

## ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS IN RE-ASSESSING NIGERIA'S POLICY ON EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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### Abstract

*In today's highly competitive global economy, achieving and sustaining global competitiveness is a necessity for any nation. Nigeria, as a developing economy, is no exception. Nigeria's education policy needs to be regularly re-assessed in order to ensure that the nation remains competitive. Administrators are at the forefront of making such assessments, as they must be equipped with the necessary practical, theoretical, and technological expertise to identify those areas of Nigeria's education policy which need to be improved, and to develop solutions accordingly. This paper therefore discussed the role of administrators in re-assessing Nigeria's policy on education for global competitiveness. The paper explored the challenges associated with Nigeria's education system. Specifically, the paper also focused on the lack of resources and quality assurance strategies, the high cost of tuition, and the lack of access to technology within Nigeria's classrooms. Next, the paper analyzed the role of administrators in addressing these challenges and strategies which decision-makers can employ to ensure that schools and universities within Nigeria are adequately equipped to meet the demands of a globally competitive economy. The paper concluded by highlighting the importance of an effective administrative approach in re-assessing Nigeria's policy on education for global competitiveness. It considered the implications of this approach, both for the nation's economic development and for the future of its educational system. The paper helped to develop an understanding of the unique role of administrators in driving change for a more competitive Nigeria.*

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**Keywords:** Education, school administrators, global competitiveness

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### Introduction

In recent years, the global education landscape has witnessed significant changes, driven by advances in technology, evolving economic demands, and shifting social paradigms. These situation has a far reaching effects on our globe. Foremost among these issues are: economic competitiveness and market share; sustainability; identity within globalization (including of information, commerce and people and their cultures); equity; and, increasingly, the role of public institutions, including education, in helping to curb the world of these concomitant challenges. To remain competitive on the world stage, Nigeria, like many other nations, must adapt and refine its education policies to meet these changing demands. Administrators, who occupy pivotal positions within the educational system, serve

as key influencers and implementers of these policy changes. Their decisions and actions have far-reaching implications for the quality of education in Nigeria and its ability to prepare students for global challenges. Therefore, any educational policy that wishes to compete and be relevant at the world stage must reflect and proffer solutions to these aforementioned world's problems, hence, such policy should be re-assessed. According to (OECD, 2001), "Education has moved up the political agenda and is seen as the key to unlocking not just social but also economic problems". The society we have, including the identity and cohesion within that society and its understanding and acceptance of other societies, is seen to be largely created in our schools. Education remains vital institution to offer partnership to national and international agencies in reshaping our society through research and practical solution. Education helps people make sense of the changes as well as fostering sustainability, including through lifelong learning. The creation, acquisition, communication and wise use of knowledge are of particular importance in global competitiveness. Therefore, society's most important investment is increasingly seen to be in the education of its people, hence, our educational policy need to be re-assessed to reflect problem-solving for global competitiveness than mere learning, because the society suffer in the absence of good education but prosper in its presence.

In this situation of high expectations of educational provision in solving world's problems, the school administrators have an enormous responsibility. Based on this, Fullan (2002) argued that, "Effective school administrators are key to large-scale and sustainable education reform". On this regard, school administrator's role are not limited to policy making alone. Also, they are generally seen to be taking more important roles in making sure that schools engage in practical and problem-solving education in other to address the world's problem and compete globally. In view of the above, this research work will examine how school administrators can strengthen the recruitment, development, retention of teachers and promotion of student outcomes in other to compete globally for solving the problems of our society and the world at large.

