

ANALYSIS OF TOPICAL EDUCATIONAL ISSUES DOMINATING ACADEMIC CONFERENCES, SUMMITS, WORKSHOPS AND MEDIA DISCUSSIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In an era defined by the rapid global educational development, education has emerged as a powerful tool for public engagement, awareness creation, transformation and human development but Nigerian education system is facing a number of problems that undermine its progress. Evidently there is governments' negligence of the education sector, the situation that exacerbating existing societal problems and invariably making Nigeria as a dynamic growth market for international outbound studies. This is largely due to the unmet demand of many students and failure to deliver the resources that accommodate the demand. The methodology of this paper sentenced on ideas, books, journals and other relevant documents it discusses and analyses topical issues dominating the Nigerian educational events, such as: quality education and learning outcomes, insecurity and its impact on education, out-of-school children crisis, brain drain and emigration of academic talent, technological integration and digital gap, policy inconsistency and political intervention, funding and budget allocation, curriculum reform, inclusive education and gender disparities, adaptive pedagogy in the 21st century, morality and discipline in education, innovation and vocational education, sustainable development, artificial intelligence in education, and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. Part of the suggestions, it offers that from the dumped various expert committees' reports and recommendations on education governments shall search the best for implementation in the best interest of country; and through fostering partnership among governments and education stakeholders is among others means to drive meaningful change in Nigerian education.

Keywords: Academic, Education, Conference, Workshops, Media

Introduction

Education in its broadest sense provides the backdrop against which development acquires its meaning, Nigerian governments are not ignorant about the critical need for education as a greatest tool for national development, but none of the Nigerian components of education sector is free from problems. These problems are the issues dominating academic conferences, summits, workshops, media discussions etc. seeking for concrete solutions for better. This paper focuses on specific issues dominating the Nigerian educational events, such as: quality education, insecurity, out-of-school children etc.

Meaning of Education

Education, formal, informal or semi-formal, exists in every society; and is regarded as the key that unlocks the potentials of an individual, nations and all other forms of creativity and powers in the world. Saleh (2022) opined that education is the light, without which the world would be in darkness. Also affirmed by Jiboyewa (2022) that education is a moral undertaking, it is concerned with the development of human beings and human interaction. It is the basis for modernization, scientific and technological breakthroughs, which have made all nations of the world listed education as priority.

Analysis of Topical Issues Concerning the Nigerian Educational System

Any discussion of the Nigerian education sector invariably focuses on the profound challenges, and a mountain of problems, which together are said to be reflective of “a crisis” in the sector, threatening its collapse (Jega, 2023). Nevertheless, across summits, workshops, mass media, and conferences in Nigeria, there is a strong consensus on the urgent need to revamp the educational system through better funding, policy reform, security, and inclusive practices. While efforts are being made, implementation and accountability remain significant challenges. A detailed analysis of the most pressing problems is given below:

1. Quality Education and Learning Outcomes: There is growing concern about the declining quality of education at all levels—primary, secondary, and tertiary. Students often graduate without acquiring the necessary skills for the job market. The term quality education defined by the UN (United Nation) which implies the equitable access of education that promotes the life-long opportunities for all and must fulfill the 21st century learners’ need (United Nation, 2020). It is an education in which its curriculum is of great quality and designed to impart relevant skills, knowledge enabling students to gain academic competencies for socio-economic survival; such that is well designed to provide the recipient with an all-round development of skills and potential for good learning outcome.

The topical issues are: poor curriculum design and implementation, insufficient teacher training, capacity-building programs, overcrowd classes, access to quality education for all, the 2025 mass failure in UTME examination, special or miracle examination centers, decline of educational standard, introducing computer base in senior secondary certificate examination etc.

Yet Nigerian education is seriously declining and is heading towards collapsing, this affects the education products in the labor market, the proficiency of the product which hinders the academic pursuit negatively. Government shall transform education through partnerships with stakeholders and civil society to drive meaningful change in tackling education decline and ensure quality education through a renewed focus on learning outcomes and their enablers, including learning in a conducive environment, support by well-trained teachers and structured content with necessary infrastructure and resources.

