

Is School Really a Scam? An Appraisal

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Abstract

This article appraises the widespread belief amongst young people in Nigeria that school is a scam. It argues that, despite the challenges of the educational system, the school remains a valuable investment for individuals and society as a whole. The article examines the reasons why many youths and parents have lost faith in the education system, including factors such as poor infrastructure and lack of job opportunities for graduates. However, the article contends that a quality education provides not only the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the workforce but also the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that are essential for navigating life's challenges. The article concludes by urging individuals and society to continue to support and invest in education as a means of building a brighter future.

Keywords: School, Education, Scam

Introduction

It is a common belief among many young people in Nigeria that "school is a scam." This phrase is often used to express frustration or disappointment with the education system, and it reflects a belief that the time, energy, and resources invested in education are not worth the payoff. This sentiment is particularly prevalent among youths in tertiary institutions, as well as those seeking admission to such institutions. The "get rich quick syndrome" (yahoo yahoo factor) among young people that enables them to become rich overnight without much ado and the fact that some African politicians amass wealth for themselves with reckless abandon, particularly the uneducated ones among them are some of the grounds that ignite this sentiment. It is not uncommon for students to feel that their education is not preparing them for the job market or that it is not relevant to their interests and goals. There are also some young people who have lost focus in secondary school and may feel that they are not making the most of their education. Additionally, there are some parents who are unmotivated to send their children to school due to poor financial or social status of some people who passed through school. This makes them view education as a scam.

The belief that "school is a scam" is not unique to Nigeria. Many students around the world may feel disillusioned with their education at some point, and it is not uncommon for people to question the value of education. However, it is important to recognize that education is a foundation for personal and professional success, and it can open up a wide range of opportunities. A good education can improve job prospects and earning potential and it can also provide personal benefits such as increased knowledge and critical thinking skills. In addition, education can be a source of personal fulfillment and a way to make a positive impact on the world.

While it is understandable that young people may feel frustrated or disheartened at times, it is important not to lose sight of the value of education. Despite the challenges and limitations of the education system in Nigeria, there are still many opportunities for students to succeed and make the most of their education. By prioritizing their education and making the most of their learning opportunities, young people can set themselves up for success and make a positive difference in the world. This is why it is important to challenge the belief that "school is a scam" and to recognize the value of education.

Meanwhile, it is very important at this juncture to carefully analyze these key concepts in this work. The purpose is to achieve clarification and to avoid misinterpretation.

Conceptual Elucidation

What Is a School?

School is simply an institution for teaching and learning. In a broad way, a school is an educational institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers. Obviously, school is intended to prepare students for life. It provides students with the necessary skills to gain a career after graduation and also become productive members of society.

Education and Its Common Role

Etymologically speaking, the word education is derived from the Latin words; *Educare* (*Educere*) and *Educatum*. “*Educare*” literally means to train. Ezeador and Okpara (2023) opine that whichever Latin words above, one may choose to describe education, the most important thing to note is that education aims at the development of human being for the development of the society. Okpara citing Osaat in Ezeador and Okpara (2023) defines education as the process by which society through schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions transmit knowledge, norm and elements of culture, values and skills from generation to generation, in a morally acceptable manner. According to Obioha and Oguguo (2019:75);

It is a purposive, conscious or unconscious, psychological, sociological, scientific and philosophical process, which brings about the development of the individual to the fullest extent and also the maximum development to the society in such a way that both enjoy maximum happiness and prosperity.

From the definitions given above, it is believed that education is a weapon to improve one’s life. It is a process of initiation into life of spirit and training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue. Importantly, education must make one aware of his root and provides points of reference which allows the individual to define his own personal place in the world. There are basically two types of education: formal and informal education. Formal education is the type of education that is done in the school. It involves teaching, reading and writing which is done by a teacher. Informal education is basically the first form of education which is done outside the school system. It can be acquired at home as well as in the local environment through peer groups, religious institutions, age grade system, festivals and other cultural features of the society. It is at home that a child learns how to talk, greet, call certain word; it is school that helps to shape their life through the help of teachers. So, formal education plays a vital role in molding and nurturing a child and this is what the youths of these days call a scam.

