

EDUCATION AND THE FUNCTIONALITY OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

¹Edidiong Linus Nkan and ²Anthony B. Wilson

¹Department of Social Studies,
²Department of Political Science,
Akwa Ibom State College of Education,
Afaha Nsit

Abstract

There is no human society in contemporary globalized village without social institutions. For social institutions to function in commendable high gear, qualitative or rather functional education which is also a powerful social institution is the functional instrument that drives all other social institutions to their highest performance level. This paper is exploring situation of education in Nigeria 'vis-à-vis' the effective functioning of all other social institutions notes that consequent on the fact that Education, the other social institutions driving force is saddled with seeming irredeemable problems, that Education is not effectively providing the needed force to make the other litany of social institutions delivered their acclaimed dividend. Invariably, any talk about Education piloting the effective performance of all other social institutions is foul or rather farcical as the existent social institutions are also bedeviled with a bewildering array of problems that emasculate their effective goal-objects delivery. Re-thinking education for its effectiveness is the recommended *panacea*.

Keywords: *Education, social institutions, driving, functional performance, real and farcical.*

Introduction

In the thinking of every well committed insider professional educationists such as these authors, Nigeria as a sovereign geo-polity entity and the mass of Nigerians, since Nigeria's flag Independence on the 1 October 1960, are taking formal Education for granted. This ideological position is evident by the fact that despite the establishment of educational institutions in Nigeria with Reckless Abandon, even if for political reasons, Nigeria is not only, even in this 21st century, an illiterate society which Ibekwe and Ochuba (2015) attested to when they opined that "Nigeria is predominantly an illiterate society", Ezekie, Hart and Adiele (2010) confirm that Nigeria's education is still far from being ready for the challenges of the new (21st) century ..." which professor Okpaga (2013) lent his support to where he posited that "Nigeria is currently facing several challenges of national development..." including Nigeria's educational question.

Like education that its world acclaimed import has not completely been felt in Nigeria, an 'illiterate society', among the least developed societies in the contemporary globalized village, social institutions, even if their positive effects are surreptitiously being enjoyed by Nigeria's mammoth population, have expensive scope or coverage span that is terrifyingly broad that is even not very well understood by some authors or scholars who have dared to discourse on them. This claim is typified by Ahomefula and Nnaji (2013) who posited that "there are... five basic social institutions, namely the family,... educational institution, political institution, the economic institution and the religious institution." In the same, Ebirim; Uzoabga; Ohizu and Onyeocha (2015 p.4) as well as, Effiong, Ekanem and Ottong, (2023), averred that "every society has the following major social institutions namely: economic, health, political, family, education, religion and culture."

While these highlighted social institutions relegated a good number of social institutions such as all the important, and very desired by all, marriage institutions, the colossal place of functional or qualitative formal education, a social institution though and the cannot be jettisoned driver of all

other social institutions, striving for the effective deliverance of their worth of goal objectives, is lamentably glossed over.

The thrust of this exposition, therefore, is to unmask the fact without functional educational institution. All other social institutions exist by sheer name or mention. This stance is predicated on the truism that it is the worthy educational institution that holds the attribute – critical knowledge, intellectual skills, positive values, desired character- that give functional fillip to the effective performance of all other acclaimed social institutions.

Review of Related Literature

Udo, Willie and Udom ,(2025), examines the effects of insecurity on Secondary school attendance in Ukanafun Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study used a survey method in the analysis. Research objectives and questions were set to guide the study. Questionnaire known as Effect of Insecurity on School Attendance (EISA) was developed to collate data for the study. A random sampling technique was used to select 107 parents in 10 Secondary Schools that were affected by the activities of insurgency in the study area. Responses to the questionnaire were summarized using percentages to study student’s attendance in schools before and during the insecurity. The Queer Ladder theory proposed by Daniel Bell 2010 was adopted. It was observed that the level of school attendance before the crisis in the study Area was high and low during and after the crises. The result also revealed gender imbalance. Male student’s attendance during the crisis was higher than female student’s attendance.

Furthermore, the result shows that parents who were willing to send their children back to the affected schools were 58 out of 107 and which was merely above 50% of the total population. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that education administrators should help students overcome emotional distress gotten during the crises through sensitization programmes, town hall briefings, and visit to churches in the affected communities. It was further recommended that teachers should embrace methods that will reduce emotional anguish instigated by the insurgency. Finally, government should tackle youth restiveness by providing employment give Special incentives to engage aggressive youths in the affected communities.