2. Insecurity: Widespread insecurity—including insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, and general kidnappings—has severely disrupted academic activities. Insecurity is another barrier to education, bandits, terrorists and gunmen that kill and kidnap many students and teachers at will are denying them access to schools, the issue that leads to the total closure of schools in many states in the North especially during the rampant kidnapping of school children, students and teachers. Associated Press (2024) stated that at least 1,400 students have been kidnapped from Nigerian schools since 2014. The situation is made worse by increasing attacks on schools, particularly in the northern part of the country. It is clear that abductions in schools have led to the closure of many schools.

The topical issues are how insecurity reduced school enrollment in the conflict zones, heighten and proactive schools security measures, school safety protocols and trauma-informed teaching strategies, the rampant and continues abductions of educators and students, school thefts etc.

Insecurity situation is made worse by increasing attacks on schools, particularly in the north of the country, for example, in February 2025 there was a heartbreaking tragedy unfolded in Zamfara State where Zarah Abubakar Shehu, a 21-year-old student of Federal University Gusau, died in a bandit’ camp four months after being kidnapped, despite her family paying a ransom for her release, that adds fear for sending students to school. UNICEF (2023) stated that ensuring educational provision in predominantly rural areas and the impact of insurgency in the Northeast present significant challenges. This requires governments to provide adequate security of lives and properties through constant training and retraining of all security personnel to prepare them towards challenges ahead that enable them fit in the global security competitiveness. There is no better time than now for schools managers to apply education in ensuring the schools safety and escape all factors that fuel insecurity and other criminalities.

3. Out-of-School Children Crisis: There has been unsatisfied supply of education in Nigeria, when there are over 10.5 million out-of-schools children aged 5-14 and all the efforts to ensure education for all stand abortive. Despite the fact that access to education is steady expanding across developing countries with higher enrolments figures, a number of obstacles such as poverty and hunger still keep about 20 million children, one in every five out-of-school globally is Nigerian, the country with highest number of out-of-schools' youths and children in the world (UNESCO in Muhammad, 2023).

The topical issues at stake include: *Almajiri* reforms, the new national commission of *Almajiri* and out-of-school children, child right act, stressing community-based and government interventions to improve enrollment, UBE program's effectiveness, urchins and street begging menace, juvenile delinquency, school feeding program, free education for all etc.

The phenomenon of out-of-school children in Nigeria has severe implications for the country's development and future which include: security challenges, shortage of skilled manpower workforce, bad International image and reputation for investors, high levels of illiteracy that limit their opportunities, socioeconomic challenges and increased dependency on others, and it hinder Nigeria's economic growth, social progress, and overall development. The government and stakeholders must work together to provide accessible education for all as contained in many government guidelines and documents (Abjournal, 2025).

4. Brain Drain and Emigration of Academic Talents: The mass exodus of lecturers, researchers, and students to foreign countries due to poor working conditions and insecurity. The education sector loses talented academics to other industries or countries due to poor working conditions and lack of opportunities. BScholarly (2025) added that brain drain of academics talents in Nigeria is driven by various factors and having significant implications for development, the factors are poor working condition, low remuneration, outdated resources and hazardous environment, poor infrastructures, unstable policy, insecurity, unemployment etc.

The topical issues are: how universities suffer from lack of experienced faculty, affecting research and mentorship; research funding; highest educator and learners ratios in the world; educators unions strike actions; poor remunerations, salary arrears and neglect of agreements with government; dialogue around alternative dispute resolution etc.

However, from 1999 to date there is massive brain drain in Nigerian education sectors with many qualified and experience educators abandoning teaching career for juicy political appointment, seeking election or leaving Nigeria, the remaining educators suffers from the governments' failure to meet their demands which often led to strikes that disrupt academic calendars and lower the quality of education. Teachers feel undervalued, and their work is not well recognized, leading to low morale and motivation, resulting in low job satisfaction and poor teaching effectiveness. Provide teachers with better remuneration, competitive welfare, opportunities for professional development, better working conditions to boost the qualitative education.

5. Technological Integration and Digital Gap: COVID-19 exposed the digital gap in Nigeria's education system, with most public schools unable to shift to remote learning. Technical integration in education according to Bing (2025) is the incorporation of digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning processes, which include online learning, digital resources, and multimedia content. However, Nigeria faces significant challenges in integrating technology into education; including inadequate internet connectivity, erratic electricity supply, and insufficient access to hardware, lack of necessary technical skills to effectively utilize technology, high costs associated with purchasing devices, software, and maintenance.