Role of Education

Education is a well-known fact which is very vital in the life of any human being in relation to his society. Okpara (2022) describes it as aiming to transform man who in turn transforms the society. However, for education to be complete say Obioha and Oguguo (2019:76), “education must incorporate the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual aspects of man”. It helps a child to develop into proper maturity. In other words, true and nurtured education is simply the development of the original nature of the child say Rousseau. In his book *Emile*, Rousseau in Obioha and Oguguo (2019:76) divides the book into five phrases, which represent the different stages of his educational ideas. The book (1) is the Infancy Stage which has to do with the physical and emotional development of the infant and the child. The Book II is the Childhood stage this stage calls for education done by life experiences and not from books. Book III that is the Pre-Adolescence Stage sees that the life interest of the child is allowed. Book IV which is the Youth Stage, here the child carefully learns how to observe the world around him. It is said that the real education begins in this stages. The last is the Book V, and Rousseau calls this stage “education of the Sophia” which is basically for the females.

What Is a Scam?

Scam means a fraudulent or deceptive act or operation. It is also a dishonest scheme or plan that is meant to con someone. Nigerian youths believe that going to school is a waste of time. For them, people spend so many years in school and still come out to do things that do not really require any form of academic rigour. For instances, Nigerian graduates end up as fashion designers, event planners, Keke NAPEP drivers, comedians, musicians and photographers. The argument here is that they could have invested their energy in these vocations rather than wasting their time studying what at the end would not be useful. However, all these reactions can be attributed to poor orientation. They all have in mind that once one graduates, the next step is to get job; and if the job does not come they navigate to the next available option.

Overview of the Current State of the Education System in Nigeria

The state of the education system in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted issue, and it is influenced by a range of factors including economic, political, and social considerations. Despite the progress that has been made in recent years, there are still significant challenges and limitations facing the education system in Nigeria that can contribute to the belief among many young people that "school is a scam". These challenges are;

- Limited Access to Quality Education:** According to data from the United Nations Development Programme, less than half of Nigerian children have access to primary education, and only about a quarter of young people have access to secondary education. This is due in part to a shortage of schools and trained teachers, as well as a lack of resources and facilities. Many schools in Nigeria are overcrowded and poorly equipped, with outdated or inadequate facilities that can hinder the learning process. Additionally, there is often a shortage of trained teachers, particularly in rural areas, which can make it difficult for students to receive a good education. As a result, some students may feel that their education is not preparing them for the job market or that it is not relevant to their interests and goals. This can contribute to the belief that "school is a scam."

- High Cost of Education:** This is another challenge facing the education system in Nigeria. For many families, the cost of sending children to school is a significant financial burden, and this can be a barrier to education. In addition to tuition fees, there are also costs associated with materials, uniforms, and other expenses that can make it difficult for families to afford education. This can be particularly challenging for low-income families, who may struggle to pay for their children's education even if they are able to access a school. Some parents may view education as a financial burden, and they may be unmotivated to send their children to school due to financial or social reasons. This can also contribute to the belief that "school is a scam."

- Lack of Resources and Facilities in Many Schools:** Many schools in Nigeria are poorly equipped, with outdated or inadequate facilities, and this can make it difficult for students to learn effectively. There is also a shortage of resources such as textbooks and other materials, which can hinder the learning process. This is particularly problematic in rural areas, where schools may be more isolated and less able to access resources. Some students may feel that their education is not worth the investment due to the lack of resources and facilities, and this can contribute to the belief that "school is a scam". Overall, the education system in Nigeria faces a number of challenges and limitations that can contribute to the belief among many young people that "school is a scam." These challenges can be particularly difficult for disadvantaged groups such as girls, who may face additional barriers to education due to cultural or social factors. Despite these challenges, it is important to recognize the value of education and the many benefits it can provide. By addressing these challenges and working to improve the education system, it is possible to create a brighter future for all Nigerians and to challenge the belief that "school is a scam."

