

History of Education, Global Trends and Issues: An Analysis

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Abstract

The whole essence of education is to impart knowledge, skills, norms, values, character traits and attitudes to develop logical reasoning, critical thinking, and boost creativity for the smooth running of society. Education is of paramount importance because it is the bedrock for growth, development, technological advancement and the resolution of problems affecting individuals, communities, nations, and the world at large. History is considered indispensable to human existence and societal sustainability. The history of education examines the development and evolution of educational systems, theories, practices, and institutions within the context of the general historical framework of political, social, economic, scientific, technological and cultural changes that have affected different societies over time. It is important to know how education has progressed, the challenges associated with education, and the general appraisal of the educational system in Nigeria and other climes. The history of education is a special case of applied history, and as such, it has a profound influence on all disciplines. This paper is intended to highlight the relevance and relationship existing among history, the history of education, and global trends in educational development. Having recognized education as being pivotal to the growth and development of mankind through the shaping of political, social, economic, scientific, and technological factors and events, this paper emphasizes the need to be abreast of history of education and advances in the educational system.

Keywords: *History, Education, History of Education, Development*

Introduction

Various scholars and historians hold diverse views about the meaning of history. Simply defined, history is the study of the human past through the analysis and interpretation of oral, written, and visual sources. History has been seen as a ramification of knowledge that generally studies the past activities of man from the perspective of time and space. It is an inquiry into the coded events of the past with the view of establishing their meaning and relevance to the present. Therefore, it could be said that history can be defined as an understanding of both the past and the present. History can be defined as a recreation of the true picture of important persons, places, and events of the past for the present and future generations. (Amaele, 2003). Jaja defines history as the reconstruction of important achievements of man as a member of society (Jaja, 2002). Succinctly put, history is the story of past facts. To get to the fact of history, one must get to the truth. The fact is not coloured, therefore the truth cannot be coloured (Jaja, 2002). Bias and prejudice are not allowed or encouraged.

According to Smith (cited in Mangvwat, 1992), history is the totality of all the changes that humanity and society have undergone. History sees the present in the light

of the past and uses the past and the present to attempt a prognosis into the future. The study of history is of great importance to society. The major purpose of history is to study occurrences, phenomena, continuity and change over a period of time. History links the present with the past and in effect, stresses the continuity of human consciousness from generation to generation (Falola, 1999). By studying history, historians can describe and explain the causes and consequences of events. The study of history brings to the fore an understanding of how people and societies have developed and how the past has shaped the present.

History entails the meticulous and critical cross examination of situations and events. Historical records or accounts are presented in sequential, coherent, consistent and systematic order. Logical presentation is an important ingredient in history. The historian tries to present issues, incidents, or events concerning people and places in their most unbiased form. He tries to dig into important areas of interest. The historian makes an in-depth investigation to unearth the truth about the past by sifting the facts of what really happened from myth, legend, fairy tales, rumours and hearsay. He takes time to evaluate the necessary information received. He compares and analyzes the information and its sources so as to come up with a balanced account. This critical examination of situations ultimately offers an intellectual experience which sharpens the imagination, boosts critical thinking, enriches understanding and adds to the body of knowledge for the development of the society and the benefit of all.

Like history, education has also been viewed by many authors in different ways. The term education is elusive. It has no universally acceptable definition. To this end, there are many definitions of education as there are educators and educationists, philosophers and psychologists (Abdulkareem, 1990). Fafunwa (1974) defines education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviour that have a positive impact on the society in which he lives. Education is a system by which the necessary knowledge and understanding are gained through the methods of teaching and learning. Since education is a cultural activity of the people, every cultural system has its own education process. The yardstick for measuring quality and standard varies from culture to culture.

The role education plays in the development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. It has been established that no country can develop beyond her educational level. Abdulkareem (1992) has stated the functions of education in society by saying that education enables a person to distinguish between good and bad attitudes, right and wrong attitudes etc., in a social setting. Also, education enables an individual to develop his skills and talents, in all ramifications. The realization of the economic development, advancement or independence of any nation is a function of the educational capacity of the working class or the decision makers of that nation. For any country, the key to success lies in its concern for and development of the education sector. When education is promoted in a country, this reduces the rate of illiteracy which eventually reduces unemployment, which is one of the biggest drawbacks to any nation's progress.

