Managing Education to Meet 21st Century Skills Development and Its Prospective Challenges in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
Education is a sector that requires utmost attention to meet up the demands of individuals and society. This implies that education has long been recognized as a veritable tool for enhancing fundamental skills necessary for meeting global challenges. Hence, management therefore must function credibly to integrate available resources in educational system. Consequently, to be tandem with the 21st-century skills, certain core competencies such as: collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving must be appropriately addressed by management of the educational system. This is the only process of adhering to dynamic pressures or challenges from the encroachment of advanced technology. Without doubt, it is through the attainment of mastery in these areas that education in the 21st century will survive and flourish in the achievement of the predetermination of goals and objectives.

Keywords: educational system, development, skills, challenges

INTRODUCTION
There is general acknowledgement that success of any organization or project depends heavily on the way it is managed, irrespective of whether it is businesses or schools. Critical in this aspect is organizational formation and the ability, power, duty and accountability of each manager in the administration matrix to function commendably. Even those with an uncomplicated understanding of organizational theory appreciate that unless organizations establish interconnected and proficient management structures, their capacity to locate and accomplish organizational goals will center on a convergence of chance development or recognition of certain skills.

According to Braslavsky (2001), 21st-century skills held a lot of pressures and guarantees in respect of development in the circumstances of knowledge acquisition. Unfolding events show that contemporary global knowledge economy is highly competitive. Thus schools would be seen as obsolete if they are unable to graduate students with indispensable skills to meet the needs of the society. Wagner (2011) observed that mastery of basic skills of reading, writing and Arithmetic; the 3 R’s, are no longer satisfactory for survival. This explains the fact that simple recall and regurgitation of facts are no longer sufficient for successful living. As a matter of fact, almost all jobs now require employees who must know how to solve a wide range of intellectual and technical problems.

Common experiences depict that academic institutions worldwide stem from common historical roots and face common present-day challenges. It is certain that 21st-century education must give emphasis to compliance and conformity over creativity to hold down a good job for decades. Compliance and conformity is now a relic, but they are still key values in many schools, even when not being expressly promoted by the lecturers and students. This, of course, is about giving students the skills needed to succeed and grow confidence in the acquired skills from higher institutions.

Apparently, school as an organization, be it departments, faculties, colleges and universities, education authorities or indeed stakeholders absolutely expect management to function creditably by integrating its resources in pursuance of its goals. Consequently, tangible resources of the school must be recognized in respects of human values, materials and financial asset. Understanding these fundamental and inevitable elements can be the spectrum of effective management of education in the 21st century in spite of several invidious challenges.
Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to investigate Managing Education to meet 21st Century Skills Development and its prospective Challenges in Nigeria. The objectives were to critically discuss emerging 21st century skills, redefining managing of education, strategies and challenges.

Statement of the Problem
Faced with all the changes and challenges, the educational institution acting as an organ of innovation has to definitely assume the enormous task of training individuals that will contribute or proffer solutions to societal challenges. By implications, university education has been profoundly altered in the past two decades with the advent and dynamic of technologies, and those involved in the academic enterprise have not yet tackle the implication of these changes. Besides, academic institutions have faced pressures of increasing numbers of students and demographic changes, demands for accountability, reconsideration of the social and economic role of higher education and implications of the impact of new technologies among others. While academic system functions in a national environment, the challenges play themselves out on a global scale and certain skills will be required to tackle them.

The focus of this study therefore is to closely examine the Managing Education to meet 21st Century Skills Development and its prospective Challenges. This is to identify what can possibly be done to improve the universities preparedness to meet the needs of the society in the face of the current challenges. To do this, desirable 21st century survival skills, strategies and other current practices have been examined to bring to light best practices.

Emerging 21st Century Skills in Managing Education
The term 21st-century skills are generally used to refer to certain core competencies such as: collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that advocated for broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others to be critically important to success in today’s world, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces.

It is be noted that the 21st century skills concept encompasses a wide-ranging and amorphous body of knowledge and skills that is not easy to define and that has not been officially codified or categorized. While the term is widely used in education, it is synonymous with other technical and abstract grammatical semantics like: applied skills, cross-curricular skills, cross-disciplinary skills, interdisciplinary skills, transferable skills, transversal skills, non-cognitive skills (Silva, 2009).

Empirically, these skills reflects on critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration across networks and leading by influence, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, curiosity and imagination.

Thus, in educational system, these skills can be learned within a curriculum that is interdisciplinary, integrated, and project based. This is predicated on the fact that contemporary society is a fast-changing world, and producing more of the same knowledge and skills will not suffice to address the challenges of the future. For instance, a generation ago, lecturers could expect that what they taught would last their students a lifetime. Today, because of rapid economic and social change, schools have to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created and technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we are yet to know or will arise (Irenka and Eccles, 2014).

