



# Nigerian Education in Digital Age





# *Revitalizing* **Nigerian Education in Digital Age**

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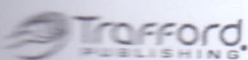
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## Schooled to Work and Schooled to Know, Where does Nigerian Educational System Fall?

Igwe, R. O.  
and  
Uzoka, E. N.

### Introduction

Education is a means of inducting people into the society where they come and preparing them for life (Igwe, 2007). It forms the bedrock of development in any nation. Hence, one cannot separate the school from the social group in which it is planted.

The school can be seen as a social agency designed to impart skills and knowledge. As Olaitan and Ali (1997) pointed out, it seeks to develop in the pupils the skills, knowledge, understanding, attitude, value patterns, and ways of behaving and living by the social group. What goes on in school is what is referred to as schooling. Schooling is the process of acquiring skills, knowledge, and change in attitude through teaching by giving instructions in a systematic and disciplined way and learning. The curriculum to the school is like the tyres on which vehicles run. It is the input, the drive, that every school makes use of in carrying out the process of schooling. It carries the amount of learning experiences that could develop the adult world (work life).

In the same vein, work can be seen as a paid employment at a job, which requires mental or physical effort or activity requiring skills. In a nutshell, work is life; it is more than a job; it is activity involving mental and physical effort carried out in order to achieve a purpose or result. According to Kjerulf (2010), there is no difference between work and personal life. Work



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provides a perfect bubble in which people invest hopes for perfection. It gives a sense of mastery and puts food on the table.

Curriculum is the mainstay of all school activities. Therefore the curriculum determines the quality of life and work after school. As observed by Kliebard (1999), education should relate to work, and to buttress this, he brought the concept of vocationalism to the field of curriculum. The question that readily comes to mind here is whether there is a relationship between school and work.

In an ideal situation, there should be a very close relationship between school and work. Bobbit (1918) affirmed that there is a relationship between school and the so-called adult world (work life). He believed that schools need curriculum that leads directly to participating in the world of work. Effectiveness, efficiency, and economy are crucial concepts for the curriculum makers. It must, therefore, prepare students for tasks in the adult world.

Dewey in Pinar et al. (1995) insisted that curriculum should focus on life itself and activities that serve social needs. In supporting this view, Childs (1995) in Afe (2001) asserted that knowing is linked to activity and stressed the need for skills, experiences for one to be developed, going to the fields and taking trips to various work units are all parts of the curriculum, but in addition, instructions and learning activities should be organised around work units. In the same vein, Igwe and Ihemebirim (2009) opined that the essence of productive education (schooling) and employment is that an educated person should be equipped with the necessary potentials to adjust to life and provide satisfaction to oneself.

However, the system of education in Nigeria has been adjudged to be more of academic and less emphasis on practical. In Nairaland Forum (2005), they pronounced that the Nigerian educational system is purely academic, demanding that, everyone ends up in the university and the less fortunate, the polytechnic.

They further opined that the system is not created to cater for crafts like auto-mechanics, plumbers, painter, etc. and all those technical jobs that need a bit of education.

Suffice it to say there have been questions in the education received in schools. It seems that schooling has not been related to work life. There is high unemployment among graduates in general, and this is an indication

of the lack of confidence by those in business and industry in the training received in schools. The solution is further aggravated by the general perception of lowered standards and quality in education. From the writer's observation, organizations and institutions have learnt to rely on expatriates, even when local labour is employed and a lot of training is put in place for the employees. This, however, cannot continue. Although education has been at the top of the priority lists of some previous Nigerian governments, the education system is still far from being ready for the challenges of the new century.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study attempts to find out if there exists a relationship between school and work in Nigerian schools, ascertain the extent to which school activities are related to work in Nigerian educational system. The study went further to identify some challenges hindering it and possible solution.

### **Methodology**

The population for this study is all students of the faculty of education, University of Lagos. A total of about three hundred students formed the sample for the study. The subjects were stratified (male, female, and department) and randomly selected.

The study involved the use of questionnaire constructed by the researchers. It was divided into two sections: the first section consisted of bio-data of the respondents, and the second section contained issues related to the subject of the study. The respondents were to indicate their opinions on the statements, by choosing from the alternatives of agreed or disagreed with the statements.

An item analysis in the questionnaire was carried out. The questionnaire was subjected to scrutiny by research experts from the University of Lagos for face and content validity. It was also pilot-tested to ensure internal consistency. Frequency counts and percentage statistics were used to analyze the data.

### **Results and Discussion**

*Research question 1:* Is there a relationship between school and work in Nigerian schools?



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*Research question 1* attempts to find out if there exists a relationship between school and work in Nigerian schools.

Majority of the respondents, that is, approximately 94% agreed that school should be related to work. This buttresses Bobbit (1918) that there is a relationship between school and the so-called adult world. He believed that school needs curriculum that leads directly to participating in the world of work. In the same vein, Kliebard (1999) insisted on the need for education to relate to work, only then will the curriculum be useful after school. However, a few of the respondents disagreed that schools should not be related to work.

