Geography textbook) so they were successfully tricked by the unscrupulous child. If these people could not identify a mere textbook, how then could they have had the basic knowledge to raise the child? This means that the child would end up growing based on the societal or peer influence and not based on how the parents raised him.

### **vi. Social exclusivity or isolation and lack of voice**

Apparently, there is a sense of inferiority complex that lives with people whose education is defective or who do not acquire enough education. They seem to struggle to fit in social situations and even if they try, they usually remain marginalised. Indeed, when people lack the required education, their inferior status alone prevents them from taking part in many social events. When they try to participate, their roles are usually unproductive and incomprehensive, contrary to their educated counterparts who have no difficulty engaging in the same activities. Defective education, therefore, will prevent Nigerian children from engaging productively with other people across the globe.

**Solutions to factors bedeviling the quality of education in Nigeria**

Looking at the factors affecting the quality of education in Nigeria and the negative effects of a defective form of education or lack of proper education, it is pertinent to think of what to do in order to avert these negative effects for a more optimistic future of education in the country. Among other recommendations, this paper proposes the following:

- i. The idea of privatisation and commercialisation of education in the country should be discouraged. But if education must be privatised, government must put measures in place to monitor the quality of education provided in such private institutions. If there are already supervising or monitoring agencies, such agencies must be seen to be doing what is required of them and shun sharp practices where obvious wrongs are overlooked just because the 'palms of the monitoring agent has been greased' (compromised). Besides, private education providers should start looking at the future of the children and should be more patriotic by protecting the country's standard of education. No one says they should not have some profit in their investment, but the emphasis should not necessarily be on profit, but molding the future of the Nigerian child.
- ii. Government must stop politicising appointment of teachers. If employments are given in other sectors based on political patronage, this should not happen in the educational sector since a defective teaching will permanently handicap the future generation.
- iii. On one hand, the idea of compromising our standards at the tertiary institutions and ending up with churning out half-baked graduates who in turn become our children's teachers must be discouraged and seriously dealt with. On the other hand, tertiary education students too must understand that certificate acquisition without the required knowledge is a big reputation deformity as this exposes them to unnecessary ridicule. Thus, they must ensure to extremely understand what they study instead of buying their certificates.
- iv. Parents, teachers and the society have a serious role in building the moral standards of the Nigerian children. Parents must allow schools and communities to instill discipline in their children. The idea of pampering children to the extent of confronting the teachers or school managements over disciplinary measures meted against one's child must be discouraged. Discipline was what the old generation cherished that made them different from the new generation set of children.
- v. Synthetic or artificial intelligence is good, but schools should ensure that children are adequately taught what they are supposed to learn and not to allow AI to supplant human nature. Computer can never be human! They are only made for humans, not humans for them!
- vi. Parents must endeavour to monitor their children's educational progress. Molding children ought to be a collective responsibility of both the parents, and the teachers, not teachers alone.
- vii. Educational policies must be fashioned in ways that are in line with the needs of the society. Since modernisation seems to unify global standards of education, educational policies must also meet the standards of global best practices.
- viii. Exposing children to social media at the tender age is distractive. Parents must monitor the way their children use social media to get rid of the distraction they get from using social media platforms. In short, primary and secondary schools all over the country must ban the use of Android cellphones not just in classrooms, but within the entire school premises. In extremely desirous cases, children's cellphones must be kept in the custody of their teachers, but on no account should they (children) be allowed to operate cellphones during school hours.
- ix. Government must revive the public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions by injecting enough funds in these institutions for more conducive learning environment.
- x. Teachers who use public school children as labourers during school hours should desist from such acts. Otherwise, they should be identified, investigated and punished accordingly to deter others.
- xi. New-generation parents need to have a rethink about their attitudes, especially the way they conduct themselves before their children. They should understand that their children will only grow into what they see not what they are told, so they should be role models rather than destroyers of their children and indeed, the future generation.
- xii. Government and school managers must ensure that adequate teachers are employed to handle various subjects. Unfeasible workload given to teachers is counterproductive in all ramifications.
- xiii. Teachers must be assigned to only teach courses or subjects related to their areas of specialty, otherwise, they may be considered jack of all threads but master of none.

- xiv. Children should be guided and advised to follow what is most suitable for them, not what their parents want them to become. In this regard, the old policy of employing guidance and counseling staff should be brought back. It appears many schools no longer have this important person and it affects the way children pursue their academic career.
- xv. There should be serious emphasis on the reading culture among our school children. School managers must spare time to compel children to read a given text at a given time during the school hours. Teachers must also take this seriously by ensuring that they lead the way because they are also guilty of this lack of reading culture. At home, parents must do the same. All stakeholders must collectively come together to revive the academic sector and forestall the impending danger ahead when our education completely fails.