### **Basic concepts:**

#### **School Administrators**

School administrators are employed to oversee the day-to-day functions in universities and colleges, elementary schools and high schools, preschools, and daycare centres. They manage routine activities, lay out future visions, and provide instructional leadership. School administrators work in every level of education. They may direct programming, hire and supervise staff, manage budgets, and make decisions that affect the academic community. They are also in charge of developing a direction and mission for the facility at which they work. According to Gürsel (2006) a school administrator is a person, who organizes and instructs school staff; and plans, coordinates and inspects works in order to achieve goals at school. The actual specific job functions for an education administrator varies depending on the institution of employment. In secondary schools, this job is usually the role of a principal and vice principals. In primary schools, its head master/mistress. Libraries and museums often employ administrators as instruction coordinators. In colleges and universities, education administrators are employed at all levels of the management structure -as admissions officers,

department heads, as deans and directors, provosts, rectors and vice chancellors. Making policies and procedures and setting educational aims and standards is the responsibility of school administrators. In small organizations, such as a daycare, there may be only one administrator in charge of all these duties. At larger institutions, such as universities or large school systems, several administrators share the workload, each having a specific responsibility. Administrators are leaders who take pride in their strategic planning, tremendous support in every sector, respect for the education system, including faculty, students, parents, and school board members. Often, administrators are professionals who manages multiple situations at once and work year round, unlike teachers that go on holiday. Apart from the day-to-day running of the school, among the duties of an administrator is preparation of budgets and proper allocation of funds for recurrent and capital expenditure in other to have for smooth running of the school.

### **The Role and Duties of School Administrators**

School administrators embrace the extremely important role of ensuring the system is operating effectively and efficiently. Those placed in administrative roles, such as a vice-chancellors, principals, deans, head of departments or head master; demonstrate a high level of excellent in every realm within education. Common roles of administrators are to ensure all schools, teachers, counsellors, are collaborating towards a common goal while improving standards and opportunities. Together, with proper leadership, school systems can meet goals set forth by school boards and foster students that are highly educated and prepared for their futures. Administration has exciting leadership opportunities, which often play large roles in forming curriculums, goals, budgets, timelines, state regulations, mandated testing, as well as performance measures to ensure all educators are able to meet personal and professional goals. Together, administrators and faculty will carve a path to success for all. Successful administrators form distinguished teams to support the goals and aspirations of students. With the assistance of vice principals, goals can be further achieved with greater outcome and acceptance. Administrators often learn techniques to relate to children of all ages, of all backgrounds. Having the capability to relate to children is not only essential to administrators, but also vital to the overall success of school districts and standardized testing. School districts must regulate per guidelines set forth at local, state and federal levels. Administrators must remain active in continuing education programs, often returning to leadership programs such as a doctoral degree. A master's degree is generally earned prior to entering an administrators role but this depends greatly on the school district and demand for administrators.

### **The role of School administrators in re-assessing Nigeria National Policy on education through strengthen teacher recruitment, development, retention and promotion of students' outcome**

The key relationships in the ways school administrators strengthen teacher recruitment, development and retention is hinge on policy. According to (OECD, 2002), the effectiveness of policy responses must be considered. Policies that attract graduates into teaching but then they do not remain and/or policies that retain teachers without linkages to professional quality assurance “will prove costly and do little to improve student learning.” It

makes clear that we need to examine not only leadership practices that make teachers more satisfied and stay in or continually return to teaching but also those that lead through the classroom and school to improved student outcomes. School systems and their administrators need to consider conferring greater professional autonomy to teachers. It has been shown to enhance the attractiveness of the profession as a career choice (teachers are attracted to and stay in the profession if they feel they belong and believe they are contributing to the success of their school and its students); Identification and development of potential leaders need to be formalized, rather than be left to chance. The process needs to include provision of early leadership experiences for young teachers; Educational interventions need to target not only the effective implementation of national programmes/priorities but also the need to progress through the inevitable developmental stages of any implementation. In targeting interventions, recognition needs to be given to the fact that it is a journey and that actions (including evaluation of success) at one stage may be inappropriate, or even counterproductive, at another stage; As part of their role school principals need to: value and support teachers (working with rather than through them); buffer teachers against the excesses of the mounting and sometimes contradictory external pressures; and, focus on sustaining school improvement by building teacher and school capacity; Review whether accountability measures are undermining teacher and school leader autonomy and build the attractiveness of leadership roles in schools in ‘challenging circumstances’; Ensure that school administration is about leadership, not management by encouraging more teachers to extend their work as educators beyond the classroom to the entire school; The position of school leader needs to not only provide job satisfaction but also to be perceived by others as providing job satisfaction. More work is needed on making school leadership an attractive and ‘do-able’ task for all those who hold or aspire to such positions, including looking at the workload implications. Strategies include: providing early leadership experiences for young teachers; disseminating examples of good practice in managing workload and models of school structures and processes that make effective use of administrative and other staff, using appropriate task delegation; demystifying the principal’s role, especially administrative and financial roles and responsibilities; and, encouraging principals to articulate and display a sense of job satisfaction; Broaden what counts for effective education beyond academic achievement to include student engagement, participation and self-concept and community social capital; As organizational learning, or collective teacher efficacy, is the important intervening variable between leadership and teacher work and then improved student outcomes, early priority be given to supporting the development of OL in schools and Greater attention be paid to the context in which school administrators operate, especially in relation to school size, sex and the home educational environments of its students.

