

Youth, Globalization, and Society in Africa and Its Diaspora

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Edited by

Jepkorir Rose Chepyator-Thomson,
Akinloye Ojo, Katja Sonkeng
and Karim Traore

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-4425-7

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4425-3

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

JEPKORIR ROSE CHEPYATOR-THOMSON,
AKINLOYE OJO, KATJA SONKENG,
AND KARIM TRAORE

This is an interdisciplinary book that brings together diverse scholars to reflect on the African continent and its diaspora. The book is written in the context of youth and young adults in the wake of the twenty-first century's globalization and technological advances that have drastically revolutionized lives and societies, across various fields ranging from education, language, food and agricultural production, religion, to sports in society. Previous research on youth in Africa is scarce; thus, this book expands the current discourse and adds to the current body of literature. Exploring challenges and opportunities of youth, diverse populations in various African nations provide valuable insights into this understudied area of research on the African continent and its diaspora. Youth is commonly defined as those individuals aged twenty-one and below, with young adults typically categorized as aged thirty-five and below, according to the population indicators of most African countries. For the Nigerian context specifically, Omoniyi, Scheld, and Oni¹ refer to individuals between the ages of twelve and thirty years as youth, putting the person in a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, as outlined in the 1981 federal government policy. Omoniyi et al. further point out the "values, attitudes and practices"² of youth in transition.

¹ Tope Omoniyi, Suzanne Scheld, and Duro Oni, "Negotiating Youth Identity in a Transnational Context in Nigeria," *Social Dynamics*, 35, no. 1 (2009): 1–18.

² Omoniyi, Scheld, and Onio, "Negotiating Youth Identity," 1-18.

The youth make up a large part of the continent's population.³ In fact, based on global indications, youth represent the largest population, with 60% of the African continent's one billion inhabitants under the age of thirty-five years.⁴ The Youth African Union Commission defines youth as individuals aged fifteen to thirty-five years, whereas the United Nations determines youth as "a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adult's independence," with an age range of "fifteen to twenty-four years, without prejudice to other Member States."⁵

The scholars' work for this book represents an attempt to understand Africa's youth in light of globalization and the creation of new realities that have impacted their ways of life. The pivotal part of the book aims to shine light on the unique position of youth in African societies in the realms of education, language, religion, food production, and sports as underpinned by globalization of Africa and its diaspora. The schooling of youth and promotion of continuing education through community centers and educational institutions is critical to the continent's youth, particularly given that school life occupies most of the youths' lives.

Youth development is primarily shaped by a variety of educational and cultural entities in society, such as family and formal education. Ntsabane and Nta point out that youth results from a partnership between the family, the education system, political parties, the media, and other agencies of socialization.⁶ The authors add, "education, as one of the agencies of socialization, offers one of the best opportunities in the production of effectively and fully participatory youth."⁷ The youth population, as "opposed to colonial past or to non-idealistic postcolonial construction of societies, represents positive hopes for many countries."⁸

Youth may stand for African nations under construction with national and pan-African identity or possibly with new socialization entities that nurture youth to become critically minded individuals to lead the continent in the increasing entanglement with the globalization of societies, democracies

³ Tidimane Ntsabane and Christopher Ntau, "The African Youth Charter and Youth Participation in Decision-Making: Opportunities and Challenges," in *The IUP Journal of International Relations*, X, no. 4 (2016): 50–64.

⁴ Ntsabane and Ntau, "The African Youth Charter," 50–64.

⁵ United Nations, Definition of Youth (2017).

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>.

⁶ Ntsabane and Ntau, "The African Youth Charter," 60.

⁷ Ntsabane and Ntau, "The African Youth Charter," 61.

⁸ Mamadou Diouf, "Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space," in *African Studies Review*, 46, no. 2 (2003): 1–12.

and economies.⁹ The education of youth in this manner involves all aspects of society. African youth presently face challenges, but there are possibilities for social change through a variety of avenues that this book reveals.