An Analysis of History of Education as an Academic Discipline

The history of education is the historical account and development of education in relation to the educational system of the present so as to enable us to predict what the educational system is likely to be in the future. To appreciate educational progression, and development and plan better for the future, requires an elaborate inquest into the past. The history of education therefore embodies the development of education at various levels and the growth of ideas, knowledge, thoughts, and imaginations that have influenced or continue to influence the development of the educational system. The history of education in Nigeria takes into account the knowledge of the traditional, or indigenous educational system, the Islamic system of education, and the Western system of education in Nigeria. It also distinguishes between formal, informal, and non-formal types of education.

The history of education enables educational managers to understand the major trends in the development of education. It presents the historical development of education in Nigeria right from the period of the traditional or indigenous educational system, i.e., informal education which existed before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. It also presents different types of education from historical perspectives. The historical analysis of these systems of education enables educational management to understand the major educational trends. The history of education in Nigeria also presents a historical analysis of educational statistics in the form of the number of schools in certain areas before, during and after the colonial era. It also presents the number of students enrolled as well as the year of establishment of such schools.

The history of education in Nigeria supplies educational managers with knowledge of past policies as they were enacted during the missionary era up to the period of colonial administration and to the period of native involvement. For instance, the history of education is one of the means that educational managers use to acquaint themselves with the provisions of such policies, codes, and ordinances as the 1992 education ordinance, the 1887 education ordinance, the 1926 education codes etc., up to the present 6-3-3-4 educational policy. The knowledge of the immediate and remote codes and policies guides educational managers in the formulation of more suitable educational policies in the future.

The study of the history of education in Nigeria acquaints the educational managers with the analysis of complicated issues and procedures undergone before arriving at certain conclusions about educational changes and innovations. It also helps educational managers understand the problems of education. The history of education acquaints the educational managers with the functions of education in society thereby making them know whether the current system of education is responsive to individuals' needs and societal needs by performing its functions effectively or not.

Overview of Education in Nigeria

Nigeria's education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four to six years, depending on the program of study). According to Nigeria's latest National Policy on Education (2004), basic education covers nine years of formal (compulsory)

schooling consisting of six years of elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Post-basic education includes three years of senior secondary education (Education System Profiles, 2017). At the tertiary level, the system consists of a university sector and a non-university sector. The latter is composed of polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole, offers opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and vocational and technical education. The academic year typically runs from September to July. Most universities use a semester system of 18 – 20 weeks. Others run from January to December, divided into three terms of 10 -12 weeks (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Basic Education

Elementary education covers grades one through six. As per the most recent Universal Basic Education guidelines implemented in 2014, the curriculum includes: English, Mathematics, Nigerian language, basic science and technology, religion and national values, and cultural and creative arts, and Arabic language (optional). Pre-vocational studies (home economics, agriculture, and entrepreneurship) and French language are introduced in grade 4 (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Nigeria's national policy on education stipulates that the language of instruction for the first three years should be the "indigenous language of the child or the language of his or her immediate environment", most commonly Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba. This policy may, however, not always be followed at schools throughout the country, and instruction may instead be delivered in English. English is commonly the language of instruction for the last three years of elementary school. Students are awarded the Primary School Leaving Certificate on completion of Grade 6, based on continuous assessment (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Progression to junior secondary education is automatic and compulsory. It lasts three years and covers grades seven through nine, completing the basic stage of education. The curriculum includes the same subjects as the elementary stage, but adds the subject of business studies (Education System Profiles, 2017).

At the end of grade 9, pupils are awarded the Basic Education Certificate (BEC), also known as the Junior School Certificate, based on their performance in final examinations administered by Nigeria's state governments. The BEC examinations take place nationwide in June each year and usually last for a week. Students are expected to take a minimum of ten subjects and a maximum of thirteen. Students must achieve passes in six subjects, including English and Mathematics, to pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Senior School Certificate Examination

At the end of the 12th grade in May/June, students sit for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). They are examined in a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine subjects, including mathematics and English, which are mandatory. Successful candidates are awarded the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC), which lists all subjects successfully taken. Students can sit for a second SSC annual exam if interested or if they

need to improve on poor results in the May/June exams (Education System Profiles, 2017).

