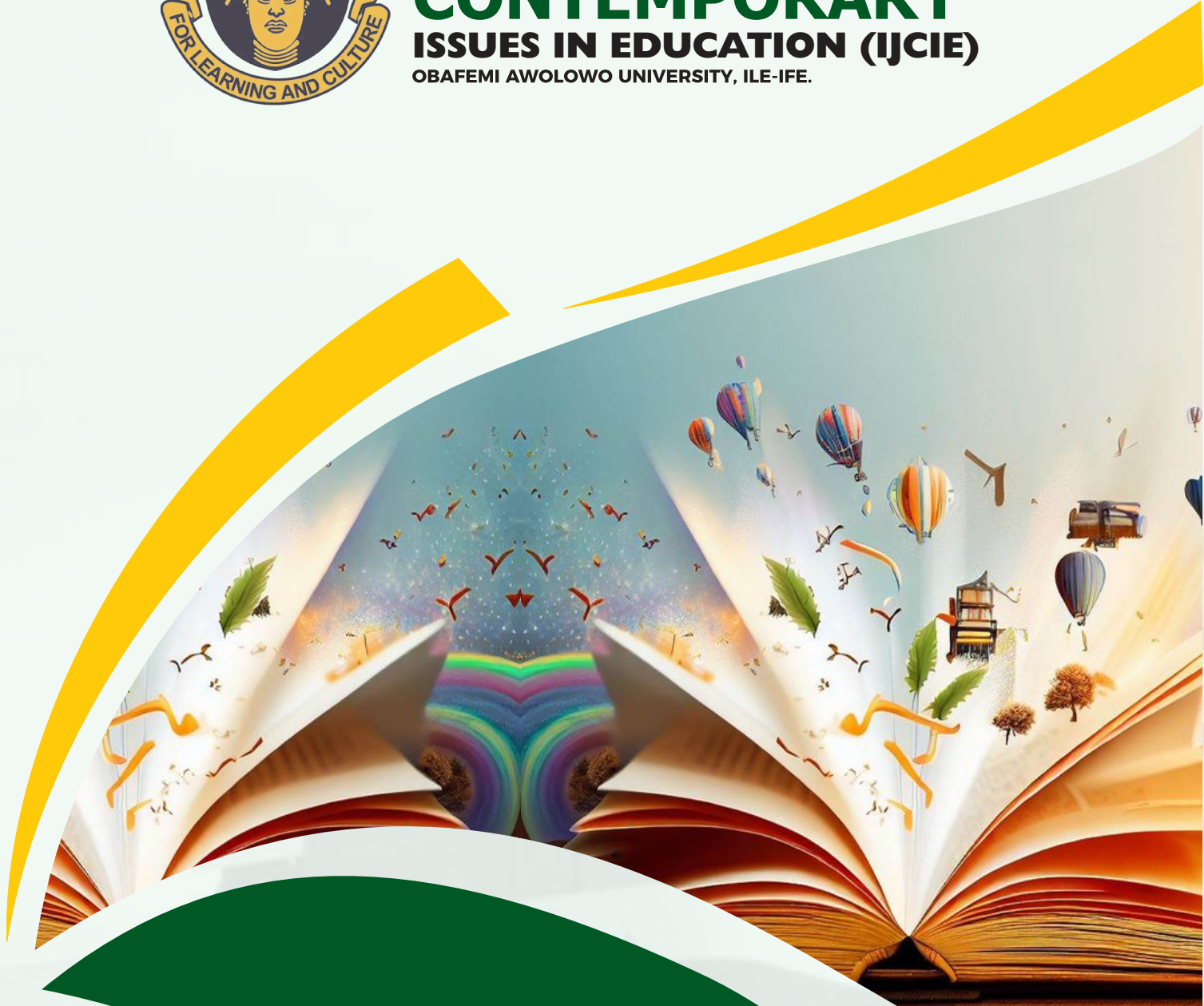




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ISSUES IN EDUCATION (IJCIE)**
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE.



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LEADERSHIP STYLE: IMPETUS FOR INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS' SYSTEM

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Abstract.