The topical issues are: increasing focus on EdTech, online learning platforms, ICT in education, digital infrastructure and teacher training in ICT, post Covid and preparation of future pandemic, technological

innovation and framework for transformation, internet scam and fraud, advancing education through practical skills and innovation for productivity; the role of technology in fostering employment; digital skills acquisition, imagine technologies etc.

Technological integration has the potential to increase accessibility, personalize learning, and improve engagement. Nigeria shall invest in infrastructural provision, develop digital literacy, and promote public-private partnerships to support technology integration in education to enhance learning outcomes and accessibility among learners from the diverse background and remote areas.

6. Policy Inconsistency and Political Intervention: Frequent changes in educational policies without continuity or proper evaluation, the changes invariably seen as policy change which sometimes are changes made in order to alter the political balance of power or even exercise political coercion to maneuver opponent. Aja et al., (2018) stated that, although education is generally supposed to be separated from politics but it is impossible to separate politics from education because it is understandable that every government has its own political agenda which shapes social programmes, governance structure and public institutions.

The topical issues are: shifting structure of the 6-3-3-4 system and inconsistent examination standards, evidence-based policymaking and long-term planning, governance and policy in education, better monitoring and evaluation frameworks; regional collaborations and policy frameworks, data driven policies, cashless policy in education, remote and virtual learning etc.

It is worthy to note that every level of education in Nigeria has its own fair share of these political intrigues. For example, the political decisions of some northern governors towards education are at times harmful to the educational practice, the February 2025 directives given to close all schools in Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, and Kebbi States Governments for up to five weeks during Ramadan annual fasting is negative disruption of the academic calendar, and also a setback for the futurology of education. However, even in Saudi Arabia and other Islamic States schools remain open throughout Ramadan period.

Policy contradiction disrupts the education system, making it challenging to achieve educational goals and objectives. It has negative impacts that lead to a decline in education quality, making it difficult for students to achieve their full potential. Nigeria shall ensure the stability and consistency in the education and exempt it from corruption and negative politics for better.

7. Funding and Budget Allocation: The government often allocates less than the recommended 15–20% of national budgets to education, violating UNESCO's guidelines. Muhammad and Okunade (2025) stated that funding is the biggest problem of Nigeria right from basic education sector to tertiary education, the annual budgetary allocations channeled towards education generally, has never met the benchmark set by UNESCO. Yet, from 1999 to 2025 the budget set aside for the whole education sector expenditures in Nigeria by the Federal Government is not meet the UNESCO standard.

The topical issues are: how underfunding affects infrastructure, teaching materials, staff welfare, and research; stakeholders advocate for increased investment and private-public partnerships; calls for transparent use of educational funds dominate media and policy discussions; call for the stoppage of embezzlement of funds by governments officials; inadequate instructional materials and infrastructure, especially in public schools etc.

Inadequate funding due to corruption and poor budget allocation hinders the execution of educational policies, leading to deterioration of basic infrastructure, dried-up scholarship funds, lacks of skilled and experience educators, fraud, overcrowd classes and lecture halls, outmoded teaching and learning processes, examination malpractice, deprived technology, inadequate resources, faulty and non-quality projects, compromising standards, bribery and corruption etc. Government shall increase budget

allocation to education as recommended by UNESCO and ensure transparent and accountable use of the funds.

8. Curriculum Reform: The curriculum is heavily theoretical, with limited emphasis on practical aspect. Curriculum reform shall provide the background that has informed the development of the new programmes and also gives practical guidelines as to what is expected to be done by administrators, teachers and students in the process of implementing the curriculum, which will ensure uniformity in practice across schools (Muhammad, 2024).

The topical issues are: overloading curricular; focus on curriculum reform that students could attend actively instead of a theory filled program, innovative based curricular, curriculum review, curriculum implementation, innovative curriculum design and development, curriculum rehabilitation and reformation etc.

The frequent curriculum reform leads sometimes to the outcry of poor academic performances. Good curriculum reform seeks to explore innovative pathways to decent employable oriented curricular across all system of education in Nigeria, with a focus on vocational training, and innovations that equip learners with market-relevant skills, that requires more funding, capacity training, reading materials, proper supervision and coordination among others to ensure quality instructions through the indicators of quality which include quality teachers and learners, quality curriculum content, quality instruction, and a friendly learning environment.

