

## Quality Education and National Development: The Nexus

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2025.v09i03.003>

| Received: 28.01.2025 | Accepted: 04.03.2025 | Published: 06.03.2025

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### Abstract

The paper examined the fact that all over the world, countries develop in accordance with the quality of education. That is the quality education in any country depended largely on the extent to which its challenges were addressed. The paper explored some of the possible challenges impeding the realization of quality education in Nigeria such as quality teachers, learners and environment, arguing that access to quality education definitely would ensure societal balance, promote accountability, stability and prevent resorting to anarchy. In this paper concept like quality education and national development were conceptualized. By way of recommendations, the paper took the position among others that quality teachers in terms of training and re-training as well as adequate unavoidable infrastructural facilities should be provided for the development of the individual and society.

**Keywords:** Quality Education, National Development, Educational Challenges, Teacher Quality, Learner Quality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Countries of the world usually develop according to the quality of their education. Hence, achieving quality is not a simple business, but relevant activities have to be planned, organized, coordinated and controlled before producing quality education. Quality of education of any country depends on the extent to which the obstacles and challenges to quality education are overcome. Quality of education is important in the promotion of peace and security in a society. Quality education involves facilitation of knowledge acquisition, skills development and character development in order to attain all round development especially in relation to national philosophy and aspirations of the people.

In this paper, it is necessary to examine the concept of quality education vis-à-vis the concept of national development, how the former necessitated the later. Other issues to be examined and assessed, are quality of the environment, teacher, learner, curriculum content, material and teaching method, sufficient funding on education etc. in the educational delivery. It is established in this paper that the attainment of quality education also has certain implications for national development.

On this note, we shall examine critically the concept of quality education.

### Concept of Quality Education

According to Sulyman and Achor (2022:109), the word “quality” in the phrase “quality of education” is a descriptive term which means “excellent” “functional” “useful” “classy” that can lead to realization of desirable goals, outstanding, good. Education involves knowledge, skills, and character development that facilitate realization of total development of individuals and the society in line with values, needs and aspirations of the individuals and the society in this respect, quality education involves the quality process, quality products, quality policies and quality practices in educational system.

On the other hand, the United Nations children’s fund (UNICEF, 2000) described quality education as education that includes the following:

- a. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate in the process of learning supported in learning by their families and communities.

- b. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective, responsive to gender differences, and provide adequate resources and facilities.
- c. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills in numeracy, literacy, and life skills, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
- d. Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well managed classroom and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate and reduce disparities and
- e. Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and as linked to national goals for education and positive participation in the society.

In the above description, UNICEF captures the learners, environment, content, processes and outcomes. UNICEF also opined that quality education involves knowledge, skills and attitudes that are meant for realizing national goals. UNICEF (2000) affirmed that definition of quality education must be open to change depending on the understanding of nature of education's challenges. Glasser (1990) points out that systems that respond to change through research finding and self-assessment are more likely to offer quality education to students.

Here, education differs from quality of education. Quality of education is the level at which educational system responds to the needs and aspirations of the people as expressed in the national education goals. Quality of education may be high or low. The high quality of education can be called quality education.

Furthermore, any processes that people call education but lack features of quality education or that cannot lead to inclusive development, are not qualified to be called quality education. Quality education has the ability to equip individuals and the society with strategies to coping with challenges that life presents and overcoming them, at both present and future times. Quality education make individuals relevant to a reasonable degree in all societies because it focuses on the values of particular societies as well as the universal values of human race (Sulyman and Achor, 2022:110). Quality is at the heart of education.