Part I: Youth, Schooling, and Continuing Education

Youths' full involvement in gainful employment is dependent on their completion of primary, secondary, and college education, along with some form of continuing education once employed. There is evidence that enrollment in primary school and retention is plagued with limited resources which are a necessary beginning part of education.¹⁰ The issues of gender, place of residence, and socioeconomics are the dominant factors influencing youth education in sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹ The authors in this section on youth, schooling, and continuing education focus on issues related to youth staying in school, their academic subject-learning while in school, and their schooling following completion of public education. The four chapters that make up this section include "Truancy and Youth's Education" by Abayomi Ayodeji Adedokun; "Attitudinal Perspectives of Nigerian Youths' Learning of Computer-based Tests in College Education," by Olaniyi Oladimeji; "Training Youth for Gainful Employment through the Realm of Continuing Education," by Nojimu-Yusuf; and "Using Experiential Teaching and Learning Models to Promote Youth Engagement and Development in sub-Saharan African Contexts," by Oluremilekun Ojo.

⁹ Ntsabane and Ntau, "The African Youth Charter," 50–64.

¹⁰ Mathias Kuepie, David Shapiro and Michel Tenikue, "Access to schooling and staying in school in selected sub-Saharan African Countries," *African Development Review* 27, no. 4 (2015): 403–414.

¹¹ Monica J. Grant and Jeré R. Behrman, "Gender gaps in educational attainment in less developed countries" in *Population and Development Review*, 36, no. 1 (2010): 71–89; Kuepie, Shapiro and Tenikue, "Access to schooling", 403–414; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, "Opportunities Lost: The Impact of Grade Repetition and School Leaving (Montreal, Canada: Global Education Digest 2012).

Part II: Youth, Language, and Globalization

Language is implicated in practices of culture, education, and globalization, as related to technology in the form of social media and computer usage. Authors in this four-chapter section address aspects of 1) globalization and inappropriate utilization of technology among African youth, particularly in the West African country of Nigeria (Ajiola Felix Oludare); 2) the Pan-African movement to untangle the extent of marginalization of African youth within and outside the continent (Kwaku Nti); 3) youths' use of social media to advance complicated social networks (Adetokunbo Akinyosoye); and 4) the role and use of Kiswahili as a continent-wide medium of communication (Mosol Kandagor).

Part III: Religion, Culture, and Globalization

In the wake of the twenty-first century, along with increased forms of globalization, African youth have ushered in new ways of religious engagement. According to Bunza and Ashafa, the religion of Islam has been instrumental in making youth “champions and vanguards of religious reform”¹² in Nigeria’s Hausa and Ebira societies. Some scholars call for the promotion of religious awareness to be embedded in diverse fields, as well as in Christian and Islamic forms of schooling.¹³ In an attempt to counteract colonial tenets of Christianity as implicated in the social and cultural equality of women and underserved populations, the authors in this section address the restoration of human agency to young women and children through the church (Danielle Clausnitzer), the emerging trend of Nigerian youth embracing traditional religion as a way to interrogate the social contraction of reality and belief systems (Oguntola-Laguda), language and religion in contemporary Africa and cultural differences embedded in conflict-resolution processes in the Nigerian public sector as interwoven with international perspectives on dialogues of understanding (Jubril).

¹² Mukhtar Umar Bunza, and Abdullahi Musa Ashafa, “Religion and the New Roles of Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Hausa and Ebira Muslim Communities in Northern Nigeria, 1930s–1980s,” *Journal of Religions and Ideologies*, 9, no. 27 (2010): 303.

¹³ Amy Stambach, “Education, Religion, and Anthropology in Africa,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39 (2010): 361–379.