Education remains the engine room for the growth and development of any nation including Nigeria. In educational institutions, there must be a force to manage both the human and material resources towards achieving educational goals. A force is needed in schools to guide the activities of teaching, non-teaching staff and students towards achievement of the institution's goals. Leadership provides the needed force. The Administrators in the schools are view to be the leaders responsible for innovations and improvement in the school system. Leadership is the act of influencing a group of people in a particular situation towards the achievement of a goal or a set of goals. Therefore, the paper examined the concept of leadership, leadership styles, functions, qualities and drawing on theoretical insights for innovations and improvement in Nigerian schools system. It identified some of the challenges facing the leaders in educational industries among which are; high cost of education, manpower problem, poor equip libraries, poor management among others. The paper suggested potential solutions for innovations and improvement in educational institution in Nigeria, including capacity building and manpower development, provision of adequate funding as recommended by UNESCO, adequate school planning and proper management of educational system. This study provides valuable insights for stakeholders and policymaker in educational industry to address the challenges and improve the innovations and

improvement in Nigerian school system.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Functions, Qualities, Challenges and Way Forward

Introduction

In every organisation, be it educational or industrial, the prime mover is the leader. It is the duty of the leader to see that the organisation moves well while at the same time keeping the subordinate/followership happy, satisfied and motivated. Adepoju (2004), stated that leadership is a process of influencing others towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. In educational institutions, there are various levels of leadership; the headmaster is a leader at the primary school level, the principal is a leader at the secondary school level, while provosts, rectors and vice-chancellors are leaders at the colleges of education, polytechnics and universities respectively. So also at the local, states and federal government levels, we have local inspectors of education, commissioners of education and ministers of education as the leaders. It is therefore imperative for educational administrators to equip themselves with leadership skills in preparation to assume positions of leadership to enable them fashion out their own styles or models of leadership. Leadership is considered as a relationship between two parties in which a super-ordinate ensures a significant influence on the behaviour of the other towards achieving a common goal. Leadership is the ability of influencing other

people according to the rule to achieve organisational goals. It involves directing, providing purpose and motivating. Leadership is an important aspect of management. The essence of leadership is followership; in other words there can be no leadership without followership. Ani & Umerah (2014), opined that “Leadership has to do with the ability to inspire others as to bring out the best in them with the aim of achieving a set out goal”. It is the means or method of achieving two ends: operating that is organisation goals and improving the staff welfare. In educational institutions, there must be a force to manage both the human and material resources towards achieving educational goals. A force is needed in schools to guide the activities of teaching, non-teaching staff and students towards achievement of the institution's goals. Leadership provides the needed force. At the primary and secondary levels of education, the force is provided by the headmaster and principal while it is provided by provosts, rectors and vice-chancellors in the colleges of education, polytechnics and universities respectively.

Leadership Styles

The school administrator is viewed to be the leader of the school and must be very effective in his operations. It therefore follows that an effective school leader translates the educational policies, laws and regulations into practical operational policies whether managing a team at work, captaining sports team or leading a major corporation, leadership style is crucial to success. Phuc et al. (2021) found that leadership style refers to a leader's style of giving direction, implementing plans, and motivating followers. Consciously or subconsciously, no doubt some leadership styles will be required. Leadership styles are the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, programmes, policy and motivating people. There are number of different styles to leadership and management that are based on different assumptions and theories. In this style of leadership, a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced (Mba, 2004). The style that individual leaders use will be based on a combination of their beliefs, values, and preferences, as well as the organizational culture and norms which encourage some styles and discourage others. Crum and Sherman (2008)

concluded that leaders use different style of leadership considering the situation in an organisation. Some of which include the following:

Autocratic Leadership, Bureaucratic Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, Democratic / Participative Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, People – Oriented/Relations – Oriented Leadership, Task – Oriented Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Situational /Contingency Leadership

Autocratic Leadership

This is a leadership style in which a leader exerts high levels of power over his/her employees. People within the team or employees are given few opportunities for making suggestions, even if the suggestions would be of advantage to the organisation's interest. Autocracy believes that human beings are evil, weak, unwilling to work, incapable of self-determination, and have limited reasoning. Therefore, they must be directed, dictated to, pushed, and forced to work (Adedokun, 2008). This style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want them to do and how they want it done, without getting the advice of their followers. Some people tend to think of this style as a vehicle for yelling, using demeaning language, and leading by threats and abusing their power. Many people resent being treated like this, because this leadership style often leads to high levels of absenteeism, and high staff turnover. Also, the team's output does not benefit from the creativity and experience of all team members, so many of the benefits of teamwork are lost. However, for some routine and skilled jobs, this style can be adopted and it remains effective where the advantages of control outweigh the disadvantages. The leader that adopts this style does not consider the interest or views of the employees but that of him alone. He treats his/her employees as tools/machines that are there to be used to affect his perceived goals. He passes down orders and has no feelings for the followers. However, this style of leadership can be effective when unskilled labour is used or in high stress situations requiring immediate actions as long as the advantages outweigh the disadvantages (Germain, 2012; Zaccaro, 2007).