9. Inclusive Education and Gender Disparities: Marginalized groups (e.g., rural children, girls, children with disabilities) face systemic exclusion from quality education. Brookings (2025) states that inclusive education aims to provide equal access to education for all students regardless of their background, ability, or gender; Of the 10.5 million children not attending school in Nigeria, 6.34 million are girls. Girls' significant barriers to education are: child marriage, poverty, systemic gender biases etc. In Northern Nigeria, less than half of all girls attend school, and literacy rates among women are significantly lower than those of men.

The topical issues are: girl-child education gap; special needs education; inclusive education policies; effect of gender on students' performance in Nigerian schools, gender dynamics and sensitiveness among Nigerian diverse cultures, women education and participation; gender base violence, women rights and greater inclusion; inclusive education in Nigeria etc.

However, Nigeria is still facing significant challenges in addressing gender disparities. Nigeria shall implement policies that promote inclusive education and address gender disparities, provide teachers with training and support to cater to diverse student needs, who also engaging with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education that can help address cultural and social barriers, and finally develop an emergency response plan that prioritize girls' education among others.

10. Adaptive Pedagogy in the 21st Century: Inventive pedagogics refers to the use of new and creative approaches to teaching and learning. Disciplines.com (2025) added that it involves experimenting with novel methods, techniques, and tools to improve student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. Teaching in Nigeria is associated with traditional mode where delivery became burdensome and many educators defy new innovation in their approach. Innovative pedagogics aims to make learning more effective, efficient, and enjoyable, while also preparing students for success in an ever-changing, complex world.

The topical issues are: innovative teaching for long-life learning; 21st-century skills, method and techniques; application of digital literacy and modern resources in education; innovative pedagogics and global competencies education for the 21st century; other are: flipped classroom, project-based learning, virtual and augmented reality etc.

Traditional teaching and learning methods in Nigeria have several effects in the 21st century, which often involve a teacher-centered approach, where students passively receive information without much interaction or engagement that can lead to disinterest among students. It focuses on rote memorization, and not adequately prepares students for the demands of the 21st century job market. It caters to a single learning style, neglecting the diverse needs of students and potentially hindering their academic progress. Nigerian teachers can consider adopting innovative teaching methods to compete in the futuristic world.

11. Morality and Discipline: According to Wikipedia (2018), morality is a body of standards or principles derive from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion or culture, morality may also be specifically synonymous with goodness or rightness. Morality constitutes a set of good behaviors and principles that concerns with the issues of right and good behavior, as it affects the human life and the society pattern; it is associated with discipline and other good values.

The topical issues are: sexual harassment syndrome; extortion of money from students/parents for admission or grades; corporal punishments and bullying, addressing ethical challenges in education, drug abuse, cultism, examination malpractice, the 2025 WASSCE midnight exams, certificate racketeering, indiscipline, immorality etc.

The emerging challengers of indiscipline, corruption, and immorality in education lead to degeneration of values and many criminalities. Ekuafeh, et al. (2015) added that there has been a change in the nation's traditional values, over time; virtue has given place to vice in all facets of national endeavor. This has contributed immensely to the decline of discipline and moral behavior of Nigerians. She further added that, character molding is supposed to be the joint responsibility of parents, teachers and community leaders.

12. Innovation and Vocational Education: This refers to skill-based programs designed for skill acquisition at lower levels of education. Vocational education is an educational approach that focuses on providing students with practical skills and training for specific occupations or industries. It aims to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to enter the workforce directly after completing their trainings. Vocational education and innovations are closely linked, as innovations in teaching methods, technology, and industry demands require vocational education to adapt and evolve (Edusko, 2025).

The topical issues are: emphasis on vocational education to reduce youth unemployment, propose integration of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) into mainstream education, making lesson functional and practical that enable students to partake in skills acquisition, neglect of vocational education, virtual reality, augmented reality, simulation base training, African creativity, creativity and imagine innovation etc.

Innovation and vocational education can drive economic growth by equipping students with practical skills, reducing poverty levels, enables individuals to improve their socio-economic status. Innovation and vocational training suffers inadequate qualified trained teachers, insufficient facilities and space for training, inadequate funding, outdated curriculum, stigma etc. Collaborate with industries and businesses and get the latest trends in equipping them with the needed manpower.