Part IV: Food and Agriculture

“There is a deepening consensus among economic experts in Africa and around the world that agriculture is Africa’s golden ticket to prosperity.”¹⁴
~ Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of Nigeria, May 2017

Agriculture is the principal source of food production on the African continent. The largest population in Africa is the youth; thus, engaging young people in food production and agriculture should be of primary focus. In recognizing this correlation, African governments have increasingly formed policies designed to motivate the youth to get involved in food and agricultural production. However, such undertaking has proven to be quite difficult. Small-scale farming as traditionally practiced in many African nations—a policy directive inherited from colonial times—promotes household food security with surplus used for local market sales or export. The steady increase in population and the occurrence of natural disasters, however, have prompted a shift in food and agricultural production, with youth being focused upon as an instrument of change. In Nigeria, for instance, there is “renewed interest in large-scale agriculture [because of] frustration of poor results from interventions intended to boost the small-scale sector.”¹⁵ There is plenty of criticism of this farming trajectory due to its labor-intensive nature. Ariyo and Mortimore contend “youth farming and agricultural development [particularly] in Nigeria, are embedded in the complex interactive system that is characteristic of modern Nigeria” [with tenets of agribusiness becoming] “relevant to both large and youth farming in Nigeria.”¹⁶ Food and the future of the next generation are the primary concerns of African law and policymakers, drawing attention to the “availability of resources and access to policymakers and processes [as] policy should pay attention to young people and agriculture.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Olusegun Obasanjo, *Tapping the potential: Youth to drive Africa’s agricultural transformation* (2017). <https://agra.org/news/tapping-the-potential-youth-to-drive-africas-agricultural-transformation>.

¹⁵ Joseph A. Ariyo and Michael Mortimore, “Youth Farming and Nigeria’s Development Dilemma: The Shonga Experiment,” in *IDS Bulletin*, 43, no. 6 (2012): 58–66.

¹⁶ Ariyo and Mortimore “Youth Farming and Nigeria’s Development Dilemma,” 64.

¹⁷ James Sumberg, Akua Anyidoho, Nana Leavy, Jennifer Lintelo and Kate Wellard, “Introduction: The Young People and Agriculture ‘Problem’ in Africa,” in *IDS Bulletin*, 43, no. 6 (2012): 1.

Ultimately, there are numerous challenges and possibilities for social change that particularly benefit the youth and women in African societies. The authors in this chapter, however, focus primarily on farming and food production (Olawepo, Kering, Alao-Owunna, and Alufemi Adedokun).

Part V: Sports, Society, and Globalization

Sport encapsulates people of all walks of life in African societies. This section deconstructs how sport is used to advance social and cultural development as well as to inform government public policy in each country. For instance, during the era of apartheid in South Africa, sports “humanized the lives of people with little to cheer about and helped propel the anti-apartheid struggle internationally”¹⁸ and sports have been used to derive health and social benefits for the youth, women, and adults as well as accrue economic capital from sport migrants to European and Asian premier soccer leagues. The authors address benefits and challenges facing African youth and adults in sporting communities and nations (M’mbaha, Emeka and Njororai).

Information About the Editors

Dr. Jepkorir Rose Chepyator-Thomson is a professor of sports management and education, specializing in sport and education in African societies, as contextualized within tenets of globalization and culture. Additionally, Dr. Chepyator-Thomson is presently the director of Cultural Studies in the Physical Activity Lab of the Department of Kinesiology, leads the Center for Sport in Culture and Development in the College of Education, and founded and hosts annually the University of Georgia’s Global Educational Forum. She has authored and co-authored several articles (e.g., “Public Policy, Physical Education and Sport in English-speaking Africa”; “Sport and Social Change in Africa”) and book chapters on sport and education (“Sport in Kenya”; “Globalization and sport in Africa”; “African triple heritage in sport”; “Colonial and postcolonial perspectives on African sports and games”), edited two books (*African Women and Globalization* published by African World Press), and co-edited another (*Global Perspectives on Physical Education and After-school Sport* published by University Press of America).

¹⁸ Chris H. Bolsmann and Peter Alegi, “South Africa and the Global Game: Introduction,” in *Soccer and Society*, 11, no. 1-2 (2010), 1.

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<https://www.africa-youth.org/>.

PART I:
YOUTH, SCHOOLING, AND CONTINUING
EDUCATION

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF POLITICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TRUANCY

ABAYOMI AYODEJI ADEDOKUN

Introduction

Issues of crime and social disorder have been on the rise all over the world, and school truancy has been identified as a major cause to these growing concerns. Truancy is a social epidemic that spreads if quick intervention is not in place. According to Lipsett, England has witnessed a dramatic increase in truancy in secondary schools as compared to previous years.¹ Data released by the Department of Children, Schools and Families show that 204,810 pupils play truant in secondary school at least once a week. In the United States, DeKalb posits that truancy is one of the top ten problems in high schools.² Truancy and class-skipping seems to be rampant all over the world and keeping up with current data poses a challenge to all stakeholders because of public sensitivity.