One of the aim of this paper is to take into account the global and international influences that propel the discussion of educational quality, while ensuring that national and local educational contexts contribute to definition of quality in varying countries. The great concern is how to establish appropriate meaning of quality education. To this question Adams in Usman and Sani Tuni (2021:264) maintains that establishing a contextualized understanding of quality

education means including relevant stakeholders in educational delivery as details below:

### Quality Learners

Quality learners are the learners who have zeal for learning, express their zeal and able to cope with the learning physical, psychological and social challenges and achieve the goals of learning which involve knowledge, skills and positive character necessary for total development of individual and the society. Quality learners are ready to give their best for teaching and learning to take place. Such learner are ready to give their best for teaching and learning to take place. Such learner are ready to give their best and spend their money to obtain the learning materials which are surprised to be provided by the school administration parents or government personnel. Quality learner spend most of their time studying and gathering knowledge and wisdom. They are ready to go anywhere in the world because to them, learning is the best achievements and the fearless key to unlock the most precious opportunities in life. Quality learners may become leaders of nations tomorrow and encourage best access to quality education. Quality learners can explore their natural and social environments with no or little help from teacher. They possess all beautiful qualities individuals may have with respect to learning. They are progressive in their learning and their search for knowledge is continuous. Quality learners can be of average age. Outside the classroom, quality learners explore the environment to acquire more knowledge. Quality learners may be the product of strong motivation and enlightenment from teachers, parents and counsellors.

Again, quality learners are explained in relation to good health and nutrition, positive early childhood experiences, regular attendance for learning and family support for learning. McCain & Mustard (1999 in Sulyman & Anchor 2022:111) explain that children with physical, psychological and social health are active and successful in learning in schools. Adequate nutrition is key to healthy brain development in early years and early detection and intervention for disabilities which can give the individual children opportunities to develop healthily. Prevention of infections, injuries and diseases are also important for children and other learners can be ensured through proper medicare, proper rest, intake of healthy air as oxygen, regular physical exercise, and so on. William (2000) asserts that positive early childhood and interactions are also important for preparing quality learners. William (2000) further notes that family support for learning which also determines quality learners, depends on parents' level of educational qualification – the higher the parents qualification, the higher the students performance, and vice versa. William may be right on this, but teaching the children to understand and become quality learners is more than just qualification. There may be parents with qualification in higher education but lack adequate method of teaching

which is very critical to imparting knowledge and skills into the learners.

Akinsanya (2015) clarifies that one of the past philosophers of education, Pestalozzi laid serious emphasis on home education as the foundation of personality development of the learner. Pestalozzi identified the parents, especially the mother as the first teacher training them through their senses, guiding their observation of natural environment, drawing them into work activities, contributing to the welfare of family and the society. As part of family support, parents motivate, praise, rebuke the learners for their progress in education. Parents and other family members provide financial support to students for obtaining necessary materials for learning.

### Quality Teachers

Quality teachers are the centre of organization and realization of quality education. Quality teacher are best measured by the quality of its teachers, quality teachers are passionate about teaching and learning, as they impart knowledge and skills, they also acquire more knowledge and skills as they focus on their professional development which facilitates quality learning. Craig, Kraft & Du Plessis (1998) note that case studies of Botswana Bangladesh, Guatemala, Namibia and Pakistan revealed that ongoing professional development of teachers contributed significantly to students learning and retention.

Sulyman and Achor (2022:114) presented the following characteristics of quality teacher thus:

- i) Quality teachers possess basic and advanced knowledge of teaching and pedagogical skills to translate their knowledge into practice.
- ii) Quality teachers possess minimum and higher qualifications for entering teaching possession.
- iii) Quality teachers are punctual and regular in the class
- iv) They possess scientific attitudes which are highly methodical in teaching
- v) Motivates the learners for more learning, make adequate use of learning materials, and employ learner centre approach in which learners needs, abilities and interests are considered.
- vi) Quality teachers teach in compliance with national goals.
- vii) Quality teacher plan or re-plan lessons before they start teaching so that their teaching can be efficient.
- viii) Quality teachers cooperate with administrators, counsellors, other teachers parents and others in order give and receive information that is critical to quality education of the learners.
- ix) Quality teachers possess adequate knowledge of their learners personality traits so that the teachers can make intelligent decision on the learners affair.