Bureaucratic Leadership

This type of leadership works, by the book, ensuring that their staff follows procedures exactly the way it is written down. Bureaucratic leadership is characterized by leaders that precisely follow rules and use positional power to influence results (Sode & Onokala, 2017). This is a very appropriate style for work involving safety risks such as working with machinery with toxic substances or at heights or where large sums of money are involved e.g. cash-handling. Subordinates are expected to follow orders of the leader because of the authority vested with their position ((Sode & Onokala, 2017). This leadership style is beneficial in hazardous types of jobs where safety is paramount and standards are expected to be followed exactly to ensure accuracy (Germain, 2012; Zaccaro, 2007). In other situations the inflexibility and high levels of control exerted can demoralise staff, and can diminish the organisation's ability to react to changing external circumstances.

Charismatic Leadership

This leadership style is similar to a transformational style; the leader injects huge doses of enthusiasm into his or her employees and is very energetic in driving others forward. Charismatic leaders believe more in themselves than in their employees. This can create a risk that a project or even an entire institution, might collapse if the leader were to leave. In the eye of the followers, success is tied with the presence of the charismatic leader. As such a charismatic leader carries a lot of responsibilities, and needs long-term commitment from the followers

Democratic/Participative Leadership

This style of leadership invites one or more members of the team with himself to make decision(s) (determine what to do and how to do it) for the organisation. This style does not only increase employees job satisfaction, by involving them in what is going on, but it also helps to develop people's skills. Employees feel in control of their own destiny, and are motivated to work harder. This style is normally used when the leader has part of the information, and the employees have the other part. A leader is not supposed to know everything; this is why the leader employs knowledgeable and skillful

employees. In democratic leadership, criticism and praise are objectively given. Performances are usually high. New ideas and changes are developed (Ukaidi, 2016). As participation takes time, this style can lead to things happening more slowly than using autocratic approach, but often the end result is better. It can be most suitable where team work is essential, and where quality is more important than speed. Using this style is of mutual benefit and allows the employees to become part of the team and also allows the leader to take better decisions.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire is a French phrase „non-interference in the affairs of others . This is used to describe a leader who leaves his employees to get on with their work without his interference. The Laissez - faire leader allows the employees to make decisions. Such leaders depend largely on subordinates to set their own goals and the means of achieving them, based on their own initiatives (Wehrich et al., 2011). However, the leader is still responsible for decisions that are made. This style can be effective if the leader monitors what is being achieved and communicates this back to his or her team regularly. It can also be effective when employees are able to analyse the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to get it done. No leader can do everything, a leader needs to set priorities and delegate certain tasks. Hence, it works for teams in which the individuals are very experienced and skilled self-starters.

However, it is not a style to use in order to blame others when things go wrong. Rather it is a style to be used when you fully trust and have total confidence in the people working under you. It can be referred to as situations where managers are not exerting sufficient control over the employees. Generally, laissez-faire leadership results in low productivity compared to other styles of leadership (Sode & Onokala, 2017; Ukaidi, 2016).

People – Oriented/Relations – Oriented Leadership

This style of leadership is the opposite of task-oriented leadership; people-oriented leaders are totally focused, supporting, motivating and developing the employees or those in the leaders team. This leadership encourages participative

decision – making which leads to good team work and creative collaboration. However, if it is taken to the extreme, it can lead to failure in achieving the organisational goal. In practice, most leaders do not use this style alone. Where it will be used, it is advisable to combine it with task-oriented style.

Task – Oriented Leadership

A task-oriented leader focuses only on how to get the job done; this type of leader can be quite autocratic. He or she will actively define the work and the roles required by the employees, and will also put structures in place, plan, organise and equally monitor the work. Task-oriented leaders care less about the well-being of the employees; they are more concerned with how to get the job done. It is job centered, production centered and boss centered. This style agrees with the assumptions of Theory X. This approach can also suffer many of the flaws of a leader that adopts autocratic style of leadership. He will also have problem of motivating staff as well as high rate of staff turn-over.