- Bad Governance:** The types of leaders we have today in Africa are mostly leaders that only concentrate on their own wellbeing. Most African leaders with Nigeria inclusive do not value the wellbeing of their citizenry, and that is why it is hard for them to investment on education to better the life of the poor masses. Until African countries with Nigeria inclusive learn to prioritize education, there can never be a sustainable development in Africa. Most teachers are poorly remunerated due to bad governance. There are no incentives provided for best students. It is mostly in Africa that we have talents that are neglected or turned to armed robbers.

● **Unemployment:** Unemployment is basically the number one reason why these youths still maintained that school is a scam. They all have the orientation that once they graduate from the university; the next thing is to begin to search for jobs. But, unfortunately the country does not have enough industries where these graduates will fit in. Most of the ones we have are moribund due to government's inability to fix or maintain them. This becomes a very big challenge facing Nigeria's education.

Benefits of Education

Benefits of education are numerous and wide-ranging, and they extend beyond just improved job prospects and higher earning potential. Education can provide both long-term and personal benefits that can enhance an individual's quality of life and contribute to their overall well-being. One of the most apparent benefits of education is improved job prospects and higher earning potential. A good education is often a key factor in finding a well-paying job, and it can also provide the skills and knowledge necessary to advance in a career. According to data from the United States Census Bureau, individuals with a college degree earn significantly more on average than those without a degree. This is true across a wide range of industries and occupations, and it is an important consideration for young people who are considering their education and career options.

In addition to the financial benefits of education, there are also many personal benefits that can enhance an individual's quality of life. Education can increase knowledge and understanding of the world, and it can also develop critical thinking skills that can be applied in a variety of settings. Education can also be a source of personal fulfillment and a way to pursue one's interests and passions. It can also provide a sense of accomplishment and pride in one's own abilities and achievements. Apart from their obvious long-term benefits, here are some others that we sometimes overlook:

- **Education can improve health outcomes:** Studies have shown that individuals with more education tend to have better health outcomes and live longer than those with less education. This is due in part to the fact that education can provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to make healthier lifestyle choices, and it can also provide access to better healthcare options.
- **Education can promote social and civic engagement:** Education can encourage individuals to become more active and engaged members of their communities. It can provide the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in civic and political processes, and it can also promote a sense of social responsibility and a desire to give back to the community.
- **Education can enhance cultural awareness and understanding:** Education can provide individuals with a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures and ways of life. It can promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and it can also help to bridge cultural divides.
- **Education can improve problem-solving and decision-making skills:** Education can develop critical thinking skills that are necessary for solving problems and making decisions. These skills can be applied in a variety of settings, including in the workplace and in personal life.
- **Education can provide a sense of purpose and direction:** Education can provide individuals with a sense of purpose and direction, and it can help them to set and achieve their goals. It can also provide a sense of accomplishment and pride in one's own abilities and achievements.

Overall, the benefits of education are numerous and wide-ranging, and they extend beyond just improved job prospects and higher earning potential. By valuing and prioritizing their education, young people can set themselves up for success and create a better future for themselves and their communities.

Success Stories of Individuals Who Have Overcome the Challenges of the Education System

There are many individuals who have excelled despite the challenges of the education system, and their success stories can be a source of inspiration for young people. These individuals often demonstrate determination, perseverance, and a strong commitment to their education, and these qualities can be keys to overcoming obstacles and achieving success. One example of an individual who has overcome the challenges of the education system is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian writer, and public speaker. Adichie grew up in Nigeria and attended university in the United States, where she faced

challenges related to culture, language, and finances. Despite these challenges, Adichie excelled academically and went on to earn a master's degree in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University. She has become a successful writer and public speaker, and she has been recognized for her contributions to literature and feminism. Adichie's story is an example of how determination, perseverance, and a commitment to education can lead to success despite the challenges of the education system