SSC examinations are offered by two different examination boards: The West African Examination Council and the National Examination Council (NECO). The examination is open to students currently enrolled in the final year of secondary school, as well external private candidates (in the November/December session only) (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Admission to public universities in Nigeria is competitive and based on scores obtained in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination as well as the SSC results. Most universities require passes in at least five SSC subjects and take the average score into consideration. Students must score an average grade of at least 'credit' level (C6) or better to be considered for admission to public universities; some institutions may require higher grades (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Vocational and Technical Education

The Nigerian education system offers a variety of options for vocational and technical education at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. To combat chronic youth unemployment, the Federal Ministry of Education presently supports a number of reform projects to advance vocational training, including the "vocationalization" of secondary education and the development of a National Vocational Qualifications Framework by the National Board for Technical Education, similar to the qualifications frameworks found in other British Commonwealth countries.

A two-tier system of nationally certified programs is offered at science and technical schools, leading to the award of National Technical and Commercial Certificates (NTC/NCC) and Advanced National Technical/Business Certificates. The lower-level program lasts three years after Junior Secondary School and is considered by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board as equivalent to the SSC. The advanced program requires two years of pre-entry industrial work experience and one year of full-time study in addition to the NTT and NCC. All certificates are awarded by the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Universities

Presently, there are 43 federal universities, 48 state universities, and 79 private universities accredited as degree-granting institutions in Nigeria. Many of these institutions are relatively new. In response to demographic pressures, Nigeria's higher education sector expanded over a relatively short period. In 1948, there was only one university-level institution in the country, the University College of Ibadan, which was originally an affiliate of the University of London. By 1962, the number of federal universities had increased to five: The University of Ibadan, the University of Ife (1961), the University of Nigeria (1960), Ahmadu Bello University (1962), and the University of Lagos (1962). (Education System Profiles, 2017)

Between 1980 and 2017, the number of recognized universities has grown tenfold from 16 to 152, as reported by Nigeria's National Universities Commission. For the first

few decades of growth, building higher education capacity was primarily in the public sector, driven by the Federal and State governments. More dramatic growth occurred beginning in the late 1990s, when the Nigerian government began to encourage the establishment of private universities. Since then, private institutions, which constitute some 45 percent of all Nigerian universities as of 2017, have proliferated at a rapid pace, from 3 in 1999 to 79 in 2021. About two thirds of these institutions are religiously affiliated schools. Despite the sheer number of private institutions that have opened, enrollments seem to be relatively low (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Nigeria's 43 federal universities as well as dozens of teaching hospitals and colleges are under the direct purview of the NUC. State governments have responsibility for the administration and financing of the 48 state universities. In addition to granting institutional accreditation, the NUC also approves and accredits all university programs, and accreditation is granted for an initial three-year period and subsequent five-year periods (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Colleges and Polytechnics

In addition to universities, there are a large number of polytechnics and colleges under the purview of the National Board of Technical Education (NBTE), the federal government body tasked with overseeing technical and vocational education. In 2017, the NBTE recognized 107 polytechnics, 27 monotechnics, and 220 colleges in various specific disciplines; these institutions were established to train students for technical and mid-level employment (Education System Profiles, 2017).

The National Commission for Colleges of Education is the federal body dedicated to overseeing non-university teacher education. As of 2017, there were 84 teacher training colleges in Nigeria (Education System Profiles, 2017).

Key Curricular Issues in Nigerian Education

The Nigerian educational system has some key curricular issues. Obioma (2007; 1-2) gave the following:

1. Identification of minimum competencies and aligning them to the methodology of classroom transactions including pedagogical skills needed and instructional materials;
2. Linking learning to the world of work of learners in the cultural context;
3. Emphasis on functional literacy, numeracy and strategic communication skills;
4. Infusion of relevant and functional entrepreneurial skills using the relevant subject contents as drivers;
5. Consolidation of some contents and subjects in the basic education context thus reducing subject / content overload;
6. The inclusion of strategic life-long skills as well as positive national values, civic, moral, and ethical education as a course of study;
7. Infusion of elements of critical thinking and of such emerging issues as HIV/AIDS education, anti-corruption studies, and capital market studies.

