

# School Pedagogical Variables and National Development: Exploring the Connection

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## **Abstract**

*This paper emphasizes the contributions of school pedagogy to national development. It stresses the fact that a nation develops in relation to its achievements in education with reference to school pedagogical variables such as instructional materials and educational facilities. In as much as the attainment of education goals and national development cannot be divorced from one another, the form, art and practice of teaching-learning activities is important to human capital development and societal development. Hence, this paper explains the state of school pedagogical variables and the need to improve on its condition in Nigerian secondary schools. The study therefore suggests, among other, an improved funding for education to enhance adequate supply of educational facilities and instructional materials, deliberate efforts at practical teaching by teachers, good maintenance culture by schools, seminars and workshops to improve teacher competences.*

**Keywords:** school pedagogical variables, national development, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

School pedagogy is a term used to describe the knowledge and practice of teaching-learning activities within the school. It is the interaction between teachers, students, the learning environment and the learning tasks as well. School pedagogical variables could be perceived as the instructional approaches implemented in the classroom, the instructional and educational materials as well as the school and learning environment. National development is a process by which a nation improves the social, economic and political well-being of its people. It is an all-encompassing process of developing consciousness and creating awareness of the need to attain self-reliance in all spheres of politics, social, cultural and economic concerns of the nation.

The effectiveness of the teacher, the school and its success in achieving its set goals are likely attached to the school pedagogical variables. Instructional materials can support student learning and increase their success. They significantly increase students achievement by allowing the student to explore knowledge independently. Students are able to bring out the relationships between concepts and ideas especially for students who are more visually oriented. Learning materials can as well add important structure to lesson planning and delivery of instruction. It can assist teachers in an important professional duty in terms of differentiation of instruction whereby lessons can be tailored towards different learning styles and capacities within the classroom.

In the same vein, educational facilities are vital to teaching learning process. They enhance and allow the learning process to run smoothly. A well ventilated and conducive classroom will arouse the interest of the students, a modern library with relevant textbooks will cultivate in students reading culture while a well equipped laboratory will allow students to be exposed to the practical context of the lessons taught. This makes teaching and learning to be more real, interesting and challenging.

Non-availability of instructional materials and educational facilities could negatively affect the morale of students. This could

make students to be distracted, discouraged and uninterested in learning process. since the interest of the students is low, they are going to have low level of understanding, inability to assimilate and failure on the part of the teacher to positively impact knowledge to the students. In this type of scenario, the attainment of educational goals and national development might be a mirage.

This paper shall be discussed under the following sub-headings:

- ✓ Concept of school
- ✓ Concept of school pedagogical variables
- ✓ Concept of national development
- ✓ The synergy between school pedagogical variables and national development
- ✓ Theoretical framework
- ✓ Conceptual framework

### **Concept of School**

School is an institution at which instruction is given in particular for a specific duration with rules and regulations, principles and policy guiding the learning environment. School serves as a Centre where knowledge and academic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic are transmitted to students. A school is an institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers (Onyeji, 2014). Most countries have systems of formal education, which is commonly compulsory. In the school system, students' progress through a series of school programmes is monitored. The school provides individuals with the skills to function in everyday society. It allows students to learn necessary concepts and skills, at the same time enables them to interact with other students socially, academically and emotionally (Malik, 2017).

Erin (2017) categorizes the functions of school into both manifest and latent functions. A manifest function is a function that people believe is the obvious purpose of school and education. It includes among others socialization and cultural transmission functions. Socialization is a process by which individuals acquire a

personal identity and learn the knowledge, language and social skills required to interact with others. Students do not only learn from the academic curriculum prepared by teachers and administrators, they equally learn from social rules and expectations from individuals within the school system.

The role of cultural transmission is also saddled with the school. It transmits the norms and the values of the society to new generation. Schools help to mold a diverse population into one society with a shared national identity and prepare future generations for their citizenship roles. Students are taught about laws and our political way of life through civic lessons, and they are taught patriotism through activities such as saluting the pledge of allegiance and the stories of the nation's heroes and exploits. The latent function is a function that people are not aware and usually is not intended.