- x) They are skilled in evaluating the learners achievement so that they can know the next step to take towards quality education.
- xi) They are philosophers as they are critical, dynamic, original through and logical in their thinking, presentations and actions.
- xii) They have developed in all three domains of educational objectives, cognitive, effective and psychomotor, and also try to develop learners in the domains.

Philosophers of education like Dewey affirmed that for the success of educational activities and to promote quality education, teachers organize and moderate learners, learning experiences based on the psychological traits of the learners. Quality teachers may employ methods like project method, learning by doing and group learning (Oyelade, 2018). Existentialist philosophers of education explained quality teachers as teachers who help learners realize their potentials and make rational decisions. Quality teachers according to existentialism, employ socratic methods, role playing and drama (Akinpelu, 1990). Agatha (2015) notes that quality teachers are good communicators, calm, possess good sense of humour good time management and utilization skills, fair evaluation, possess detailed teaching plans, good mastery of the subject they teach, dedication to their professional services and excellent leadership skills. In addition, quality teacher relate their teaching to life experiences of the learners for understanding of the content. In line with this, Verwimp (1999) in Sulyman & Achor (2022:115); reported that the interview of Ethiopian teachers revealed that their teaching was learner centred and related to students' needs because they related the lessons to daily life experiences of the learners.

### Quality Environment

Learning environments are vital to ensuring quality education learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational system happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements. Quality physical learning environment involves quality school facilities which include strongly built and well-equipped building, not dilapidated ones (UNICEF, 2000). Carron & Chau (1996) submitted that research findings showed there is a relationship between learning and quality of schools buildings. Philosophers of education such as Rousseau, Dewey and Montessori laid emphasis on importance of conducive learning environment to promote quality learning experience (Akinpelu, 1990).

Quality learning environment is healthy not polluted so that the students can be healthy. Standard play grounds that contain basketball court, football field, and many more are in place as sport is part of cocurricular activities. Religious places are also ideal

features of quality learning environment since the learners are interested in practicing their religions, and this practice should be done in the secure and covered place. Physical features of quality learning environment include proper drainage, water system, good lighting, adequate ventilation, banks, hospitals and many more. More, the class size of quality learning environment is spacious enough to accommodate the learners conveniently.

Psychosocial component of the ideal quality learning environment involve safety, peace, positive interpersonal relationships as well as happy events. Promoting safety in a learning environment is a collective responsibility of all the stakeholders in education. All the threats to the security of learning environment are annihilated. The threats may include cultism, rape, robbery, murder, and so on. When there is safety peace or non-violence usually follows. World Health Organization (1998) affirms that violence had adverse effects on emotional and behavioral states of the students and these may affect their learning.

Quality environment enhances happiness of the learners through beautiful experiences in the environment, clubs and societies, celebrations, and more. Sutton (1999) stresses that for a learning environment to be a quality, peaceful and great one, there is need for zero level of discrimination among the learners and others with different identities. In some places, girls are denied access to quality education. According to Sulyman & Achor (2022), to pave way for girls education, Republic of Guinea increased girls enrolment from 17 percent (1989) to 37 percent (1997). Craig, Craft & Du Plessis (1998) averred that policies can be made to promote quality learning environment and curb rape, drug abuse, sexism and more. Mitchell (1995) opines that quality learning environment is inclusive as it accommodates and caters for proper development of both normal and special children UNICEF (2000) reports that all other categories of learners are also captured in the quality learning environment.

### Quality Process

Until recently, much discussion of educational quality centered on system inputs such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content, regular payment of salaries and allowance may encourage teachers to offer their best for learners development. Also adequate monitoring and supervision by different bodies that range from school administrators quality assurance agencies, ministries of education, education boards and many more, are parts of quality education. Obanya (1995) argues that the use of home language to teach primary school learners can enhance their comprehension. However, studies revealed that many Africans still resist the use of local language to teach; they rather prefer the use of the foreign and official language, even at the elementary levels of education. Many parents and teachers believe that learning in the

mother tongue can later impair the use of English or French language.