13. Sustainable Development: Shaker (2015) defines it as the organizing principle for sustaining finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet. It is also a process that envisions a desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resources-use, continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity, stability and beauty of natural biotic system.

The topical issues include: Educating for sustainable development and climate action, partnerships for accelerating sustainable development and climate solutions, highlighting the role of education in achieving SDG, sustainable solutions that can be integrated into education, addresses climate change and

sustainable development, emphasizing education's role in climate change and sustainable development, sustainable African development etc.

Sustainable development emphasizes the pleasant integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions to achieve long-term well-being and equity (Wordu, 2023). The goals of sustainable development are in line with the philosophy of Nigerian education as all geared towards enhancing individual for better. Also Wordu (2023) stated that education for sustainable development (ESD) in Nigeria aims to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and values to help them become informed citizens and take action to create a better world.

14. AI (Artificial Intelligence) Transformation: The fact that AI is transforming every segment of human life particularly education sector, is no longer a story, AI simplifies tasks and streamlines traditional education methods for efficient result. The innovative AI-driven pedagogical strategies in education hold exciting possibilities for promoting equitable access and enhancing learning outcomes, and in Nigeria, if properly adopted and incorporated to education it will guarantee inclusive and quality education for all, where new innovations shall be encompassed to the curricular amidst the futuristic world educational challenge (Chan in Chan & Colloton, 2023).

The topical issues are: international collaboration on artificial intelligence to education, AI-powered pedagogies in education, leveraging AI to customize learning, building teacher capacity for AI integration, rethinking curriculum in the AI era, AI-enhanced assessment and feedback systems, AI and modeling in the African classroom, AI powered research etc.

The growing accessibility and responsiveness of AI-powered tools among individuals signal a transformative shift in the Nigerian education through providing additional support to education. AI is eventually shaping a future where technology serves society's best interests; it enhances the educational productivity through simplifying tasks for human consumption, and can also facilitate collaborative learning among others. If Nigeria can fully recognize the benefits of AI and approve it across its education sectors, it will no doubt drive it to significant progress.

15. Entrepreneurship and Skills Acquisition: Entrepreneurship education leads to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for efficient and effective living; it gives the youths more opportunities to exercise creative freedom, higher self-esteem, and a greater sense of control over their own lives. An entrepreneur is one who undertakes the risk of organizing and managing a business. The science entrepreneur looks inward into his/her environment to identify problems confronting people and provide solutions to such problems (Nwosu & Nwaocha, 2014).

The topical issues are: skills over degrees, entrepreneurship education for economic recovery, growth and development; entrepreneurship model for creative economy; entrepreneurial skills innovations for sustainable development; cross-country comparisons of entrepreneurship education outcomes, entrepreneurship for self-reliance and poverty alleviation etc.

In the midst of unemployment challenges and the ever changing world of today, entrepreneurship and skills training has been an important tool for the achievement of rapid and sustainable growth and development through innovative entrepreneurial skills development. The knowledge and skills acquire could be of value by helping students to develop entrepreneurial skills for job creation, thereby leading to poverty eradication and economic recovery.

Conclusion

It continues to be an undisputable fact that no nation can develops without adequate and appropriate investment in education, but the Nigerian education is still suffering from one problem leading to many

others, that resulted in deprive academic standard. Governments shall endeavor to commit itself towards a genuine transformation through adequate funding of Nigerian education, for it to perform excellently and in line with the global best practices. Tilde (2024) stated that education is the key to social movement, peace and development. It gives hope to the poor and assures the rich of his privilege. Let us commit ourselves sincerely to education reform and make it possible for our society to live in peace and develop like other nations.

Suggestions

Against the foregoing, this paper offers the followings suggestions:

1. From the dumped various expert committees' reports and recommendations on education governments shall search the best for implementation in the best interest of country.
2. All the academic conferences deliberations recommendations and media educational discussions shall be communicated to the authorities concern for consideration.
3. Merit—competence based on academic quality, good character, devotion and functional in approach to everything education.
4. Educators shall equip themselves with the flexibility, resilience, and agility needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.
5. Fostering partnership among governments and education stakeholders to drive meaningful change in Nigerian education

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