Conceptual Literature

Some scholars such as Okeke and Nwagwu in Mezieobi (2016; Enang, Urujzian, Udoka, (2013), are opposed to conceptual clarifications on account of their presumed opinion that they ‘prejudicial’, ‘frustrating and fruitless’ ‘consist in unpacking the set of preferences of the communicator’ and are ‘hazardous’. But tilting unshakeably to the communicative admonition of Voltaire in Hitchner and Harbold (1972) to the effect that “if you wish to (meaningfully) converse with me (and achieve communicable results)define your terms”, Mezieobi (2012) justified the rationale for conceptual clarifications when he opined that conceptual clarifications “provide a common discursive frame of understanding between the communicator and his audience with a view to defusing (communicative) ambiguities misunderstanding and misinterpretations”.

In this vein, four concepts: Education, social institutions, real and farcical need to be briefly explained.

Education: conceptualized, thus as:

*The most portent (transformational, re-construction-oriented)
Or powerful...life unending quality and human improvement-
geared process through which humans are inducted into
acquiring relevant knowledge, desirable values, social and*

*manipulative skills, very essential for humans' effective living, effective responsible participation in society, societal problems' solving, and for societal continuous... (correct) development...(and) the only route through which Humans... escape from the thralldom of ignorance and its Negative accompaniment,
(Philip- Ogoh & Apkan, 2021 p.160)*

Social institutions: contextualized

Social institutions are societal established and systematically organized human relations-driven structures, instruments, procedures, practices which are not only concerned with humans wellbeing but also make for social order, govern behavior in all facets of life in the determined bid to meet the basic needs of both societal humans in particular and the society at large.

Real: Meaning

This is something that exists in actuality or practice.

Farcical: This term

This refers to some practices, situation that is not viewed with any measure of seriousness.

Social institutions: Typologization

Social institutions, in all countries in the contemporary globalized village can be grouped into two brackets or jackets. These are the principal social institutions and the associated social Institution.

Types of Social Institutions

Principal social institutions	Associated social institutions
1. Traditional institution	1.Organs of Government- the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary;
2. Cultural Institution	2. Political parties;
3. Family Institution	3. Pressure/interest Groups;
4. Marriage Institution	4. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC);
5. Educational Institution	5. Social Media;
6. Health Institution	6. Civil Society Organizations;
7. Religious Institution	7. Tiers of Government- Federal, State, Local Government;
8. Communicative Institutions	8. Armed Forces- The Army, Navy and Air Force;
9. Charitable Institutions	9. Paramilitary Institutions- Police and Civil Defence;
	10. Public Complains Commission;
	11. The legal Institutions- the Law Courts, Lawyers, Correctional Service, Legal aid Council, Legislature, Police Force;
	12. Enfranchised Nigerians;
	13. Economic Institutions– Farming Institutions, Trading/Marketing Institutions, Service Institutions and Financial Institutions – Bank Financial Institutions, the non-Banking Financial Institutions, International Financial Institutions.

Source: Mezieobi, K.A (2017). Essays on social studies.Owerri: Christopher Katukoma Publishing Company.

Some authors such as Olugbuyi & Adedirann (2010); Ahamefula and Nnajiето (2013), Obike and Edim (2015): Ebirim; Uzoagbu; Ohizu and Oyeacha (2015) have in their discourse on social institutions included political and economic institutions in their catalogue of social institutions. This inclusion may be have been informed by the truism that all institution name them – social, political and economic – focus largely on man and his wellbeing. Man in his striving to satiate his needs that are impinging on the social, political and economic life of

a nation must of unavoidable necessity be effectuated through cordially established interpersonal or interactions. The same is true in the drive of the majority of persons in a society solve basic problems affecting them negatively and emanating from social political and economic dimensions of national life. It is, therefore the quality of interactions or interpersonal relationship involved in social institution and all other institutions subsumed in them – political and economic - that give social institutions their long-acclaimed relevance.

