



Analysis of Factors Responsible for Appointment of Non-Educationists as Heads of Educational Institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions) in Nigeria and Way Forward

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Abstract: This paper discussed factors responsible for appointment of Non- Educationists as heads of educational Institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions) in Nigeria. Primary data and secondary data were collected and used in the paper. The data were sourced from print and online publications. The paper concluded that poor perception of education as non-professional, weak agitation of educational stakeholders, lack of constitutional provision on appointment of professionals and poor resistance from national assembly members are the factors responsible for appointment of Non- Educationist as heads of educational institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions) in Nigeria. Based on these problems, the paper recommended that the educational stakeholders in Nigeria should come together and insisting on the appointment of only professional educationists to manage educational institutions in Nigeria. The National assembly both at state and federal level should insist that the government only appoint professional educationists to head educational institutions.

Keywords: Appointment, Education, Non-professional.

Introduction

The Nigerian educational system is the largest in Africa (Atiga, & Ogunode, 2021). The Nigerian educational system comprises the basic education, junior secondary school education, senior secondary school education and the higher education. According to WENR (2017) Nigeria's education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four to six years, depending on the program of study). Administration of education in Nigeria is a shared responsibility by the three tiers of ministries of education, that is, the federal, states and local government and other statutory bodies established by the three tiers of government for the administration and management of education at the various levels. These commissions assist the various ministries of education at the Federal, states and local government levels to achieve the objectives of education. The Federal Ministry of Education is saddled with the functions of coordinating the national policy and procedures and for ensuring that the states' policies operate within the parameters of the national policy as adapted for local needs (NEEDS, 2014; Moja, 2000). Coordination of policy at the political level is handled by the National Council of Education, the highest policymaking body chaired by the Federal Minister of Education and includes all the State Commissioners of Education. This body is advised by the Joint Consultative Committee on Education, which consists of all the Federal and State Directors of Education, Chief Executives of education statutory bodies, and Directors of University Institutes of Education (Needs Assessment in the Nigerian education sector, 2014).

Nigerian educational system according to Atiga, & Ogunode, (2021) is bisected with myriad of challenges. These includes; inadequate funding, shortage infrastructures, shortage of teachers,

corruption, uncondusive learning environment. In addition to these inadequacies (Ogunode, (2020); Ogunode, & Adanna (2022); Ogunode, Johnson, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, (2022), the school system is plagued with numerous unstable academic calendar caused by strikes, poor quality of education, social vices such as examination malpractices, cultism, hooliganism and corruption; Ogunode, Chijindu, & Jegede (2022); Ogunode, Akinjobi, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022; gender inequality Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015). Ogunode, Gregory & Abubakar (2020a) submits that the inadequate infrastructural facilities in the primary, secondary and higher education in Nigeria is due to lack of comprehensive infrastructural facilities planning, while the problem of inadequate funding can also be traced to the lack of financial educational planning for the entire educational sector.

Many factors have been identified as responsible for these challenges in the Nigerian educational system. Among these challenges is the problem of appointment of non-professional in the field of education as the federal minister or state commissioners of education. Ogunode, N., Gregory D., & Abubakar, M. (2020a) asserts that the educational qualifications, experiences, knowledge and attitude of the groups of people appointed to head and coordinate educational programmes at various level of government matter. Their attitude towards planning education, making policies, implementing educational programmes and supervising educational projects is of important to the development of education in Nigeria. For meaningful development to take place in the educational sector; the government needs to re-address the issue of appointment in the sector. There is need to appoint professionals in the field of education to manage every ministries, commissions, agencies and departments of education for the formulation of sound polities and effective implementation.

Ogunode & Josiah (2021) and Ogunode (2020) observed that the responsibilities of appointing ministers of education and commissioner of education is constitutionally in the hands of the president of the federation and the Governor of the state while the Chairmen has the constitutional power to appoint the exertive secretary of education at the local government level. Presidents, Governors and Chairmen elected into government in Nigeria are found appointing non-professional educationists as Federal ministers, state commissioners of education and other heads of commissions and agencies.

The realization of the educational objectives depends on the quality of leaders appointed to oversee the affairs of different agencies and para-state of the education in the Country. Educational leadership matters to effectively administer the affairs of educational institutions. Failure in the Nigeria educational system can be traced to the various leaders appointed to head the various educational institutions who are less qualified or do not have experiences in educational management and administration. The government appoints whosoever they think to handle the ministry of education on like the health sector that the minister must be a medical practitioner. Therefore, failure of the government to recognize the education as a profession that must always be handled by an educational expert or administrators is contributing to the problems facing the educational institutions (Ogunode & Josiah, 2021).

Ogunode, Ahmed, Gregory & Abubakar (2020) linked problems facing the administration of public schools in Nigeria is the weak administrators appointed by the various tiers of government to head the educational institutions. Many school administrators appointed to oversee the administration and management of some educational institutions are very weak in terms of administration and management. Some of them do not have the qualifications, experiences and the knowledge required to successfully manage such institutions to a place of glory. At the tertiary institutions, Ajape, et al (2020) opined that many leaders emerged in the educational institutions without due process. They are appointed by politicians and many of them are less qualified to handle the academic educational institutions. They lack competence, leadership skills, and managerial skills to transform the institution for sustainability.