### **Conclusion**

This paper looked at the dwindling system of education in Nigeria and the negative effects a failed education has on the country. Following the researchers' personal observations as stakeholders in the educational sector and the views of different scholars and sources, it was found that different factors account for a defective quality of education. These factors include privatisation and commercialisation of education, poor quality of teachers, inadequate due diligence in the teachers' recruitment process, poor teacher training process, indiscipline amongst the learning youths, over-reliance on artificial or synthetic intelligence, nonchalant attitudes of parents, defective educational policies, distraction occasioned by the use of social media, poor foundation at the lower levels of education, attitudes of the new-generation parents, teachers' excess and unfeasible workload, poor reading culture etc. The researchers also looked at the effects of defective education on the society, highlighting that defective education produces intellectually-poor leaders, it can also lead to collapse of all sectors, youth unemployment, poverty and criminality. The researchers also stated that poor quality of education can lead to poor health and shorter life expectancy; it can cause problems with raising children and it leads to social exclusivity or isolation and lack of voice. Based on the insights from the factors and effects of declining quality of education, the paper concludes that all hands must be on deck to save Nigeria's educational system. Children, parents, teachers, schools, communities and indeed, the government have an obligation to perform, while understanding that education standardisation is not the responsibility of only one of the above-mentioned stakeholders.

**References**

- Abdullahi, D. A. and John (2014). The political will and quality basic education in Nigeria. *Journal of Power, Politics, and Government*. 2 (2), 75 – 100.
- Abolade, S.B. and Oyelade, A.F. (2018). Historical development of private secondary education in Nigeria: 1859 – Present. *eJournal of Education Policy (eJEP)*. Retrieved from <http://nau.edu/COE/eJournal/>
- Alex-Nmechi, J.C. and Horsfall, M.N. (2019). Reading culture, benefits, and role of libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)*, 28 – 36.
- Ali, A.A., Dada, I.T., Isiaka, G.A., and Salmon, S.A. (2014). Types, causes and management of indiscipline acts among secondary school students in Shomolu Local Government Area of Lagos State. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*. 8 (2), 254 – 287.
- Amado, J. and Friere, M.V. (2009). Managing and handling indiscipline in schools. *International Journal of Violence and School*. 8, 85 – 97.
- Chinwuba, C.N. (2019). Parental supervision: A veritable tool for building good morals in children. In *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 7 (4), 1 – 5.
- Education Policy. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org>
- Evgeniou, A. (2022). History of education in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://www.unicaf.org/history-of-education-in-nigeria/>
- Gaustard, J. (2005). School discipline. Retrieved from <http://www.drdaan.organisation/handout%2001-html>
- Gert, B. (2015). Education philosophy. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/concept-of-education>
- Ibrahim, I. (2020) Brief history of education in Nigeria. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/35912844/Brief\\_History\\_of\\_Education\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.academia.edu/35912844/Brief_History_of_Education_in_Nigeria)
- Jenkins, A. (2020). 12 tips to maximize profits in business. Retrieved from <https://www.netsuite.com/portal/resource/articles/business-strategy/maximize-profitability.shtml>
- Koko, M.N. and Abraham, N.M. (2008). Issues and concerns in privatisation of education in Nigeria: the legal implications. *African Journal for the Study of Educational Issues (AJEDUI)*, 4 (4), 8 – 13.
- Krishnamurti, J. (2016). *Education and the significance of life*. Krishnamurti Foundation India. Retrieved from <https://store.kfoundation.org/books/books-by-j-krishnamurti/books/education-and-the-significance-of-life>
- Olawuyi, B.O. (2004). Advent of western education in Nigeria (1842 – 1881): In S.A. Jimoh (ed.) *Foundations of education* pp.23 – 25. Department of Educational Foundations, University of Ilorin Publication.
- Segovia, V.M. (2010). Transforming mindsets through education for sustainable development. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/concept-of-education>
- Thomas, R.M. (2001). Education: Culture and religious concepts. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/concept-of-education>
- UNESCO (2024). *Artificial Intelligence in education*. Retrieved from <https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-education/artificial-intelligence>
- Wilson, H.E. (1978). *Social Engineering in Singapore: Educational policies and social change, 1819-1972*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore University Press.
- Yarson, M.C. (2004). *Strategies for curbing indiscipline in Nigerian secondary schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.Accs.org.uk>.