Redefining Managing of Education
Developing an insight into functional roles of education in the 21st century will enhance more visionary approaches in understanding the forces and dynamic nature of management of the school system. In light of these, the question is how can organizations best approach the challenge of developing true leaders? Answering this question means considering traditional models and methods for management education in relation to evolving new approaches. Hence, the best answer needs to be expressed in terms of the wants and needs of both the employee and the organization and the best ways the evolving nature of their relationship will be integral to the success of the enterprise (Okogbaa,2017). The key issues, therefore, relate to the themes of leadership, relationship-building and collaboration. Without doubt, it is through the attainment of mastery in these areas that
organizations and their leaders in the 21st century will survive and flourish in the achievement of the predetermination of goals and objectives of the educational system.

Similarly, refining education requires immediate needs for alternative teaching and learning methods. In other words, traditional degree approaches, programs and professional development as well as traditional methods for examples: books, lectures, discussions, case studies will continue to be updated. Obviously, to develop professional for success in an environment of strong market forces, shifting competencies and new educational model will have to be embraced. Traditional model fall short in their ability to link knowledge, skills and concepts require in the 21st century. Most pointedly, the traditional learning methods most commonly employed in managing education provide learning experiences that are inadequate in several respects as it fails to provide accurate, timely feedback on competency development in the areas most germane to success.

In addition, ensuring the realization of accurate and timely feedback will be foundation of the realizing quality assurance in the educational sector. Apparently, theories of adult learning always include the provision of accurate, timely feedback to the intended learner. Feedback either as the confirmation of one's ideas or approach, or information that indicates disconfirmation or error is necessary for people to update their beliefs and expectations regarding the outcomes of their future actions. The timeliness of feedback involves both the time between the behavior and the feedback, and the ability of the intended recipient to hear and understand the message. Such feedback provides the recipients with an understanding of how peers, bosses, subordinates and even customers perceive their actions.

In the same vein, increase participation and time-sensitivity is appropriate for redefining education system in Nigeria. The opportunity to reach out and touch someone at almost any time or place puts a premium on the ability to be sensitive to others and their time. It is easy to be intrusive or curt without necessarily knowing it particularly via phone or e-mail. Without exception, most education businesses fail to incorporate relevant people into the learning experiences hence affecting the level of conversations on future educational practices. This process will not be palatable for resuscitation of the educational practices. There must be fruitful collaboration in all relevant fields of specialization.

Consequently, using master-apprentice relationships is critical for the achievement of the expected requisite results in the education sector. School Business educators in formal educational programs are rarely masters of business. Their ability to develop students as apprentices is minimal, and their interest in doing so is often equally low. In contrast with other professions, one might be led to believe that management is something that need not be known in order to be taught. Medicine, dentistry and the performing arts among other professions seem to have made a different assumption. A significant degree of personal mastery is necessary for the key skills and concepts to be passed from one person (the master) to another (the apprentice) as formal business education relying on books, lectures and instructors may serve as an impediment to professional development.

**Strategies of Managing Education in the 21st Century**

Managing education system requires composite or bodies of management skills and ideas for effective utilization of potential resources available. In other words, proficient utilization of both human and material paraphernalia depicts adequate understanding of certain strategically approaches such as: Orientation of behavioral attributes and values necessary for management of the educational system. In this case, basic orientation sometimes known as management approach will remain relatively constant. There are individuals who tend to be assertive in all they do, who are concerned to explain to their subordinates exactly what is wanted and how it is to be done and who tend to be intolerant of or not to listen to ideas other than their own. On the other hand, there are basically solicitous people who want above all to maintain good relationships (Braslavsky, 2004). Behavior, however, varies and will vary according to circumstances and people. No doubt, one of the characteristics of those who truly have a high concern for both people and results is that they are able to adapt their behavior according to the needs of the person with whom they are dealing. This implies that the capacity of generating or regenerating managing education skills is by recognizing the behavioral pattern of people working in the same environment. This will help to reposition the aims and objectives of education for both short and long time planning.
In another perspective, suiting behavior to circumstances of the task responsibilities will be more appreciable, relevant and creditable. If the system is to be managed proficiently, there is need to built attitudinal mechanism that will suit our social environment and psychological mind set. This, apparently, calls for situational sensitivity and style flexibility advocated by Reddin, 1971. For instance, if there is an emergency, an assertive style by the leader is probably highly appropriate as there may not be time to consult. On the other hand, if a person is in distress, a highly solicitous approach is probably best. More so, recognizing inappropriate behavior will create an avenue to identify distress and unfavorable circumstance. While it is true that there are times when any of the range of behaviors may be equally appropriate, we must remember that there are other times when a particular behavior is quite inappropriate. It is vitally important to increase skill in recognizing when a particular form of behavior is wrong and ability to use alternative forms of behavior. There are a number of rules of thumb which the individual manager can use in spotting an inappropriate use of behavior on his or her part. These rules only apply to inappropriate uses of the different types of behavior, and that while assertive behavior, for example, may have a negative effect on some people, there are others who like to be dealt with in an assertive way and who will not respond to anything else. Different individuals need to be handled in different ways. While some people may be slow to take action if not chased, for example, others will be sufficiently self-motivated to produce the best results when left alone (Asiyai, 2017).