### **The Role of Administrators in Re-Assessing Nigeria’s Policy on Education for Global Competitiveness**

#### **Shaping a vision of academic success for all students:**

Effective school administrators are responsible for establishing a school wide vision of commitment to high standards and the success of all students. The academic achievement of every student always topped principals’ agenda. Historically, public school principals were

seen as school managers, and as recently as two decades ago, high standards were thought to be the province of the college bound. Career success in a global economy depends on a strong education; for all segments of society to be able to compete fairly, the yawning gap in academic achievement between disadvantaged and advantaged students' needs to narrow. In a school, that begins with a principal's spelling out "high standards and rigorous learning goals," Vanderbilt University researchers assert with underlined emphasis. Specifically, they say, "The research literature over the last quarter century has consistently supported the notion that having high expectations for all, including clear and public standards, is one key to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and less advantaged students and for raising the overall achievement of all students" (Andrew et. al, 2008). An effective principal also makes sure that notion of academic success for all gets picked up by the faculty and underpins what researchers at the University of Washington describe as a school wide learning improvement agenda that focuses on goals for student progress (Michael et. at., 2010). One middle school teacher described what adopting the vision meant for her. "My expectations have increased every year," she told the researchers. "I've learned that as long as you support them, there is really nothing [the students] can't do". According to Bradley, (2009), he assert that developing a shared vision around standards and success for all students is an essential element of school leadership.

#### **Creating a climate hospitable for education:**

Effective school administrators ensure that schools allow both adults and children to put learning at the centre of their daily activities. Such "a healthy school environment," as Vanderbilt researchers call it, is characterized by basics like safety and orderliness, as well as less tangible qualities such as a "supportive, responsive" attitude toward the children and a sense by teachers that they are part of a community of professionals focused on good instruction (Ellen, et. al., 2009). Is it a surprise, then, that principals at schools with high teacher ratings for "instructional climate" outrank other principals in developing an atmosphere of caring and trust? Or that their teachers are more likely than faculty members elsewhere to find the principals' motives and intentions are good? Indeed! Creating a climate hospitable to education will inevitably defeat teacher pessimism and regarding themselves as hardworking martyrs in a hopeless cause. To change this kind of mindset and begin to combat teacher isolation, closed doors, negativism, defeatism and teacher resistance, the most effective school administrators focus on building a sense of school community, with the attendant characteristics. These include respect for every member of the school community; "an upbeat, welcoming, solution-oriented, no-blame, professional environment;" and efforts to involve staff and students in a variety of activities in the school.

#### **Cultivating leadership in others**

A broad and longstanding consensus in leadership theory holds that leaders in all walks of life and all kinds of organizations, public and private, need to depend on others to accomplish the group's purpose and need to encourage the development of leadership across the organization (Yukl, 2009). Schools are no different. Principals who get high marks from teachers for creating a strong climate for instruction in their schools also receive higher marks than other principals for spurring leadership in the faculty, according to the research from the