Transactional Leadership

This style of leadership starts with the premise that the employees agree to obey their leader totally when they take up the appointment. The „transaction is that the organisation pays the employees, in return for their effort and compliance. As such, the leader has the right to employees if their work does not meet the predetermined standard. It is a process through the tasks and human dimensions of organisation are reconciled and integrated. This leader tries to match organisational needs with those of the employees of the organisation and strives to attain them. The employees can do little to improve their job satisfaction under transactional leadership. The leader shows the employees some measure of control of their income/reward by using incentives that encourage even higher standards. Alternatively a transactional leader could practice „management by exception whereby rather than reward better work, he or she would take corrective action if the required standards were not met.

Transformational Leadership

A leader who employs this style of leadership is a true leader who inspires the employees with a shared vision of the future. Transformational leaders are highly visible, and

spend a lot of time communicating with the employees. They do not necessarily lead from the front, as they tend to delegate responsibility amongst their teams. In many organisations, both transactional and transformational leaders are needed. The transactional leaders ensure that routine work is done reliably while the transformational leaders look after employee's initiatives and add new value.

Situational/Contingency Leadership

A situational leader is a leader that adopt the best leadership style or combination of styles to every situation he is dealing with, it also depends on the type of forces involved between the followers, the leader, and the situation, the time available, the relationships between employer and employees, the level of training of employees, the type of tasks and laws that establish the organisation. A situational leader believes that there is no single leadership style that suits all situations; the situation demands the type of style to adopt.

Theories of Leadership

Various theories have been developed and proposed to provide better understanding of factors that influence a person's decision to become a leader, as well as their behavior and leadership style. These theories had been broadly classified into three. These include the Trait theories, the Personality-behavioral theories, system theory and the situational or contingency theories. The major propositions of the proponents of each of these theories are discussed below.

Trait Theory

The trait theory is primarily associated with Gordon Allport, who is considered a founder of modern study of personality. This theory is built on the premise that leaders are “born and not made” This among other things implies that some attributes are naturally endowed in potential leaders at birth, which are not acquired or got by any other means. It is also referred to as the “great man theory of leadership”. The trait leadership theory believes certain qualities such as intelligence, sense of responsibility, creativity and other values puts anyone in the shoes of a good leader (Akpa et al., 2021; Perera et al.,

2021). The theory focuses on analysing mental, physical and social characteristic in order to gain more understanding of what traits or the combination thereof, that are common among leaders (Mouton, 2019; Sode & Onokala, 2017). Leadership should be viewed as a set of personality traits that differentiate leaders from subordinates. Traits theory focuses on the employee rather than the job itself (Abba et al., 2004). It gives more attention to the process of selecting leaders than the training for leadership itself. Because not all leaders possess all of the attributes, and many non-leaders may possess the majority of them, traits theory has not been very productive in explaining leadership (Usman et al., 2019); and there is no uniformity of identified trait or any substantial link of qualities with real instances of leadership in hundreds of studies (Abba et al., 2004). Scholars at one time or the other had embarked on one study or the other in an attempt to identify and compare the leadership traits, which distinguish leaders from the followers. Efforts were also directed towards drawing the line of difference between the characteristics of effective leadership and the ineffective ones; although most researchers were not so keen on this latter aspect. Most studies on leadership traits focused extensively on identifying intellectual, emotional and physical characteristics of successful leaders.

The Behavioral Theory of Leadership

The behavioural theory, which focuses on observable behaviours and their relationship to environmental stimuli, is linked to John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner known for his work on operant conditioning which is a major concept within behavioural theory. In reaction to the trait theory, the behavioural theories offered a new perspective, one that focuses on the behaviours of leaders as opposed to their mental, physical or social characteristics. Thus, with evolutions in psychometrics, notably the factor analysis, researchers were able to measure the cause and effects relationship of specific human behaviours from leaders (Aalateeg, 2017; Avolio et al., 2009). Behavioural theory promotes the value of leadership styles with an emphasis on concern for people and collaboration. The behavioural theory seeks to explain leadership not on the basis of what leaders are, but in terms of what they do so as

to identify the relationships, which exist between behavioural pattern and work group performance. Similarly, the behavioural approach sought the “one best” style of leadership that would be effective in all situations and ignored situational factors. In order to study these two key dimensions of leadership were identified which had attracted variety of labels. The dimensions are: concerns for organization; and concern for relationships of individual. Experts agree that leadership style is defined by the extent to which the leader seems to show concern for or seems orientated towards either the organizational task or individual relationship. Often, the phrase Task-oriented (T.O.) is used to refer to tendencies the leader shows for work accomplishment and Relation-oriented (R.O) for the leader's tendency to show concern for people in displaying leadership behaviours. This theory helps managers find the right balance between different styles of leadership, and helps them decide how to behave as leaders, depending on concerns for people and for productivity (Aalateeg, 2017).