Dewey in Pinar et al. (1995) insisted that curriculum should focus on life itself and activities that serve social needs. Active occupation that is manual skills and technical efficiency that will bring immediate satisfaction in work should be of importance to education. Based on this, Dewey in Pinar et al. (1995) conducted experiments known as "Dewey school," whereby, the curriculum was carried out in both classrooms and the community. The goal of education is to develop in students the power to thrive in the world. Thus, the school activities should be organised around four basic fields: science, industry, aesthetics, and civics with science being the central subject (Pinar et al., 1995). Furthermore, Childs (1995) In Afe (2001) was of the view that "knowing is linked to activity". He pointed out that experience is considered to be an active process of development and undergoing it. He stressed the need for "skills" and experiences to be developed; it involves going to the field, taking trips to various work units, revealing that although the subjects are still part of the curriculum, instructions and learning activities should be organised around work units.

Subscribing to this, Igwe and Ihemebirim (2009) opined that the essence of productive education and empowerment means that an educated person should be equipped with the necessary potentials to adjust to life and provide satisfaction to himself. The person should be employable and marketable; this would empower him to open avenues for creating wealth and social reconstruction. This is because, every human effort is geared towards problem-solving and living a fulfilled life.

*Research question 2:* To what extent is school activities related to work in Nigerian educational system?

As regards the extent to which school activities are related to work in Nigerian educational system, majority of the respondents opined that there is a disconnection between what is done in the school and what is obtained in the labour market. Investigation reveals that school and work life have been parallel and the system of education is mainly academic-laden. This is agreed with the Nairaland Forum (2005) that the Nigerian education system is purely academic, demanding that everyone ends up in the university and the less fortunate, in the polytechnics. This scenario does not cater for pre-vocational and vocational courses. For instance, crafts like auto-mechanics, plumber, painters, etc. that promotes self-reliance are not given prominence. Hence, the high level of unemployment, socio vices vis-à-vis armed robbery, kidnapping, moral decadence, Boko Haram issue, and other unethical vices like corruption, money laundering, etc. are perpetrated in the country.

*Research question 3:* What are the challenges hindering its relatedness to work?

The findings of the study revealed that inadequate facilities and poor curriculum have been adjudged to be responsible for the disconnection between the school and the world of work. This is in line with Ahiakwo's (1996) observation that the issue is not about schools lacking plans to relate to work but the inadequate delivery of instructions affected by the poor quality of training facilities has been the bane. The so-called vocational schools are not well-equipped to enhance acquisition of skills. Other factors adduced by the respondents are limited number of qualified teachers, population explosions in public schools, focusing on quantity and less on quality, while the private schools focus on profit maximization. According to Moja (2000), the school system has expanded rapidly in terms of the number of institutions established, and the number of students admitted in schools at all levels.

*Research question 4:* How can the identified problems be ameliorated?

In the same vein, Fafunwa (2001) opined that in the present education process, much attention has been on school programmes with little or no attention on what goes on outside the school. In order to ameliorate some of the challenges identified in the study, the researchers proposed some possible solutions. The government and stakeholders should make haste to avert the situation of having too much of schooling and too



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little education. This scenario calls for a review of the school curriculum at all levels of education in Nigeria. Thus, curriculum planners must be qualified and conversant with the demands of the society. Furthermore, school activities must extend to the workplaces. This is in line with Earl et al. (2006) that schools and classrooms should no longer be the central learning hubs they are today. There is need to start thinking about how to organise learning in communities and not limit it within the boundaries of classrooms and school buildings. Huebner (1975) pointed out that educational environment and activities in the school are symbolic of what man is today and what he wants to be tomorrow.

Childs in Pinar et al. (1995) pointed out that knowing is linked to activity, and experience is considered to be an active process of development and undergoing it. This confirms the need to create a balance between academic and its application, still, of utmost importance is the adequate funding of education. Finance is the bedrock for proper funding of education because it is required to provide adequate facilities and infrastructures which will enhance effective teaching and learning. Closely related to the issue of funding is the need for the training and retraining of teachers. Uzoka (2009) observed that training and retraining of teachers must be organised for engagement and delivery of learning experiences; especially with the new challenges springing up in education, it is absolutely necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Conclusively, there is need to link what goes on in the school to what goes on outside the school environment. In other words, to bring about improvement in the educational system, it becomes imperative to ensure that what is done in the school must be highly related to the world of work, since it is the only way to close the gap between the school and the work life. In other words, to promote self-reliance in the country, active occupation, that is, manual skills, and technical efficiency that will bring immediate satisfaction in work should be of importance to education.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. There is need for urgent and immediate review of the school curriculum to make education more useful to meet the changing demands of the present-day society.
2. Adequate funding of education at all levels is very crucial in order to enhance effective teaching and learning.
3. Training and retraining of teachers is of utmost importance because teachers are the active agents for the realization of the goals of education.
4. The ethics of work must be incorporated into the curriculum and institution, and schools should have a partnership in the running of educational activities and programmes.

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