Truancy occurs in Nigeria and other African nations as well.³ It is a major antisocial phenomenon that society needs to address to improve educational, economic, and societal standards. Oluremi describes truancy as a major discipline problem among secondary school students that constitutes danger to all spectrums of society, causing lifelong problems not only for

¹ Anthea Lipsett, *Truancy Rates Rise in Secondary School* (2007). Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/oct/25/schools.uk>.

² Jay DeKalb, *Student Truancy* (1999). <http://www.ericdigests.org/1999-4/truancy.htm>.

³ Doubleglist, *Truancy among Secondary School Students in Ebonyi South Education Zone* (2013). <http://www.doubleglist.com/truancy-secondary-school-students-ebonyi-south-education-zone/>

the parents, society and schools, but also for the economy at large.⁴

DoubleGist describes the school as a social unit that attempts to educate students about their world.⁵ Staying in school for educational reasons is an established part of a culture that mandates that parents educate their children for a future of greatness. The purpose of education, according to DoubleGist, is for students to attain educational excellence that will reflect positively on society and advance the frontiers of civilization.⁶ The National Center for School Engagement defines truancy as unexcused absences from school by a minor that exceed the normal time allowed by state law.⁷ Each state has pertinent laws regarding school attendance, including the age when children start school and when they can legally leave, and the allowed number of absences from school in a year.⁸ The prevalence of truancy and absenteeism in today's schools has become a pressing issue that society as a whole needs to tackle imminently. The social implications of truancy are manifold.

What is Truancy?

Thus far, no globally accepted definition of truancy exists. One definition of truancy refers to accumulating unexcused absences from school up to more than half of the school year.⁹ Definitions of truancy may not be universal but share common elements, such as an excessive number of unexcused absences from classes. Hence, many schools consider truancy as an act of delinquency.¹⁰ This is one of the numerous factors that contribute to the risk of dropping out of school. Students who engage in truancy are likely to use drugs, commit crimes, and act as intermediaries between criminals and their victims.

Yount traces back the issue to Massachusetts and New York truancy

⁴ Fareo Dorcas Oluremi, "Truancy and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Southwestern Nigeria: Implication for Counseling," in *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education*, 32 (2013): 1424–1428.

⁵ Doublegist, "Truancy among Secondary School Students"

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ National Center for School Engagement, "Overview of Truancy" and "Truancy Fact Sheet," in *Toolkits for Creating Your Own Truancy Reduction Program* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/pr/217271.pdf>.

⁸ NCSE, "Overview of Truancy"

⁹ M.C. Echebiwe, *Truancy among Secondary School Students: A Monograph* (Abia State College of Education, Arochukwu 2009); Terence P. Thornberry and David. L. Huizinga, *Urban Delinquency Justices Bulletin*. Office of Justice Programs (2000); Charles Walls, "New Approaches to Truancy Prevention in Urban Schools" (ED480916) (New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education 2003).

¹⁰ Ibid.

laws enacted in 1853 and 1854, respectively.¹¹ The Education Act, on different levels of government put in place, compelled parents to send their children to school. The policy restricted the number of allowed unexcused absences to no more than five within a school year.¹² Since the first enactment of a law on truancy, various government organizations have stepped into action to eradicate truancy in schools. If the issue of truancy is not viewed as an urgent matter, commitment to improving the problem will be lacking, which will cause larger social problems. Education ought to increase the knowledge and awareness of creativity in the job among workers. If the foundation of education is faulty due to truancy and skipping classes, employees will not attain the expected performance.