universities of Minnesota and Toronto (Seashore Louis, Leithwood et al., 2010). In fact if test scores are any indication, the more willing principals are to spread leadership around, the better for the students. One of the most striking findings of the universities of Minnesota and Toronto report is that effective leadership from all sources – principals, influential teachers, staff teams and others – is associated with better student performance on maths and reading tests. The relationship is strong albeit indirect: Good leadership, the study suggests, improves both teacher motivation and work settings. This, in turn, can fortify classroom instruction. “Compared with lower-achieving schools, higher-achieving schools provided all stakeholders with greater influence on decisions. Why the better result? Perhaps this is a case of two heads or more being better than one: “The higher performance of these schools might be explained as a consequence of the greater access they have to collective knowledge and wisdom embedded within their communities. School administrators may be relieved to find out, moreover, that their authority does not wane as others’ waxes, hence, avoiding creation of empire building. Clearly, school leadership is not a zero-sum game. “Principals and district leaders have the most influence on decisions in all schools; however, they do not lose influence as others gain influence,” Indeed, although “higher-performing schools awarded greater influence to most stakeholder, little changed in these schools’ overall hierarchical structure.” (Seashore Louis, Leithwood et al., 2010).

### **Improving instruction**

Effective principals work relentlessly to improve achievement by focusing on the quality of instruction. They help define and promote high expectations; they attack teacher isolation and fragmented effort; and they connect directly with teachers and the classroom. Effective administrators also encourage continual professional learning. They emphasize research based strategies to improve teaching and learning and initiate discussions about instructional approaches, both in teams and with individual teachers. They pursue these strategies despite the preference of many teachers to be left alone. It means that leaders must become intimately familiar with the “technical core” of schooling, i.e, what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Kenneth, et. al, 2004). To improve the instruction, administrators can engage in formal evaluation, classroom visits or learning walks, spending time in classrooms (or ensure that someone who’s qualified does), observing and commenting on what’s working well and what is not. Moreover, they shift the pattern of the annual evaluation cycle to one of ongoing and informal interactions with teachers. This means that evaluation won’t be one-off activities done at the end of the term, rather, it’s continuous and spontaneous. This visits enable administrators to make formative observations that will be clearly about learning and professional growth, coupled with direct and immediate feedback. As noted above, a central part of being a great leader is cultivating leadership in others. The learning-focused principal is intent on helping teachers improve their practice either directly or with the aid of school administrators like department chairs and other teaching experts, in a bid to improve instruction.

### **Managing people, data and processes**

No matter the size of school, whether big or small, as an organization, the challenges facing the administrators are relatively the same. To get the job done, effective leaders need to make

good use of the resources at hand. In other words, they have to be good managers. They manage both the man and material resources available in the school in a well-defined process in order to achieve optimum result. Effective administrators nurture and support their staffs, while facing the reality that sometimes teachers don't work out. They hire carefully, but adhering to the rules and regulations and procedures governing hiring of teachers in order to employ capable and able teachers. They also engaged in aggressively weeding out individuals who did not show the capacity to grow. When it comes to data, effective administrators try to draw the most from statistics and evidence, having learned to ask useful questions of the information, to display it in ways that tell compelling stories and to use it for promotion and collaborative inquiry among teachers. They use data as a means not only to pinpoint problems but to understand their nature and causes in order to find possible means of solving them. A good school administrator engage in the process of planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating/controlling, directing and evaluating in order to achieve educational goals and objectives, thereby, helping in solving the global problem. According to Andrew, (2008), there are six key steps that the effective principal takes when carrying out his/her most important leadership responsibilities: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating and monitoring. The school leader pressing for high academic standards would, for example, map out rigorous targets for improvements in learning (planning), get the faculty on board to do what's necessary to meet those targets (implementing), encourage students and teachers in meeting the goals (supporting), challenge low expectations and low district funding for students with special needs (advocating), make sure families are aware of the learning goals (communicating), and keep on top of test results (monitoring).