### Quality Outcomes

The environment, content and processes that learners encounter in school lead to diverse results, some intended and unintended. Quality learner outcomes are intentional, expected effects of the educational system. They include what children know and can do, as well as the attitude and expectations they have for themselves and their societies. Hence quality outcomes usually go with desirable aims and objectives set in an educational policy since educational efforts are usually directed towards realizing the aims and objectives, the outcomes are the products of educational system and are probably the most desired aspects of education. No matter how great the processes are, if the outcomes are defective, the processes may be rated poor. This research classifies possible quality outcomes of educational system into seven which are intellectual development and excellence, social development and excellence, moral development and excellence, and spiritual development and excellence.

### Quality Content

Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools. National goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curriculum. Quality curriculum or content cater for both local and national interest (UNICEF, 2000). Quality content or curriculum facilitates meaningful development of learners through teaching and learning of certain subjects. For example, philosophy is another subject which promote critical reasoning, wisdom and knowledge acquisition and deep intellectual imagination. Philosophy is embedded in all aspects of learning. Critical reasoning, wisdom, deep imagination and knowledge are needed for quality personal and societal living.

Akinsanya (2015) submit that Plato, Aristotle Nyerere, Awolowo, Solarin and Akinpelu contributed their views on curriculum of quality education, plato suggested music, poetry, literature, arithmetic as content of elementary school and gymnastics to prepare the learners to become members of the armed forces. The philosopher king in plato's philosophy of education should be taught geometry, astronomy and arithmetics, it serves a mean for training to leadership. Aristotle's curriculum featured reading, writing, gymnastics, music and drawing Nyerere, an African and Tanzania philosopher, had his curriculum as education for self-reliance which he believed should make all Tanzania learners self-dependent. As part of self-reliance curriculum, Nyerere argued that all schools should embrace farming which is indigenous to Tanzania and many African societies. Looking at this argument, it can be said that Nyerere embraced agricultural science as



part his quality curriculum. Others are Awolowo, who had free education at the centre of his philosophy of education. While Solarin's quality curriculum involves humanist education, vocational education as well as intellectual subjects, Akinpelu (1990) in his criticism of R.S. Peters' concept of education for its excessive emphasis on intellectual development. He then redefined concept of education in educated man to include all aspects of development, intellectual, economic, political, social, moral, and cultural. He described educated man as a person who shows evidence of well-integrated personality and who is fully developed as a person and in his or her relation to others. It can be inferred from this definition that Akinpelu's quality curriculum would be an inclusive one, designed for total development.

Specifically, his curriculum would include moral education, political studies, social studies, economics, rational studies such as philosophy and mathematics and other subjects that contain culture of the society such as language studies, history, anthropology, and more. It should be noted that all these philosophers ideas are parts of quality curriculum because the ideas are meant to satisfy certain human needs. Quality curriculum involves all areas of learning because all areas of learning are useful in certain ways.

Having discussed some of the sub-sector as it concerned quality education, it would be necessary to discuss processes for achieving and dimension of quality education.

### **Processes for Achieving and Dimension of Quality Education**

Adam in Usman and Sani-Tum (2021:265) provide some possible quality education should undergo. In this presentation, five related processes such as seeks out learners who are to learn should be in good health and nutrition, early childhood psychosocial development experiences, regular attendance for learning thus quality learner.

Two, for quality education to take place, learning environment should provide and sufficient learning ground and up to date, libraries as well as teaching materials. Three, curriculum content should be of excellent standard and to reflect national goals intended to be achieved by education. This means that any attempt to include less quality and irrelevant contents in the curriculum will end up in producing poor and non-directional education four, quality process in education is also important in achieving quality education. This suggest that both teachers and administrators should make good use of teaching input to outline the best teaching and learning of student. Five, before education should be called qualitative, the outcome of the entire education should be of high standard.