Education: Bestriding social Institutions as a Colossus

There is no worthy identification, pinpointing, highlighting or categorization of social institutions that can sideline education and educational institutions. The place of qualitative, functional, applicable or usable education in giving untold fillip or functional relevance in whatever dimensions of social institutions are unquantifiable. It is qualitative education that can propel the effectiveness and efficiency of any social institution, name it, or mar it if that education is of a very poor quality. It is in total recognition of the monumental place of education in serving as an inevitable performance stimulator that made Ebirim; Uzoabga; ohizu and oyeocha (2015 pps. 120-121) to opine that “education is (not just) one of man’s social institutions... throughout the world, education has become a vast and complex social institution” such as the core social institutions and the affiliated social institutions such as the political and economic institutions.

Education, with emphasis on qualitative and functional education, is fundamental to the invigoration of all other forms of social institutions. Given this aphorism, the auspicious question at this juncture is: What is that education holds in its storehouse that it (education) doles out to the other kinds of social institutions in order to energize them to perform their optimal best? The answer to this query is not far to seek. If as it is Nigeria, as a sovereign geo-polity, is a preponderating illiterate society and the literacy index of Nigeria is lamentably too poor or very low, it commonsensical follows that the mass of Nigeria populace is wallowing in crass ignorance that is counter- productive or inimical to the desired functionality of the social institutions. Functional “education takes away the ignorance”(Uriah in Birabil & ifediora, 2015 p.10) that is pervasive and mitigates the effective functioning of the social institutions.

Besides gravely emasculating ignorance that tends to thwart effective functional performance of the social institutions, education that is perfectly delivering its dividends to the people and the society undertakes the onerous task of imbuing its recipients with the desired cognition or critical intellectual skills or wherewithal that will make humans:

1. Understand what social institutions means in all their ramifications.
2. Come to terms with the bewildering array of the expansive scope of social institutions;
3. Appreciate the place of functional social institutions in the lives of Nigerians and societal stability and its accompanying social order;
4. Know the directions to go to thwart all factors or forces that tend to work against the efficiency of any social institution;
5. come to grip with the road map to thread to make the social institutions be high gear- prone in effective performance of their role to human and society.

6. Make humans susceptible to accepting modernizing or social changes that enhance the effectiveness of social institutions.
7. Engineer educational researches that will open up better frontiers in the longevity of social institutions;
8. Make the education conscious of the fact that no matter the import or premium attached to some social institutions such as the family institution considered as the “oldest social institution in human history” (Oloya, 2013 p.181) or as Mezieobi and Opara in Mezieobui (2013 p.1) described it (the family institution as) “the parent (social institution) of all other (social) institution in view of the fact that from the family emerges human actors in all other institutions...” and the consideration of education as one of the ‘five major institutions’, all social institutions “are interrelated in a number of (cooperative) ways” (Ebirim et al,2015 p.120).

The other roles of education that exert positive effects on the social institutions include the fact that education is ordinarily affective intense laden when appropriately harnessed such that when learners are guided to acquire the right kind of values, with their embedded good character and attitudinal habitable disposition that will attune social institutions to giving the best of all they hold in the interest of humans and the society.

When education makes make it possible for positive values, desirable behaviour, attitudes and good character to reign supreme and become our culture- the way we do things now in actual life habituation or practices, these will have a tremendous and catalytic positive effect in all social institutions. This will come to effective play in our lives and whatever problems that currently militate against the effective performance of the social institutions and, therefore, cast aspersions on their existence, will be scuttled.

When the Litany of social institutions in any society are admirably delivering their functions in high gear with a minimum of manageable problems, the glory goes to functional education that has done its work very positively – re-invigoration or rejuvenation-wise-on those social institutions. At this point, education is positively driving in realistic terms all the social institutions. When the picture is surreal, education has failed in its functions in gingering the social institutions to fruitful performance.

Education Motoring Effective Social Institutions in Nigeria: The Situation Is More Farcical Than Real

Formal Education in 1842 made its debut in the geo-polity today referred to Nigeria. This was the instrumentality of the British colonial administration that had administrative dominion over colonial Nigeria. There is, therefore, no gainsaying the fact that colonial education in Nigeria birthed a good number of social institutions and reinforced the existence of some other existing traditional social institutions such as indigenous education, the family, marriage. Religious institution even if that was an unsophisticated level at the time.

From Nigeria’s flag or political independence on October 1, 1960 and particularly from 1982 when the first Nigerians made in 1976 Educational Policy were not into full operation – implementation wise, consciousness of effective social institutions become rife or was stimulated by the injection of social institutions of all brand as curricula artifacts in Nigeria’s educational system.