The school inculcates civic and social responsibility. It helps to make rising generation to understand its rights and duties as citizens of a democratic country. The school provides the premises for the foundation of mankind civilization. No national reconstruction and development is possible without the involvement of the school system. The school holds the responsibility of raising the future of the nation by instilling various skills and competency which are indispensable to nation building in the younger generation (Adefemi, 2017). The school prepares great leaders who turn out to be nation builders.

### **Concept of School Pedagogical Variables**

The term school pedagogical variables are a varied and an all-encompassing one. It comprises among other several other variables, instructional materials as well as educational facilities. Instructional materials are the tools used in educational lessons, which enhance active learning and assessment (Angela, 2016). They are materials which provide teaching-learning activities with basic aids which facilitate easy understanding and comprehension of students. Basically, any resource a teacher uses to help him teach his students is an instructional material. Jackson (2015) identifies three categories of

instructional materials as traditional resources, graphic organizers and teacher-made resources.

The traditional resources include textbooks and workbooks used in the classroom. For example, language classrooms always have literature textbooks, writing textbooks and even vocabulary and spelling workbooks. In addition, traditional resources also include any supplementary reading material, like novels or poems outside the textbook. These materials help to introduce new concepts to students, and when mastery is shown on a basic level, a teacher can introduce a more challenging material related to that concept. Graphic organizers are in form of any visual representation of information. Diagrams, charts, tables, flow charts and graphs are all examples of graphic organizers. All these allow students to physically see relationships between ideas. This is imperative for learning especially for students who are more visually oriented. Teacher-made resources include any resource a teacher creates to facilitate learning. It involves handouts, worksheets, texts, quizzes and projects. In recent times, the use of audio and visual presentation of material with the goal of improving comprehension and retention of students is receiving more emphasis (Onwe, 2012).

It is evident that learning is more effective when sensory experiences are stimulated. These include pictures, slides, radios, videos, filmstrips, project opaque materials, and tape among others. The concept of audiovisual aids is not new and can be traced back to seventeenth century when John Amos Cornenius (1592-1670), a Bohemian educator, introduced pictures as teaching aids in his book *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* that was illustrated with 150 drawings of everyday life (Jackly, 2014). Similarly, Jean Rousseau (1712-1778) and J.H. Postalozzi (1746-1827) advocated the use of visual and play materials in teaching (Kingsley, 2015). Audiovisual aids were also widely used during and after World War II by the armed service. In the current digital world, audiovisual aids have grown exponentially with several multimedia such as educational DVDs, YouTube, educational series and other online materials (Onwe, 2012). The goal of audio-

visual aids is to enhance teachers' ability to present the lesson in simple, effective and easy to understand for the students.

The relevant of instructional facilities as school pedagogy notwithstanding the state of instructional facilities in Nigerian secondary schools is nothing to write home about. In most schools, the supply of these facilities are lacking, where they are available, they are grossly inadequately supplied, or in a poor and unusable condition. Adefemi (2017) discover that most teachers in Nigeria go to classes to teach students virtually without instructional aids. Teachers therefore teach in abstract, as the concepts taught are not presented or brought into the realities of the students. The lessons are dry, uninteresting and boring to the students; even the entire school system seems to be a waste of time and not worthwhile to the students. In the light of this, only few serious students struggle and strive to memorize or cram concepts taught just to pass examinations, while a large proportion of the students perform poorly academically especially in external examinations. In a situation where students are not positively impacted or influenced in the teaching learning process, obviously, the attainment of educational goals as well as national development might be far from being reached.

Educational facilities are the facilities provided to students, so that they can use every opportunity to develop full potential. It refers to the entire environment of the school or an organization. It also connotes both the physical and material resources available to students and teachers in the school to facilitate the learning and teaching process. The classrooms, the libraries and the laboratories for sciences are the three main areas of facilities identified in the system or environment (Onyeji, 2014). In spite of the important place occupied by school facilities in enhancing teaching-learning activities in schools, the state of such facilities in many Nigerian schools is highly discouraging.