Innovations in Educational Evaluation in Nigeria

Innovations in educational evaluation in Nigeria before and after independence can be discussed under four major headings: Instrumentation, frame of interpretation, evaluation agencies, and mode of evaluation.

Instrumentation

Prior to independence and after independence, the evaluation instrument used in Nigerian schools was essay type achievement tests, which were solely used by classroom teachers in evaluating students' achievements. These tests are teacher made. Essay tests have many advantages, such as being easy to develop, promoting whole learning, and giving room for proper interpretation of information among others; they however have the following limitations: it is not easy to score, seems to have low reliability in scoring, limitations in sampling and so can have low content coverage. It also promotes subjective scoring. Due to these limitations amongst others, the multiple-choice objective tests were introduced in 1964 by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to supplement the traditional essay type test (Obodo, 2004). Up till now, the multiple-choice objective tests are used in conjunction with the essay type test in evaluating students' achievements in schools, school certificates/general certificate examinations, basic education certificate examinations, common entrance examinations etc., in Nigeria.

Frame of Interpretation

In Nigerian educational system, there are two frames of interpretation. They are norm referenced interpretation and criterion referenced interpretation. Norm referenced frame of interpretation consists of interpreting evaluation data with respect to a student's relative position in a defined group. Here, the average score of the student represents the norm which is used in comparing each student's level of achievements. The criterion reference frame of interpretation evaluates achievements in absolute terms. Data are interpreted based on pre-specified criteria. For instance, at the inception of a lesson, a teacher may decide in advance that any student who answers at least 70% of the number of items has mastered the concept. Those who reach this criterion proceeds to the next lesson while those who could not repeat the lesson. This gives rise to individualized instruction systems today.

Evaluation Agencies in Nigeria

Another factor that has contributed to the development and innovations in educational evaluations in Nigeria are the evaluation agencies. These include the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the Ministries of Education, the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), the National Teachers Institute (NTI) and schools.

Mode of Evaluation

The mode of evaluation refers to the general design or approach to evaluation. There had not been any clearly defined mode of evaluation in Nigeria until 1977, when the Nigerian government first introduced continuous assessment as contained in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 1977). It should be noted that the national

outcry of 1977 against the massive leakage of the WAEC and SSCE question papers gave rise to this mode of evaluation in Nigeria. The government having taken notice of the grave consequences of a malpractice ridden exam and certification, made haste to form various commissions of inquiry into the problem. One of the obvious consequences is that the Nigerian educational certificate and indeed all West Africans will be treated with contempt if the ugly trend is not nailed or checked.

Major Trends of Curriculum Changes

Globally, education has developed beyond traditional and crude strategies of teaching. Students today are inquisitive and reach to explore, therefore teachers have to also move ahead of them. According to Obanya (2009), Mkpa (2010), Priestly (2011), and Yates (2012), the major trends of changes in the curriculum manifest as global developments which now have significant influence on national and regional curriculum activities. There is an increased emphasis on skills and dispositions that are relevant to lifelong learning, employment, social participation, and creativity, educational content and teaching-learning materials now appear to be more functional, diversified, and operational in nature. Movement is now towards information and communication technology, low-cost, portable hand held devices for students' use that can be connected through global networks and tailored for specific tasks or applications. This advancement in technology is leading to a multitude of approaches that cater for the needs of learners worldwide, and there is an emphasis on the need for teachers to use differentiated curriculum, multiple learning styles and engage in transformational teaching. Some global trends in education are:

1. The use of technology and integration

Technology will not only enhance education; it will drive learning of all kinds. The explosion of technology over the past two decades has not left the education sector behind. Computers and the internet have changed how students can not only access information but even take classes themselves. The growth of technological capabilities means that a variety of media and learning-support tools now exist to help students receive a high-quality education through the Internet (Eaton, 2010). This trend presents a number of benefits and drawbacks for teachers and institutions that want to continue to offer their students the rigorous education they need to thrive.

Technology, for example, may not encourage students to learn soft skills. They might not have the built-in opportunities to engage with their fellow students, the way they might in traditional-style classrooms. For example, opportunities for leadership on group projects will not occur as organically as they once did. The online platform may also force teachers to change how they teach. They might find it challenging to change how they approach lesson plans and to ensure that the students remain engaged even while they cannot see the instructor in person.