Formal Education Bequeathed to Nigeria by Colonial Britain

Among the negative perspective of the education which colonial Britain bequeathed to Nigeria as described by Phillip- Ogoh and Apkan (2021 p.163) are that:

The British colonial masters in Nigeria were not concerned with qualitative education...(that will effectively elicit the dividends of social institutions). The curricula which the British implemented in Nigerian schools were British-oriented and did not in any way address the (social institutional) needs, lives and aspirations of Nigerians and, therefore, was very irrelevant to our context. British education in the grab of Nigerian education in Nigerian soil, dealt a deadly blow on Nigeria's indigenous culture.

The Nature of Nigeria's Education Supposedly Conveying Social Institutions to their Desired Performance Effectiveness

Since the exits of the colonial Britain from Nigeria following decolonization after Nigeria gained her red flag independence, formal educational undertaking in Nigeria has totally become the preserve of Nigeria her people in terms of control and implementation. Irrespective of the fact that our colonial exploiters masterminding our educational enterprise in colonial Nigeria had exited, living Nigeria's education to our hand in control and direction, Nigeria's education that is supposedly motoring all the dimensions of social institutions is disappointingly characterized by all negatives that tend markedly to truncate the effectiveness of these social institutions.

The following educational drawbacks will suffice to highlight the surreal nature of Nigeria's education that is developmentally entrusted with giving movement-fillip to the diverse social institutions. Nigeria's gory educational portrait is evidenced by the fact that Nigeria's education is crassly unstable as its educational system is grossly susceptible to educational crossover. Philip-Ogoh and Akpan (2021 p. 164) vividly represented this truism when they averred, and we concur, that since:

Nigeria's flag independence on the 1st October, 1960, we have not put in place a stable education system. We have gravitated from the 7-3-2-3 in the 1970s, 6-3-3-4 from 1982 – 2007, from 2007 to 2024, Nigeria is into the 1-9-3-4 education system perhaps on experimental bases.

Besides, Nigeria's educational system's brand incertitude, irrespective of the fact that functional "education is dead to hold the key to the doo of real (social institutions' motored) national development, Nigeria pays lip service or passing attention (if any attention at all) to education with ridiculous annual budget to it" (Mezieobi, Mezieobi and Mezieobi, 2013 p. 76).

The other educational related factors that are mitigating effective institutionalization of all dimensions of social institutions in varied ways include "Nigeria's" education philosophy... (not attuned to squarely addressing) Nigeria's (social institutions') educational (tailored) peculiarities and societal realities", (Philip Ogoh and Akpan, 2021 p. 164), the preponderance of 'cheaters' in t5the grab of teachers and invariably poor quality teachers. Mezieobi, Nwosu, Essien and mezieobi (2017 pps.225-226) succinctly and made this point when the posited that "excessive educational politicking (in Nigeria's educational context) has occasioned that injection of poor quality caliber of teachers into the educational institution who have nothing educative (in actuality) to offer as they cannot give what they do not have".

Consequent on the foregoing Nigeria's educational debilities that has ripple negative effects on social institutions' effective performance, coupled with the fact that "most policies of (Nigeria's) educational system are not (effectively implemented as planned ...," (olubuyi and Adedirian, 2010 p.65), Nigeria has physical school without real education as there is no meaningful (or tangible) teaching and learning going on in our educational institutions" (Philip -Ogoh and Akpan (2021 p.164), most graduate of educational institution cannot express themselves...."(Osakwe,2009 p.38)in English language with ease, they also "Jack sabale (entrepreneurial and)practical (desirable social skills...(and) are intellectually and affectively incapacitated...." (Mezieobi, *et al*, 2013 p.76).

Some of the other myriad of factors which are brazen indicators of Nigeria's educational slumbering include the fact that disrespect in truism that Information and Communication Technology (ICT)facilities are in the contemporary globalized village tremendously impacting on effective educational delivery services that ordinarily should place social institutions in people's enjoyable constituency, Mezieobi and Irikana (2013 p.11) are not, as at today, happy that "ICT (in relation to education services delivery)in Nigeria.... Doesn't exist for now in reality..." Furthermore, with regard to educational leadership that should be the flag bearer in giving the right educational direction to go which positively impact on all social institutions, it (educational leadership (in Nigeria is an all-comers field. Ezekiel-Hart and Adiele (2010 p.195) condemned this unprofessional practice when they wept that "in many instance, it is only in... (are) appointed to head (in education ministry, educational institutions of all types), whereas other professions, such as, health and justice are always headed by a professional".