The shortage of classrooms in many schools especially in public schools where the best supposed to be found being the government owned schools is so acute that more than sixty students occupy classrooms that are meant for about thirty students according to the

UNESCO recommendation. In most public schools, based on observation as teachers and experience gathered during teaching practice supervision, classroom furniture and other classroom facilities are grossly inadequate. Where classes are overcrowded, neither the teacher nor the student can move freely as expected in secondary classrooms in Nigeria. This is why many teachers failed to give assignments to such large number of students regularly which in turn has negatively affected the outputs of educational school system as well as the much desired national development. In such overcrowded classroom, the experience amidst the students will be 'survival of the fittest' while the low learners might not be taken care off.

Library facilities in most Nigerian schools may be described as unsatisfactory. Library without current books and not even conducive for reading comparing with what a 21st century educational library should look like. In fact, Nigerian schools may be said to be suffering from an acute shortage of supply of library facilities. Most of the books in the library are not current but rather outdated and are not in conformity with the new curriculum and subjects taught in school. This situation depicts that students are discouraged from cultivating reading culture which is highly indispensable to writing skills, research and national development.

A close look at the physical environment of many schools in Nigeria today presents a sorry sight with horrible dilapidated buildings, dingy classrooms devoid of seats and writing tables, and lack of or nonfunctional toilets, among others. This type of physical environment is not conducive for learning. Mennhein and Steward (2002) as cited in Obimah (2018) had identified overcrowded classrooms as one of the causes of poor school performance and examination malpractices.

On science laboratories, Olanrewaju (2014) claims that only few schools have science laboratories which are well equipped to carry out scientific experiments. A good number of schools teach some science subjects such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology as if they are non-science subjects without laboratory. This implies that teachers resort to the theoretical science without the practical demonstration of the subject-matter. The contention is that the nation

has been unfair not only to the students but to her, as this inhibits national development. This is because no nation can develop technology through theoretical teaching of science subjects and under poor pedagogical of poor educational variables.

### **Concept of National Development**

Development is the process of expansion which is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation. It could be an ongoing process or being developed. Development means different things to different fields of study or people. It is just an event, incidence, occurrence, happening, or circumstance that constitutes a new stage in a changing situation (Oredein, 2016). Following Gboyega (2003), it is an idea that embodies all attempts to improve those conditions of human existence in all ramifications. There are different types of development; these include human capital development and national development, with each having its indicators. Development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation (Lawal and Oluwatoyin, 2011). It represents transformation from a primitive level (village level) to a civilized (national level). Economically, it is referred to as an increase in the earnings of a nation and consequent increase in its foreign exchange earnings. Also, it can be seen as an increase in the standard and quality of lives of the people at all levels of the development plan. In intellectual circles, development has a multi-angular definition, though this multi-angularity converges towards same point (Ojo and Ojo, 2012).

National development could be major development or local development. National development is the ability of a nation to improve the lives of its citizens. National development goes beyond having plenty of money; it embraces all aspects of social behaviour such as the establishment of law and order, resourcefulness in business dealings, honesty in business relations, sophistication, broadmindedness, familiarity with science, modern technology and mechanical gadgets and overall positive national outlook (Ojo and Ojo, 2012). Although, it might not be so easy to determine which country is developed and which is less developed, yet a country is known to be



developed when she is able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry. Being that as it may, it is somewhat easier to say which country is richer and which is poorer. Also, it is easier to say that a country is developing like Nigeria, thus, Nigeria is a developing nation. Nigeria has been battling with the problems of development in spite of the huge human, material and natural resources in her possession (Oredein, 2016).