Fortunately, the advent of the online classroom and technology-infused instruction also offers a wealth of opportunities for instructors and their institutions. Many teachers immediately notice the greater flexibility they can offer in their learning schedule.

Platforms may offer students the opportunities to watch lectures live or watch recorded versions later. Teachers can appreciate this benefit for students.

The online nature of these courses may also enhance the ability of teachers to offer accommodations for different styles of learning. Advanced students may receive additional learning resources and challenges to encourage themselves to go deeper into the material without interrupting the flow of the rest of the class.

Learning management systems can also make it easier for teachers to track how their students progress through the course. They can see how their students have engaged with the broadcast and recorded classes, therefore, they have a more efficient tracking system that allows them to provide more timely coaching as needed (Eaton, 2010).

2. *Expansion of mobile technology*

Technology will become increasingly mobile, meaning that opportunities for learning will – and already do – exist everywhere, all the time. Learning would not be confined to the four walls of a classroom. The growth of technological capabilities means that a plethora of media and learning-support tools are here to help students receive a high-quality education online.

The advent of the digital classroom and technology-infused instruction on platforms offers opportunities for teachers to make use of discussion boards, video chats, audio and video feedback on assignments, and other tools provided in most learning management systems. The online nature of these courses has improved the ability of teachers to use different styles of learning (Eaton, 2010).

3. *Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom*

Artificial intelligence and augmented reality, when added to the classroom, creates a different dynamic around learning and outcomes. Ideally, it can become more fun, engaging and experimental. These technologies permit students to “get out” of their classrooms and explore possibilities from a distance. Instead of having access only to new and innovative concepts through textbooks, students will be able to experience them through evolved interactions and virtual spaces.

The presence of technology in classrooms has grown phenomenally in the last decade, promoting student learning in and out of the classroom, while preparing them for their careers. As we enter a new decade, these technologies will continue to expand the concept of student learning, with integrated and interactive learning experiences facilitated by digital technology (Eaton, 2010).

4. *Soft Skill Training*

Critical thinking, problem-solving, people management, and creativity will continue to be the most preferred skills in the workplace. Employers want to see emerging professionals make hard decisions and showcase their leadership abilities.

The institutions, school boards, and individual teachers that uncover quality formulas for encouraging the development of these skills and making students more employable will have a competitive advantage in preparing students for their respective pathways (Eaton, 2010).

5. Asset-based approaches to evaluation

At the classroom level (through the use of portfolios), at the regional or national scale (through the use of benchmarks) and on a multi-national or international level (through the use of large-scale frameworks) (Eaton, 2010).

6. Increased creativity

Knowledge will be created and co-created, not simply "imparted" by teachers. Students are not just taking in facts; they are creating new knowledge. As digital classrooms have grown, it has also changed how teachers relate to their students in the classroom. Teachers have now become the facilitators of education. They are evolving into a position where they help students understand how to learn how to love learning, and how to uncover and understand the information they find (Eaton, 2010).

Learning has become easily accessible and convenient, and modern technology has been crucial in that development. Students have been able to establish virtual connections with one another and continue their studies.

7. Global Approaches to Learning: shared interests, curiosity and a hunger for learning are driving us to reach beyond our own borders (Eaton, 2010).

8. Global Mobility: Teachers and students are experiencing more of the world, more often, and starting at a younger age (Eaton, 2010).

9. Borderless Education: The barrier of geography is being transcended by technology, creativity and a desire to "go global" (Eaton, 2010).

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing, we have seen how the study of the history of education and education could shape and influence global trends in education and educational management. Most importantly, the paper has discussed the implication of studying the history of education in Nigeria which in precise terms includes:

- a) Knowledge of the major trends in the development of education in Nigeria.
- b) Knowledge of past educational statistics for future planning
- c) Knowledge of past policies, codes and ordinances in Nigeria.
- d) Insight into the complicated procedures through which changes in education are brought about etc.

In view of this, it can be concluded that the significance of studying the history of education cannot be overemphasized especially when one considers the fact that educational management has to do with the study of the past events in education, and comparing them with the present happenings in order to logically and rationally plan for the future of educational development.

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