Leadership and Job experience is more expeditious in managing education. In dealing with subordinates, the appropriate leadership style may vary according to how long they have been in the job. In the early days subordinates may look for high task behavior from their boss, i.e. expectations to tell them what are expected and teach how to do it in detail. At certain stage a more overtly motivational behavior may be called for, i.e. agreeing what is expected but leaving the subordinate more freedom to decide how to carry it out and giving feedback on results. At different stage, the employee may simply need positive or negative feedback on results (a demonstration of genuine interest). It is unavoidable for bringing about a desirable change in the educational organization for promoting the organizational health-its effectiveness and functional efficiently.

Challenges of Managing Education at 21st Century

In the educational sector, access and equity remain central factors, but in the contemporary policy perspective it is sometimes ignored. While academic systems worldwide have expanded dramatically, there are problems of access and equity in many parts of the world. Gender, ethnicity, and social class remain serious issues (Phillip and Patti, 1999). Measures have to be put in place to combat the menace of access and equity in enrollment of the students.

Research and development is one of the primary missions of the universities. From the early 1960s, research was conceived as an instrument for teaching and was mainly undertaken by alien professors. In the 1970s and 1980s, the dimensions of research from universities grew steadily and were increasingly being undertaken by Nigerian scholars. However, in the 1990s, researches at universities started to decline due to short of funds, among other reasons. Decline in institutional research condense the ability of universities to attain or utilize new knowledge and play an authoritative leadership role with reverence to policy issues in various sectors of development. Universities must put more emphasis on research and make a deliberate effort to facilitate training, engage in research, and disseminate findings in the 21st century. This will help build the much-needed intellectual capacity in research.

Also, there is need to develop proficient capacity for innovative and creative strategies for critical thinking and future educational provisions and practices. These strategies need to include: improvement of evaluation and accreditation systems, review of programs to make it more responsive to individuals and societal needs, enhancement of gender equity, promotion of university linkages with the private sectors and involvement in policy analysis through research. As a matter of fact, improvement and innovation of the educational system necessitate utilization of dynamic of technologies. Hence, Universities in Nigeria need to review and re-evaluate their missions for the realization of specific strategic plans in the 21st century (Asiyai, 2017).

Accountability is a contemporary watch word in higher education. Demands by funding sources (mainly government), measuring academic productivity, control of funding allocations is increasingly and fundamental part of the debate on university education. Governance systems are being strained,
sometimes to the breaking point. To meet the demands for accountability, universities are becoming managerialized with political administrators gaining increasing control.

Another challenge is the expansion that brings with it improved differentiation and the materialization of academic systems. New kinds of academic institutions surface, and existing universities provide larger and more miscellaneous groups. In order to make sense of this differentiation, academic systems are structured to provide coordination and appropriate management of the resources. Expansion, of course, puts pressure on universities despite dwindling financial provision. The pace of expansion over the past 20 years has been enormous, as evidenced by the number of institutions of higher learning especially in Nigeria.

As the current century draws to a close, social pressures and the specific requirements of the labor market have resulted in an extraordinary diversification in programs of study. University education has not been exempt from the force and urgency with which educational reform is politically advocated as a response to the economic imperatives. Universities no longer have a monopoly on higher learning. In this regard, it is imperative that the university continues to demonstrate its relevance to local problems. In doing this, it functions as repository and creator of knowledge. It must become the principal instrument for passing on accumulated experiences, cultural and scientific conduct for socio economic development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that innovative skills and collaboration among the various stakeholders in education industry is required for effective management. Thus, there must be capacity development in tandem with the encroachment of modern technology in order to capture the dynamic forces of this era as well as meeting prospective challenges. By implication, the universities must develop new ways of engaging staff in novel academic and interpersonal skills in order not to be suffocated by the advent of the 21st century skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government and other relevant agencies should create opportunities for development of emerging skills in managing education.
- Every stakeholder should act in collaboration in redefining the aims and objectives of the education to meet imminent challenges.
- Interested and equitable stakeholders should be involved in analyzing and evaluating curriculum development and implementation.
- There is need for protection and evaluating the fundamental issues affecting the educational sectors intermittently or periodically.

REFERENCES