### **The Synergy between School Pedagogical Variables and National Development**

The term national development is very comprehensive. It includes all aspects of life in an individual and the nation at large. It is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and development of individuals. It is the total effect of all citizens' forces and addition to the stock of physical, human resources and knowledge and skill (Hilderbrandt, 2015). It embraces social, economic, political, cultural and religious advancement in a country. The total national development of a nation largely depends on the school system in operation, and essentially on the school system pedagogy. This is because the entire wealth of the nation greatly lies on the kind and form of school pedagogy, as all human resources in the different walks of life either in sciences or humanities are all products of the school system.

The school system liberates man and the society at large from ignorance and superstition. It acts as the key to unlock the development of individuals and national potentials for the enhancement of social, political and economic developments. The entire structure of the school is geared towards equipping students with the skills required to occupy significant positions in order to improve the society. At various levels, the school through its pedagogies educates future leaders and develop high technical and entrepreneurial capacities needed for economic growth and development.

The school pedagogy within the education system is a bridge to the future. It serves as agents and means of human capital formation

and manpower development that produces the wheel to acquisition of skills and knowledge required for national development. It is also a known fact that a nation's ability to develop the skills, knowledge and competences of its members is crucial and fundamentally linked to the school pedagogy. Ogbodo and Nwaoku (2007) as cited in Sanubi and Akpotu (2015) reported that the primary determinant of a country's standard of living is how well it succeed in developing and utilizing the skills, knowledge, health and habits of its population, and that, appropriate and effective school pedagogy can be neglected only at a country's peril. Igbuzor (2006) indicates that a well functioning school facilities and effective school pedagogy are vital to human capital development and consequently national development.

Apparently, Nigeria had witnessed a series of educational system since 1914. Immediately after independence in Nigeria, there was a lot of shortcomings in the educational system as it was based on the British educational system which did not pave way for yearning needs, interests and aspirations of the Nigerian society. This gave birth to the 1969 curriculum conference that focused on Nigerian children in Nigerian society with national policies on education 1977, 1981|1998, 2004 and 2013 respectively, all with the prime purpose of improving the quality of Nigerian education (Adeyemi, 2012).

New fields of interdisciplinary study and associated professional networks are recently emerging to replace or supplement traditional subjects as a way of organizing formal study programs (Gardner, 2014). Some of these subjects are inculcated in the school curriculum right from the secondary school level and at the tertiary institution where students can specialize. Examples of these are Entrepreneurial Educational Studies and Vocational Education Studies. Supporters of such interdisciplinary curricular approach argue that the focus on separate subject disciplines and standardized international comparisons of educational performance in core subjects divert the attention of policy makers and practitioners from both the goal of education and national development (Yolkman, 2015). In particular, it was argued that the traditional curriculum is not broad or future-oriented enough and fails to orientate the next generation towards

evidence of urgent and diverse but interrelated threats to human society.

If the desired national goal and development is to be achieved, then education and the school system must succeed. Also, the indispensable school pedagogical factors must be given a due consideration. The good news is that, all education stakeholders, that is, the government, education policy makers, the teachers, etc. are to a very large extent conscious of this fact. Hence, various education policies which align with this have equally been formulated at the time or the other. The bad news however, is the poor implementation process which has characterized most of our educational policies in Nigeria.

Poor implementation of educational policies is essentially caused by inadequate funds which have resulted into poor supply of educational facilities in schools. Also, inadequate personnel especially vocational and technical oriented teachers and again failure to involve teachers in education policy formulation process has also accounted for the implementation of education policies in Nigeria. Teachers interprets and implements the designed curriculum, but sad to mention that the gap between policy formulation, teacher education and orientation programs as well as the classroom remain large. The present situation in the school system is therefore not only serving as a hindrance to the attainment of educational goals but as well creating a wide gap between the school system and expected national development.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Formal Organization Theory is adopted in this study. The proponents of this theory include: Luther Gulick, Henri Fayol, Lindel Uriwick, J.D Money, A.C. Reiley and others. Henri Fayol is regarded as the most prominent enunciator of this theory. The theory is of the view that an organization is goal oriented and in order for it to accomplish its goals, certain tasks must be undertaken and these tasks can be organized as to accomplish efficiently the organization goals (Onwe, 2012).