From the above analysis, the dimension of the Quality education become necessary. Usman and Sani

Tuni (2021:265) presented six keys dimension of quality education which include, seeks out learners and assist them to learn; reflect what the learners bring to his/her learning; take into account educational content, examine the processes of education; situate the learning environment and provide an enabling environment that is right-based with appropriate Managerial and Administrative system. This implies that for education to be qualitative, right learners should be selected and assisted for learning, teaching method should reflect learner's previous knowledge, educational content should be relevant to the societal needs, process of education should be critically examined, leaning environment should be clearly positioned and provided with appropriate managerial and administrative delivery.

Apart from the above, another different approach has distinguished other six dimension of quality education different from the above in outlook. These dimension are equity, contextualization and relevance, sustainability, balanced approach, learning outcomes and fundamental principle in education. According to these theory terms are worthy to be observed if quality education has to be achieved.

**Equity:** This term refers to non-discrimination in education equity in education means that personal and social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving educational and all that individual reach at least a basic minimum level of skills.

**Contextualization and Relevance:** Quality education cannot be based on a blue print that is applicable in all situations, solutions and adaptation of education system must be based on real needs of a country and/ or community.

**Sustainability:** Educational change processes often need time to be realized. By enhancing the capacities of local children authorities, this is aims to institutionalize these processes.

**Balanced Approach:** Quality education aims at developing a balanced set of capabilities of children. They require becoming economically productive, developing sustainable livelihoods, contributing to peaceful and democratic societies and enhancing individual wellbeing.

**Learning Outcomes:** After completing a certain level of education, children must have developed a minimum standard of skills. Quality education requires a result-oriented approach.

**Fundamental Principle:** it is firmly believed that quality education can only be achieved if equity and particularly gender equity, us achieve quality education " which tends to achieve quality education, there must be no discrimination in education delivery, the rule of

equity and justice must be followed, content of education should be followed, content of education should always be tandem with community needs, education system should be allowed to continue to exist over times, education should produce a balanced development in a learner at the end of the education a learner should be able to show a good standard of learning and equity in gender most especially must to be observed. According to this theory, to achieve quality education, these six distinctive parts must be obeyed and followed concurrently.

For better understanding of conceptual meaning of quality education which education has to be ensured to achieve quality education. The different variables influencing the processes of teaching and learning as contained in the framework are: learner characteristic--- - What learners bring to the experiences, socio-economic background, place of residence, health, cultural and religious background are important determinant of quality learning. Context-societal for education. Input--- the success of teaching/learning is influenced by the availability of material and human resources. The management of the resources is also important in determining the quality of education provided. Outcome often expressed in term of measurable learning objectives through test and examination performance. Proxies for learner achievement such as economic gains from employment are sometimes.

### **The Dynamics Nature of Quality Education and Nigerian's national Policy on Education**

Next in this discourse, other scholars believed that quality education is dynamic Concept. It evolves with time and it's subject to social, economic and environmental conditions. To buttress this opinion, international human right law provides the general legal frame work that guarantees quality education even in a changing situation. These laws are itemized and discussed briefly.

Aims of education beyond literacy and numeracy skills: according to article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human right and fundamental freedoms" Based on this international legal framework, student must receive a quality education that enabled that their personalities, talents and abilities to live a full and satisfying life within society. The aims of education go far beyond acquiring numeracy and literacy skills. Basic skills also includes life's skills such as ability to make well balanced decision, to resolve conflict in responsibility, critical thinking, creative talent and other abilities which give children the tools needed to pursue their option in life.

Again, the curriculum, teaching materials/methods must meet the aims of education as defined by international law. At primary and secondary

levels, education has to be child-centered, child friendly and empowering. Education must be provided in a way that respect the inherent dignity of the child and enables the child to express his or her view and to participate in school life. Any stereotyped concept of the role of men and women has to be eliminated from text books and school Programs and teaching methods has to be adopted. Education has to be adapted to children with disabilities and to particular cultural contexts.