The cost of truancy is high. Taxpayers' money is wasted on students who deliberately avoid school. More importantly, however, truancy is an early predictor of minors' delinquency, social isolation, and educational failures.¹³ Truancy and absenteeism are directly linked to substance use and abuse, antisocial activity, early sexual activity, withdrawal from high school, and suicidal ideation and attempts.¹⁴ Seeley identifies truancy as a contributing factor to the first-time use of drugs and involvement in other antisocial activities.¹⁵

To combat this epidemic and help students perform well in school and thrive in society, the causes of truancy must be well-understood and identified. Baker et al. attest that certain factors cause students to skip class and play truant. These causes include the social influence of friends and parental care. Schools must also take a share of responsibility because of ineffective school policies on attendance, poor record-keeping, and unsafe school environments).¹⁶

¹¹ Rick Yount, "Population and Sampling" (4th ed. 2006). Retrieved from http://www.napce.org/documents/research-design-yount/07_sampling_4th.pdf.

¹² Doubleglist, "Truancy among Secondary School Students"

¹³ NCSE, "Overview of Truancy"

¹⁴ Hedy N. Chang and Mariajosé Romero, Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in Early Grades." National Center for Children in Poverty (Columbia University Press 2008); Kimberly L. Henry and David L. Huizinga, School-Related Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Truancy among Urban Youth Placed at Risk," *Journal of Prevention* 28, no. 6 (2007): 505–519.

¹⁵ Ken Seeley, "Truancy and Connections to Bad Outcomes and Best Practices," presented at The Policy Forum—Truancy: The Absent Epidemic. (Washington, DC: The Office of State Superintendent of Education, District of Columbia 2008) March.

¹⁶ J. Z. Heilbrunn, *Pieces of Truancy Jigsaw: A Literature Review* (Denver, CO: National Center for School Engagement 2007). <http://schoolengagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/piecesofthetrucancyjigsawliteraturereview.pdf>.

Causes of Truancy

Truancy will continue to exist in school environments if the government fails to act. It is a four-fold problem, which includes the student, the student's family background, the school, and the community.¹⁷ Government policies anchor this four-fold problem: laws, decisions, attributes, and behavior.

In the case of the student, when the school environment is hostile, students will find excuses to avoid school. School hostility can lead to student laziness toward schoolwork. Such an environment can stem from poor school infrastructure and negative teacher attitudes toward work due to underpaid salaries and other entitlements.¹⁸ No amount of policy or propaganda can eradicate this if the government fails to genuinely tackle the root causes of the problem. Creating a good learning environment and treating those who are educating the minds of the young well can contribute to a positive social change and ultimately help diminishing truancy.

The poverty level contributes immensely to students' truancy in secondary schools. In Nigeria, many parents seek a good education for their children but cannot afford the school registration fee, let alone each term's tuition. Almost all state governors in the federation use free education as part of their agenda while campaigning, but then renege on their promises when they rise to power. As a result of this deceitful strategy by politicians, free education has become simple propaganda that raises false hopes in many parents. As such parents are obligated to send children into the workforce at an early age to earn sufficiently tuition money, while helping with the family finances at the same time. Moreover, some parents have increasingly started to encourage their children to join political parties for monetary gain. As a negative side effect, some parents report losing control over their children, who oftentimes turn into errand boys, criminals, or informants for politicians, while engaging in illegal activities, such as drug use, rape, and assault.¹⁹

¹⁷ Myriam L. Baker, Nady Jane Sigmon and Elaine Nugent, "Truancy Reduction: Keeping Students in School," in *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Bulletin* (2001); I. N. Okwakpam and I. O. Okwakpam, "Causes and Levels of Truancy among Secondary School Students: A Case Study of Rivers State, Nigeria," *Problem of Education in the 21st Century*, 45, (2012): 51–62.

¹⁸ P.L. Thomas, *Politics and Education Don't Mix* (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/04/politics-and-education-dont-mix/256303/>.

¹⁹ Baker et al., "Truancy Reduction: Keeping Students in School"

Schools must take a share of the blame; still, inefficient governance also plays a significant role. Gwegwe argues that the majority of politicians lack a patriotic commitment to their nation. Instead, their motivations are purely driven by self-interest.²⁰ More specifically, they are looking for ways to make quick money from the government. Evidence has shown that politicians tend to embezzle budgetary allocations for school systems, which include educational funds and other financial resources meant for educational development. This situation has paralyzed the zeal of teachers, who in response frequently embark upon strike action to demand unpaid salaries, more benefits, and better school infrastructure and facilities.