Situational Theories

Situational theory has no single developer, the situational theory recognizes that both personality traits and situational factors influence behaviour. The criticisms that flooded the trait theory and the behavioral approach made scholars to consider the situational theory. With this, opinion shifted from “leaders are born, not made” to leaders are made, not born”. This theory assume that the most effective leaders are those able to adapt their style to given situations and look at signs such as type of task, nature of group, and other factors that might contribute to getting the job done (Cherry, 2018; Abba et al., 2004). This theory is recognized by many as a standard for training leaders; it is a practical approach, which is easily understood and easily applied; it sets forth a clear set of prescriptions for how leaders should act if they want to enhance their effectiveness; and it recognizes and stresses that there is no one best style of leadership; instead, leaders need to be flexible and adapt their style to the requirements of the situation (Northouse, 2010). Northouse (2010) opines that effective leadership occurs when leaders accurately diagnose the development level of subordinates in a task situation and then exhibit the prescribed

leadership style that matches that situation. Rather than focusing on leaders' personality traits, this approach focuses on what the leader really does.

The situational theory is that the situation with which a leader finds him-self will dictate his actions or behaviours. They argued that no theory could be regarded as the best; hence the situation would determine the course of action.

Functions of School Leaders

The leadership functions or activities of school heads include planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, controlling, reporting, evaluating and budgeting.

The specific task areas of leadership would vary from one situation to another. The major task of all leaders is how to influence the behaviour of subordinates so that results of the system are attained.

Motivation – In the school system, the principal motivates his staff by providing immediate attainable goals toward which the staff should work. He is to ensure that means are provided for attaining goals set for staff. Another way, is through feedback.

Understanding the Ability of Staff – Since the school system would comprise men and women of different specializations, it is essential for the school principal to know the capabilities and characteristics of each staff.

Job Classification – On entering a system, the new employee would like to know what his specific tasks are. It is the principal's task to match people and position. This should be done based on specialization and interest areas.

Staff Orientation – After staff have been recruited and assigned, the school head introduces them to the system. This minimizes the adjustment problems confronting the staff. The type of environment in which the new staff finds himself and the first impression he has in his early days would go a long way to influence his behaviour and moral within the system.

Staff Development – In the school system, the staff development aims at correcting certain deficiencies which were known at the time of

appointment. It equally enables the teaching staff to face the challenges resulting from innovation in the school curriculum. Non professional teachers are encouraged to be professionalized while the professionals themselves acquire higher qualifications for greater development responsibilities and status within the school system.

Staff Supervision and Assessment –

Supervision helps the new teachers to understand the Purposes, responsibilities, and relationships of his position and the directions of his efforts.

The principal gives clear guidance as to steps, methods and goals of work and makes personal examination or the work of individual members without straining relationships.

Leadership Qualities In Schools

It is generally accepted that the quality of leadership in an organization, be it religious, social, political, traditional and educational or otherwise affects to a large extent the success or failure of that organization. Effective leadership in school management also depends on the qualities of school leaders. Some of the qualities of a good school leader are highlighted as follows: Knowledge of the organisation objectives and the means for their attainment, reasonably good health and physical stamina, sympathy, confidence and demonstrable capability to work with people, even disposition, sense of humour without intense moodiness and temper fuse-ups, social general education, orderly life with desirable character, intensive professional training, flexibility in thinking together with imitativeness and ambition, a philosophy of life that leads to action, balance between introversion and extroversion, approachable and fair in dealing with others, intelligent and knowledgeable, disciplined and hardworking, professionally trained and competent, honest, straight forward and consistent., good human relations, interested in students and staff welfare, innovative, dynamic, resourceful and courageous, firm but not proud in making judgments and decisions, willing to take blames for mistakes, willing to learn, improve and encourage others to learn.

The qualities listed above suggested that a school

leader should be a perfect person.