In the spirit of dynamism, the following are expected in our educational system: The learning environment should be adequate, safe and non-violent for teaching and learning. There should be availability of classroom, libraries, laboratories etc. others are teachers, finance.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), the national philosophy contains unity, harmony, democracy, sovereignty freedom, equality, justice, inter-African solidarity, global peace and understanding. These can be regarded as quality philosophy as well as quality desired outcome of a nation. These can be regarded as quality desired outcome of a nation. These can be regarded as quality philosophy as well as quality desired outcomes of a nation development and social change, progressive and united Nigerian, maximization of creative potential and skills for individual for self fulfilment and general development of the society education for all and education that is qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the need of the society. The goal of the Nigerian education include development of morally sound, patriotic and effective citizens, integration of individuals into the immediate community show that Nigeria pursues quality education in policy. The philosophy and goals are to direct the educational activities of Nigeria towards realizing the goals when the quality goals are realized, they become quality overcome or quality products. Quality curriculum of Nigerian education designed to turn the goals to outcome includes sciences, social sciences, vocational subject, humanities, education and art at the basic, post-basic and tertiary levels with specific objectives in consonance with goals of Nigerian education. Nigerian education is inclusive as it includes the special learners, the normal and others categories of children.

According to Amaele (2019:115) in presenting a true picture of what National philosophy on Education should be, argues that the philosophy of a nation should therefore determine it philosophy of education. The aim and objectives of education in Nigeria, facilities required, teaching and non-teaching staff, school curriculum, environment, funding, structure, even products among others should reflect the genuine outfit of Pragmatism. Hence, further stressed that, the school curriculum, environment, teachers administration, structure, funding, policies etc. should be provided, examined and assessed within the genuine standard of

pragmatism, which usually refer to as practical orientation. It is the philosophy of workability, functionality and result oriented. All these are largely advocated in Nigerian's education policy but quality education is limited in reality in Nigerian. There are many obstacle and challenges in Nigeria that hinder realization of quality education. These includes quality learning, quality learning, environment, quality teachers. Others are quality curriculum, quality outcomes, quality process etc.

### Implication of Quality Education for National Development

National development is achievement of desirable things and continuous positive change that takes place in the country. Quality education is great instrument for enhancing development in nation. The following implication of quality education are presented in this study by showing the relationships between quality education and other variables.

The later 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the national policy on education stated that:

Education in Nigeria is an instrument "Par excellence" for affecting national development. It has witnessed active participation by non-government agencies communication and individual as well as government intervention (FRN 2004:111)

According to Amaele (2019: 133), it does not require the services of a prophet or a soothsayer or a philosopher to explain the scenario that makes for the serious decline now witnessed in quality and standard of education presently in Nigeria. Hence this also explains the reason for the growing rate of unemployment, social and political crisis, economic and religious misapplication, as well as general insecurity and violence in the country. Education in Nigeria has shifted from government interest (public interest) to private (personal) interest. The national annual budget for education for over a decade now is unimaginably low and highly regrettable. Studies across some public primary and secondary school in parts of the country revealed a high level of abandonment in the area of funding, human resources, teaching and learning, facilities, supervision, school laboratories, libraries, etc. The present reality in Nigeria education negates the "philosophy of Nigeria", which principally is to "live in unity and harmony as an indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principle of freedom, equality and justice (FRN 2014:4).

Implication of quality education for national development include solution to problems listed above on that note, quality education should be prompted more in realities in Nigeria.

### CONCLUSION

Education has been described as the bedrock of every society and tool for nation building. For quality education to be achieved in a nation building. For quality education to be achieved in a nature, the principal actor of learning who are the teachers, learners and the environment must be cooperatively organized. In other words, the teacher must be adequate in quality and quantity, the student must be well trained and facilities must be provided as well. Of recent, it has been established or discovered that the proliferation and rapid establishment of private schools and institution in Nigeria has been strongly related to the lack of confidence in the Nigeria's education system which has adverse effect on the development of the nation. Lastly, the Government, parent, teachers, learners and other stakeholders should be at best contribute their quota to intellectual, physical moral, social, emotional, economic and spiritual development of the individuals and the society.

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