Another example is Tony Elumelu, a Nigerian entrepreneur and philanthropist. Elumelu grew up in a modest family in Nigeria and faced financial challenges that made it difficult for him to afford education. Despite these challenges, Elumelu excelled academically and went on to earn a degree in economics from the University of Lagos. He then built a successful career in the banking industry, eventually becoming the chairman of one of Nigeria's largest banks. Elumelu has also been recognized for his philanthropy and his efforts to promote entrepreneurship in Africa. His story is an example of how hard work and determination can lead to success, even in the face of financial challenges

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She is known for her activism for education and women's rights, particularly in the Swat Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistan, where the local Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. Yousafzai was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman in 2012, but she survived and continued to advocate for education. She has received numerous awards and accolades for her activism, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. Yousafzai's story is an example of how determination and perseverance can lead to success, even in the face of threats and violence.

J.K. Rowling is a British novelist, philanthropist, and film producer best known for writing the Harry Potter fantasy series. Rowling faced numerous challenges and setbacks in her life, including poverty, depression, and the death of her mother. Despite these challenges, she persevered and wrote the Harry Potter books while raising a child as a single mother. The books became a global phenomenon, and Rowling has become one of the most successful writers in history. Her story is an example of how hard work and determination can lead to success, even in the face of personal challenges. There are many other individuals who have overcome the challenges of the education system and achieved success, and their stories can serve as inspiration and encouragement for others. By valuing education and persevering in the face of challenges, it is possible to create a brighter future and achieve one's goals in life.

Tips for Success in the Education System

Set Goals:

Setting goals can be a powerful tool for students to achieve success in the education system. Goals can provide a sense of direction and focus, and they can help students stay motivated and on track. Goals can be both short-term and long-term, and they can be specific to a particular course or subject, or more general in nature. For example, a student might set a goal to earn an A in a particular course or to graduate with honors. It is important for students to set realistic and achievable goals, and to break larger goals into smaller, more manageable steps. This can make goals more attainable and help students to stay motivated and on track. It can also be helpful to set deadlines for achieving goals and to review and revise goals as needed. By setting and working towards goals, students can increase their chances of success in the education system and achieve their full potential.

Stay Organized:

Staying organized is an essential aspect of success in the education system. It can help students keep track of assignments, deadlines, and other responsibilities, and it can reduce stress and prevent last-minute cramming or rushing to complete assignments. There are many tools that students can use to stay organized, such as calendars, to-do lists, and planners. It can be helpful for students to choose a tool that works best for them and to use it consistently to stay organized and on top of tasks.

Seek Help When Needed:

It is normal to struggle with coursework or other challenges from time to time, and seeking help when needed can be an important part of the learning process. There are many resources available to students

to help them overcome challenges and succeed in their studies, such as tutoring, academic advisors, and support services. These resources can provide students with the guidance and support they need to overcome difficulties and achieve their goals.

Find A Study Routine That Works for You:

Students have different study habits and preferences, so it is important for them to find a study routine that works for them. Some students may prefer to study in the morning, while others may find it more effective to study in the evening. Experiment with different approaches and find what works best for you. This may involve finding a quiet place to study, setting aside dedicated study time, or using study aids such as flashcards or study guides. By finding a study routine that works for you, you can make the most of your study time and improve your chances of success in the education system.

Stay Motivated:

Motivation can be a key factor in success, and it is important for students to find ways to stay motivated, even when faced with challenges or setbacks. This may involve setting goals, finding sources of inspiration, or rewarding oneself for progress. Students may also find it helpful to surround themselves with supportive people who can encourage and motivate them. By staying motivated, students can stay focused and committed to their studies and achieve their goals. In conclusion, the education system can be challenging, but there are many strategies that students can use to increase their chances of success. By setting goals, staying organized, seeking help when needed, finding a study routine that works for them, and staying motivated, students can overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential. By following these tips and finding strategies that work for them, students can set themselves up for success in the education system and realize the many benefits of education.

Encouraging Parents to Value Education

Education is a critical foundation for personal and professional success, and it plays a vital role in the development and prosperity of a country. By investing in education, parents can help their children develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers and contribute to their communities. Education can also provide children with opportunities to learn about the world, explore new ideas, and develop critical thinking skills.