According to Henri Fayol, administration comprises five elements, which include: forecasting and planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. Onwe (2012) explained further that to administer is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and control. Thus, administration is neither an exclusive privilege nor a particular responsibility of the head or senior members of the organization. It is an activity spread, like all other activities between head and members of the corporate body.

Luther Ctulick as cited in Onwe (2012) summed up the principles of organization in the acronym POSDCORB which stands for Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting. This theory reveals the reason for the poor implementation of educational and pedagogical policies in Nigerian schools.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Human capital is recognized as a key condition for better national development. The school system is the heart of human capital development. This is because the school pedagogies play an important role in impacting and preparing the next generation towards promoting and engaging actions for an ecologically sustainable future (Angela, 2015). It is equally a known fact that the skills and qualities required by the next generation for both educational goal attainment and national development are very much the same. These skills are undoubtedly acquired through appropriate school pedagogy factors which enhance teaching-learning activities and enables teachers to raise future leaders.

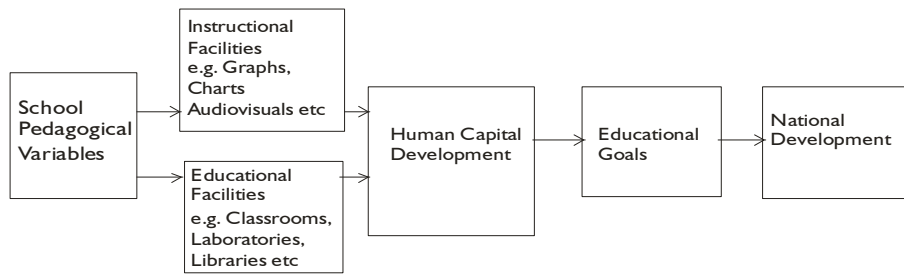


Fig 1: Akinnda and Oredein, 2018.

### Summary

This study focused on school pedagogical variables with reference to instructional materials and educational facilities as a means of developing a nation's potentials in terms of human capital formation and manpower development. Emphasis was placed on the effectiveness of the school system in attainment of the national goals and in particular the appropriateness of the school pedagogy. Students are adequately equipped and prepared to meet the challenges of both socio-economic, political and technological developments of the nation only when they are positively impacted through a well structured and an encompassing school process which is endowed with the right and adequate pedagogies. They turn out to be matured, nurtured, responsible and creative individuals who assumes leadership positions in divers sphere of life. They could as well be invaluable assets with great minds and wealth of knowledge which they could translate to building a great and independent nation. However, when school pedagogies are ineffective, a great vacuum is created in national development. The products of the school system are uninformed and misguided with a low morale. Societal expectations equally fails as these folk of people tends to be liabilities to the nation rather than being nation builders. It is therefore imperative for the government to always ensure adequate and effective school pedagogies.

## **Conclusion**

The school system as stated earlier is the wheel that drives any economy to the achievement of educational and national development goals as a whole. Nigerian youths as future leaders and nation builders need to be properly educated and trained to be efficient. Unfortunately, the poor state of school pedagogies in terms of educational facilities and instructional materials is adversely affecting the school system. This in turn has affected the products of the school system which turned out to be half-backed, with a blurred vision. The implication of this is that the youths are incapacitated in achieving both educational goals and national development goals.

## **Way Forward**

In order to attain national development in the society through school pedagogies, the following way forward are hereby proffered:

1. The government should allocate enough funds in her budget for the provision of educational facilities and instructional materials which will build up the skills of the students technically and vocationally.
2. Practical teaching should be emphasized by the teachers rather than the theoretical method of teaching. The teacher should carefully plan the lessons to make concept taught simple, clear and understandable.
3. Schools should maintain a good maintenance culture. Head teachers and school principals should ensure that the educational materials and instructional facilities available are properly put in a functional and useable state.
4. Seminars and workshops should occasionally be organized in various schools.
5. Students should be sensitized and trained through such seminars on the need for them to be equipped in various vocational and technical subjects and become useful members of their society.

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