Even though this is not possible, yet a successful school leader is likely to possess some degree of these qualities than the unsuccessful one. It must be pointed out that good leadership qualities can be developed, learned or acquired by training and education.

Challenges of Leadership for School Administration

The school system is increasingly challenged with many complex problems. There is a general outcry that standards of education are falling and morals are flagging. The blame is mostly centered on the school administrators of different levels of education and other stakeholders in educational industry. Some blame the pupils for this apparent decline in education and moral values, a thoughtful few think that they are due to the nature of change in all directions. Majority blame the teachers for the woes in the schools. They are not as devoted and dedicated to the cause of education as their predecessors. Teachers as a group blame parents and the children. They also blame the government for unattractive condition of service and for poor physical facilities in the classroom. Others are:

1. Under funding: Nigeria is the one of the country that is yet to allocate 26percent of her budgetary allocation to the education as recommended by the United Nation (UNESCO). This goes a long way to affect the materials needed and procurement of required school facilities for all level of education with the meager allocation.
2. High cost of education: The cost education in Nigeria is going on alarming rate due to the high cost of materials, equipment and facilities used in the system for the smooth running of the educational processes. Income of some parent could not enable their ward attain quality education through standard schools.
3. Corruption: Most of the public office holders in Nigeria have come to power only for their personal interest and not serve the interest of masses. Most of them unlawfully withdraw the public fund meant for provision of educational facilities and procurement of necessary materials or maintaining the existing ones and fraudulently divert it into personal account for personal use.
4. Cultural problem: Nigeria is an amalgamation of over 375 ethnic groups and each has its own unique culture. Therefore the task of educational planners should meet the entire needs of students from different ethnic groups is a serious undertaking which requires the appointment of professionals who have adequate knowledge about what is require to do.
5. Manpower problems: Top government functionaries and political classes in most cases exert their influence over whom to appointed as a curriculum and school plant planners without considering and evaluating their suitability, capabilities and cognate experience for the job. When an inexperience one is made to be the school curriculum and plants planners, there is certainty that ineffectiveness and inefficiency seed will germinate in the school system.
6. Poor equip libraries and laboratories: In most Nigerian schools, libraries and laboratories are not only ill-equipped but are grossing absent. In some schools, The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and other voluntary bodies are directly involved in provision and equipment of public schools libraries and laboratories.
7. Poor management of education: Management of education in Nigeria at all levels may continue until policy prescriptions are passed as act of the National assembly through the provision of legal backings. Sometime, there exit educational conflicts between the role of federal, state and local government on the management and maintenance of public schools.

8. Economic Recession: Due to economic recession that the nation and world at large are witnessing, the prices of the facilities have been skyrocketed in the recent times. These among others makes the procurement of the facilities unaffordable by the prospective school manager and administrators thereby making them resort to running the school with poor school facilities and equipment.
 9. Population explosion on the part of the students: An increase in population over times and continuous demand on education has led to overcrowded in the school system without any more structure to accommodate more students due to the insufficient school facilities.
 10. Poor planning: A dearth of statistic on student's enrolment, number of teachers their qualifications and demographic trends statistics on buildings and other learning facilities are all inadequate at present. All these are capable of stalling the planning.
These problems and many more offer too many opportunities to exert on leadership.
4. Nigeria school should be equipped with good libraries and laboratories materials that can stand the test of the time for the users.
 5. There should be effective management of education at all level. This could be achieved by the cooperation of the government and proprietors of private schools.
 6. Education research findings should be implemented and sponsored by the government and its agencies in order to avoid wastage of resources and develop her educational system.
 7. There should be regular and adequate management of school facilities by all stakeholders in education.
 8. There should be professionals in planning of curriculum making right decision and implementation of school plants, design and construction.
 9. More personnel should be employed to teach and take care of the school in order to expand the life spans of the buildings and other facilities.
 10. There should be a provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities for the progress and prospect of her educational system.

Ways to Improve the Challenges of Successful Leadership

The following are hereby recommended to pave way for the growth and development of the nation's education and address the challenges confronting the leadership style on educational system in Nigeria:

1. Government should allocate more funds at least 26 percent of her total budget recommended by UNESCO for effectively implementation, regular and adequate management of available school resources and facilities.
2. Government and school proprietors should reduce the cost of education so that parent should easily afford the quality and standard education for their wards.
3. Government and politician should not

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