### **Improving school leadership**

The simple fact is that without effective leaders most of the goals of educational improvement will be very difficult to achieve and by extension, global problems will persist. Absent attention to that reality, we are in danger of under mining the very standards and goals we have set for ourselves. So what can be done to provide all teachers and students with the highly skilled school leadership they need and deserve? In other words, how do we create a pipeline of leaders who can make a real difference for the better society, especially in a globe in distress? A pipeline for effective leadership according to Wallace would have four necessary and interlocking parts: Defining the job of the principal and assistant principal. Districts create clear, rigorous job requirements that detail what principals and assistant principals must know and do, and that emerge from what research tells us are the knowledge, skills and behaviours principals need to improve teaching and learning; providing high-quality training for aspiring school leaders. Principal training programs, whether run by universities, non-profits or districts, recruit and select only the people with the potential and desire to become effective principals in the districts the programs feed into. The programs provide the future leaders with high-quality training and internships that reflect the realities education leaders face in the field; hiring selectively, districts hire only well-trained candidates for principal and assistant principal jobs and evaluating principals and giving them the on-the-job support they need. Districts regularly evaluate principals, assessing the behaviours that research tells us are most closely tied to improving teaching and student

achievement. Districts then provide professional development, including mentoring, that responds to what the evaluations find for each individual.

**Some of the educational policies that could benefit from re-assessment include:**

**Curriculum and Content:**

Curriculum relevance: Ensure that the curriculum is aligned with the needs of the modern workforce, including technology, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and vocational skills.

Cultural diversity and inclusivity: Promote a curriculum that recognizes and celebrates the diversity of Nigeria's culture and society.

**Teacher Training and Development:**

Teacher quality: Invest in professional development programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of educators, keeping them up to date with best practices.

Incentives and support: Implement policies to attract and retain talented teachers by offering competitive salaries and professional support.

**Access to Quality Education:**

Infrastructure and facilities: Address the inadequate infrastructure and facilities in many schools, particularly in rural areas.

Educational access for marginalized groups: Ensure that educational opportunities are available and accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, or location.

**Examination and Assessment:**

Assessment methods: Evaluate the effectiveness of examination and assessment methods to ensure they encourage critical thinking and problem-solving.

Reducing exam pressure: Re-assess the pressure placed on students by high-stakes examinations and explore alternative assessment approaches.

**Technology Integration:**

Digital literacy: Develop policies to integrate technology into the curriculum and equip students with essential digital literacy skills.

Connectivity and access: Ensure that schools, particularly in underserved areas, have access to reliable internet and technology resources.

**Quality Assurance and Accreditation:**

Accreditation standards: Maintain high standards for accrediting institutions to ensure the quality of education.

Accountability mechanisms: Implement effective accountability measures to monitor and improve the performance of educational institutions.

**Funding and Resource Allocation:**

Adequate funding: Re-evaluate the allocation of financial resources to education and ensure that it is sufficient to support educational goals.

Transparent budgeting: Promote transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of education funds.



**Educational Governance:**

Decentralization: Assess the effectiveness of decentralization and local autonomy in education management.

Stakeholder involvement: Involve various stakeholders, including parents, educators, and communities, in decision-making processes.

**Vocational and Technical Education:** Promote vocational and technical education programs that prepare students for the workforce and reduce unemployment rates.

Global Competitiveness: Align education policies with the demands of the global economy and ensure that Nigerian graduates are equipped with skills and knowledge to compete on an international level. Re-assessing these educational policies requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort involving government officials, educators, parents, students, and other stakeholders. It is essential to continually monitor and adapt policies to meet the evolving needs of society and the global landscape.

**Conclusion**

A successful school is about much more than teaching. While good teaching and learning are crucial, the administration that underpins it is key to providing a well-rounded education that encompasses the whole child, learning environment, and the society for global competitiveness. Effective administration and operations support an education that goes well beyond imparting knowledge, but practical solving of the societal problems relevant to the world. School operations teams ensure that students' daily needs are met; that they receive healthy and nutritious meals, sleep and learn in a safe environment, and receive appropriate medical care and mental health support in other for a comprehensive instrument in finding solution of the society. Beyond the day-to-day, the administrative team are often the ones responsible for recording, checking and analyzing student data, so they can enable those responsible for both learning and wellbeing to tailor their approach to the needs of the student. Fullan (2002) has gone as far to conclude that, Effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform. This reform/re-assessment is key in competing at the world stage.

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