Everything rationally considered, the surreal portrait of Nigeria's education that should ordinarily give vent to the right kind of social institutions, with minimal of problems, have been given all demanding names such as poor quality education, failed education and Nigeria has no "qualitative educational future" (Mezieobi, *et al*, 2013 p.76), if the current Nigeria's educational debilities in their negative sustenance.

The Question as to whether or not education in Nigeria is realistically driving social institution to the right efficacious direction

Let it be unequivocally reiterated that education, qualitative education though only powerful instrument that has the capacity to drive all manner of social institutions to the desired efficacious station. In the vein, therefore, functional education is not only the parent social institution in that it makes or mars the effectiveness of the social institutions, (education) in itself is a social institution.

If education in Nigeria is saddled with bewildering litany of the bottlenecks or problems follows that education in Nigeria is not positively and satisfactory impacting on all the dimensions of social institutions -the principal and the associated social institutions. If this is true as it were in the context of Nigeria, it will be basking in the euphoria of the false sense of education realistically driving other social institutions, education inclusive, to their desired effective performance. The obverse is farcical in high gear. To put it straight, it is very unreal to ascribe the effective functioning of any social institution, in Nigeria to education stimulating or being catalytic to it.

The ineffectiveness of education in Nigeria in positively bolstering the performance of all the other social institutions in Nigeria is amplified or attested to by the fact that all social institutions in Nigeria are existing in sheer name and performing at ludicrous insignificant index. Taking the family institution for example Virginia Amadi in Mezieobi, Nwosu, Essien and Mezieobi and Ruth wali-Essien (2021 p.196)also pointing at the distressed marital situation in Nigeria, averred that "marriage

problems (in Nigeria) are on the increase with many people (supposedly in marriage) adopting the empty-shell marriage option as a cover up”

There is no aspect of social institutions in Nigeria that is not characterized by an overdose of problems scuttling its effectiveness. Mezieobi, Nwosu, Essien and Mezieobi (2017 pps.229-30), gave bird’s eye -view of the problems of the Nigeria’s Health institution when they opined that:

...most health institution in Nigeria is existing in sheer name as they lack not only the right caliber of professionally qualified medical personnel but also the requisite medical equipment and facilities in their ... (surreal) dilapidation... Hospital is sidelined when nurses, pharmacists, unqualified chemists are everywhere diagnosing ailments and diseases (with reckless abandon) and administering drugs. In our health context, illiterates hawk drugs and our people (even the educated) are subscribers.

With specific reference to religious institutions in Nigeria and their bewildering array of problems, Mezieobi *et al*, (2017 p.234) noted that irrespective of their “... overdose... religious intolerance has reached uncontrollable dimensions such that they have degenerated into perpetual religious conflicts...” Also unveiling the problems of religious Institutions in Nigeria, Ken Mezieobi *et al*, (2017 p.235) also informed that “the proliferation of ...religious institution (in Nigeria)... is not connected with the (founders) quest for (intense- laden) quest for monetary and materials’ acquisition...”

In addition, the communicative institutions charitable institutions, political institutions, democratic institutions, legal institutions, economic institutions of all types such as the “... farming institutions... service institutions; and ... financial institutions” (Mezieobi, Mezieobi, Jerry-Alagbaoso and Onyeagoro, 2017 p.249) are also deeply immersed in their given plethora of problems.

Conclusion

One who has understanding grips of what social institutions are all about and who has realistically, as an insider critical observer in Nigeria, taken a cursory panoramic overview of how education, itself a social institution and powerful instrument conveying other types of social institutions supposedly to their effective performance stations, will simply, in the context of Nigeria, leap into the inescapable conclusion that education in Nigeria has abysmally failed in showcasing its worth in being catalytic to effective performance of social institutions in Nigeria. This stance is exemplified by the many problems staring all brands of social institutions in the face which have defied well-articulated remedies.

Recommendations

Given the preponderating non-performance circumstances of all social institutions in Nigeria, for social institutions in our context to be jolted into their expected levels of effective performance, Education in Nigeria, which is the propelling force of all social institutions, should be subjected to a drastic reinvigorating-motored review by professional educational pundits in all disciplines encapsulated in Education as a distinct professional field of study. The die is cast if the political class will give the survival of education and social institutions a chance to thrive devoid educational propagandizing.

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