Ways Parents Can Support Their Children's Education, Even If They Have Financial or Social Challenges

Parents can support their children's education in many ways, even if they face financial or social challenges. Some strategies for supporting children's education include:

- **Encouraging a love of learning:** Parents can play an important role in helping their children develop a love of learning. One way to do this is by reading to children from an early age. Reading to children exposes them to new ideas, vocabulary, and concepts, and it can also help them develop language and listening skills. Parents can also encourage a love of learning by discussing what children are learning at school and asking them about their interests. This can help children see that learning is a valuable and enjoyable activity.
- **Providing opportunities for learning outside of school:** This might include visiting museums, attending cultural events, or participating in educational programs or activities. By providing these opportunities, parents can help children see that learning is a lifelong pursuit and that it can be fun and engaging.
- **Providing a supportive environment:** Parents can create a supportive environment for learning by setting aside dedicated study time and providing a quiet, distraction-free place for children to study. This might involve setting up a designated study area in the home, such as a desk or a quiet corner. It can also be helpful to establish a consistent study schedule and to encourage children to set goals for their studies.
- **Providing tools to help children stay organized.** This might involve providing tools such as calendars, to-do lists, or planners to help children keep track of assignments and deadlines. By helping children stay organized, parents can reduce stress and help them make the most of their study time.
- **Communicating with teachers:** Parents can stay informed about their children's education by communicating with their teachers. This might involve attending parent-teacher conferences,

staying in touch with teachers via email or phone, or participating in school events or activities. By staying in touch with teachers, parents can stay informed about their children's progress and get a sense of what they are learning in school. This can also help parents identify any areas where their children may need extra support, and it can provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions or express concerns.

- **Communicating expectations and goals with teachers:** For example, parents might discuss with teachers the types of assignments and activities they would like to see their children complete or the areas where they would like to see their children focus their efforts. By communicating with teachers about their expectations, parents can help ensure that their children are receiving the support they need to succeed.
- **Seeking out resources:** Parents can seek out resources such as tutoring or academic support services to help their children overcome challenges and succeed in their studies. These resources can provide additional support and guidance to help children understand concepts and complete assignments. Parents might also consider enlisting the help of family members, such as older siblings or grandparents, who can provide additional support and encouragement. By seeking out these resources, parents can help ensure that their children have the support they need to succeed in their studies. This can be especially important for children who are struggling with coursework or who may be facing other challenges, such as learning differences or language barriers. By providing additional support, parents can help their children overcome these challenges and achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

Education is a critical foundation for personal and professional success, and it plays a vital role in the development and prosperity of a country. Despite the challenges and limitations of the education system in Nigeria, it is important for youths to value and prioritize their education. By investing in their education, youths can gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers and contribute to their communities. The benefits of education are numerous and long-lasting. Education can provide improved job prospects and higher earning potential, as well as personal benefits such as increased knowledge and critical thinking skills. Education can also provide opportunities for personal growth and development, and it can help individuals make informed decisions about their lives and communities.

In addition to the benefits of education for individuals, education is also crucial for the future of the country. By investing in education, parents can help their children achieve their full potential and contribute to the development and prosperity of Nigeria. It is a common belief among many youths in Nigeria that "school is a scam," but this belief is not supported by the evidence. While the education system in Nigeria may have its challenges and limitations, it is important to recognize that education is a valuable investment in oneself and one's future. By valuing and prioritizing education, youths can gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers and contribute to their communities. We encourage youths to recognize the value of education and to reject the belief that "school is a scam." Rather than viewing school as a burden or a waste of time, we urge youths to embrace the opportunities that education provides and to work towards achieving their goals and dreams. With determination and perseverance, it is possible to succeed in school and build a bright future, regardless of the challenges that may arise. So, we can confidently say that "school is not a scam". We further urge them to value and prioritize their education and to seek out the resources and support they need to succeed. We also encourage parents to support their children's education, even if they face financial or social challenges. Together, we can build a brighter future for Nigeria through the power of education.

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