Research shows that the majority of people appointed to head the various educational establishments in Nigeria are not professionals in the field of education. For instance, EduCeleb.com (2019 in Gamelegi 2019) did a study and report that Nigeria's Ministers of Education (1960-2020) had 51 persons who have either been Minister or Minister of State for Education, 11 of them were women, 23 were teachers at various levels of education before their appointment, 15 of them studied

education courses and practised that in their professional lives, 11 of them were involved in educational administration in their professional lives before the appointment. The poor appointment of educationists to fully take, manage and administer the various educational institutions especially the federal and state ministry of education has led to numerous challenges facing the educational system in Nigeria. It is imperative to discuss the factors responsible for the appointment of non-educationists as head of educational institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions) in Nigeria.

Factors Responsible for Appointment of Non- Educationist to Manage Educational Institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions)

There are many factors responsible for appointment of non-professional educationists as heads of educational institutions, especially the federal and state ministries of education. Such factors include; poor perception of education as non-professional, weak agitation of educational stakeholders, lack of provision of constitution on appointment of professionals and poor resistance from national assembly members.

Poor Perception of Education as Non-Professional

The poor perception of politicians and many other professions about education as a non-professional programme is a major factor that has contributed to the appointment of non-professional educationists as Ministers, Commissioners, executive secretaries and heads of education establishment in Nigeria. Many people believe education as a profession is not a professional institution. These wrong assumptions and beliefs are responsible for the poor treatment given to anything that is associated with the teaching profession in Nigeria. For instance, teachers are poorly motivated, their allowances and benefits are not regularly paid as other professional bodies in the Country (Ogunode, Johnson, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022; Ogunode, Chijindu & Jegede 2022). The budgetary allocation to the educational sector is one of the least among other sectors like Health, Energy, security etc. For instance, in 2022, the Nigerian government budgeted N2.29trn that represented 13.4% of the budget for the Military, Police, Intelligence and Paramilitary (recurrent/capital expenditure). N1.4trn, comprised 8.3% of the budget and it included provisions for Works and Housing, Power (inclusive of PSRP Provisions), Transport, Water Resources, Aviation. The government budgeted N1.234 trillion for education, representing an increase of 9.2% compared with the N1.130 trillion provision made in the 2021 budget. The budget allocation for the education sector was subdivided into 3 categories: N815.69 billion was the amount provisioned for the Federal Ministry of Education and its agencies (recurrent/capital expenditure, Okafor, 2022). The above showed that allocation to the education sector is among the least compared to other sectors. Most educational institutions facilities are not attractive and conducive. Professional teachers shared offices and students were overcrowded in their respective classrooms (Ogunode, Yahaya & Musa, 2022; Ogunode, & Adanna, 2022). The educational profession is not regarded or shown any dignity by other professions in the country. This makes the government to appoint anybody to go and head educational institutions across the country. Musa (2017) acknowledged that the wrong perception of politicians about the educational sector is responsible for their negative attitude towards the administration and management of education including appointment of heads.

Weak Agitation of Educational Stakeholders

The weak agitations and pressure from the various educational stakeholders on the need to professionalise the appointment of educational institutions in Nigeria is another factor that have led to the appointment of non-professional educationists to head different educational institutions across the country, especially the federal minister of education. The major stakeholders in educational institutions in Nigeria have not put enough pressure on the executive arm of government at every level of education to appoint only those with education qualifications, background and experiences as heads of educational institutions in Nigeria. Musa (2017) submitted that only few stakeholders in educational sector are responding to educational problems and crises in Nigeria. He argued that many stakeholders in educational sector are weak and not effective. For instance, the prolonged

strike actions in the educational institutions especially in the universities was not responded to positively that is why the strike took a long time before the unions called off the strikes.

Lack of Provision of Constitution on Appointment of Professionals

The lack of constitutional provision on the professionalism of the heads of educational institutions in Nigeria is another major factor responsible for the appointment of non-professional educationists to manage various educational institutions in the country. Many educational institutions in Nigeria are headed and managed by people who have no business in the management and administration of education. They are appointed based on political consideration rather than on professional qualifications and knowledge. The appointment of non-professional educationists has hampered development in the entire educational system. EduCeleb.com (2019) observes the requirements of becoming the Minister of Education in Nigeria according to the 1999 constitutions. According to Section 147 (5) of the 1999 constitution as amended, the only qualification for one to be appointed as Minister is that the person must be “qualified for election into the House of Representatives”. A person is qualified to be in the House of Representatives, according section 65 (2) of the Nigerian constitution if, they have “been educated up to at least School Certificate level or equivalent” and are “member of a political party and is sponsored by that party. It is clear that there is no professionalism attached to the appointment of the education minister.

Poor Resistance from National Assembly Members

The poor resistance from the national assembly, in the both upper and lower chambers of the national assembly is also responsible for the appointment of non-professional educationists as the heads of various educational institutions especially the federal ministries and state ministries of education. Majorities of people appointed as Federal minister of education and state commissioner of education are not professionals in education. Majority of them lack the leadership skills, abilities and knowledge to transform the educational sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the factors responsible for appointment of Non-Educationists as head of educational Institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions) in Nigeria. The paper concludes that poor perception of education as non-professional, weak agitation of educational stakeholders, lack of constitutional provision on appointment of professionals and poor resistance from national assembly members are the factors responsible for appointment of Non- Educationists as heads of Educational Institutions (Ministries, Agencies and Commissions) in Nigeria. Based on these problems, the paper recommended the following:

1. The educational stakeholders in Nigeria should come together and insisting on the appointment of only professional educationists to manage educational institutions in Nigeria.
2. The National assembly both at state and federal level should insist that the government only appoint professional educationists to head educational institutions.
3. The national assembly should come up with law professionalizing the appointment of minister of education in Nigeria.

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