Communities in Nigeria are usually large, consist of low-income families, and they are representatives of the majority of the nation.²¹ Consequently, the population of illiterates, semi-illiterates, and educated people who lack self-discipline is steadily growing. The absence of effective policies hinders the proper education of the youth and the young adults, to provide them with basic medical care, and support their academic pursuits. Even in the United States, every educational institution is required to have a health clinic on-site that responds to the students' and staff's immediate medical needs. Parents' inability to care for their children has created a severe problem for society. Children and young adults have become engaged in all kinds of work just to survive.

The deviant attitude of these students could be linked to their family background, which also detracts the community. As with other nations, the government must establish concrete measures to eradicate inequality between opportunistic politicians and the people they govern. And yet, as important as education is, no such government policies exist at this point. Collins points out that if good people (leaders) are not in the right place to perform their duties, the outcome will be irrelevant to the entire organization.²² The right people need to sit in the right seat. Society ought to nominate people to govern based on what they know versus whom they know and who can make things happen. Until the right people are put in the right positions, nations cannot provide good infrastructure, good education, good governance, and jobs.

²⁰ Kali Gwegwe, *Nigerian Politics: Destroying today to secure tomorrow?* (2010). <http://nigeriademocracywatchtower.blogspot.com/2010/04/>

²¹ Gwegwe, "Nigerian Politics: Destroying today to secure tomorrow?"

²² Jim Collins, "Good to Great: Why some companies make the leap...and others don't" (2001). <http://www.criticalthink.info/Phil1301/goodtogreat.htm>

Governmental Roles in School Truancy

African governments have not adequately addressed the issue of truancy. For instance, in Nigeria, many government schools do not have sufficient infrastructure to be called learning centers. Instead, innocent students are used as political pawns. This trend creates a vacuum in educational systems, as teachers are reluctant to question the absence of students in their classes for fear of being reported to their politically active parents. By contrast, in the United States, law enforcement officers used to visit truant students' homes to issue the parents of such students appearance ticket fines, and require them to appear in court for keeping their children out of school or paying a fine for missing classes.

Although the government in Nigeria seemingly fails to fulfill their political and constitutional responsibilities, ironically, the government and the parents tend to now blame teachers for not doing their job, because students are continually absent from school.

Many times, the school authority will call home to report absenteeism or skipping classes but to no avail, because parents are not responding to these calls.²³ Students even often tell teachers that their parents will not do anything, which is true. School truancy rates and crime rates are almost identical. Teachers cannot fix the problems in schools due to a lack of support from the government. Different laws favor learners, which students often use against teachers. Conversely, however, Goldstain posits that government action on truancy is too harsh on low-income parents; they are at the receiving end for any consequences, such as fines, detention, or both as the situation demands.²⁴

According to UK Prime Minister David Cameron, as reported in the *Southend Standard*, any unpaid fines due to student's truancy will be deducted from child tax credit.²⁵ This action of deduction will surely affect parents of the truant students economically. Due to complaints from parents, the consequences of students' truancy are more than the offense committed. Looking at the claim, it is obvious that the system put in place by the government is not yielding results.

²³ Anthony Rainge, personal communication, Nov. 14, 2013.

²⁴ Dana Goldstain, *Inexcusable Absences* (2015).

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/121186/truancy-laws-unfairly-attack-poor-children-and-parents>.

²⁵ *Southend Standard*, Parents Face Deductions from Tax Credits for Failing to Pay Truancy Fines (2015).

https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/local_news/13810620.parents-face-deductions-from-tax-credits-for-failing-to-pay-truancy-fines/

In the African context, especially in Nigeria, politics have become rule by force.²⁶ The purpose of being in power is to serve, not to rule, but the reverse is the case. Students in post-primary education are now politicians' instruments. Politicians give out money and materials solely to lure innocent students from low-income families to work for them as party agents or in other shady assignments. In the United States, the situation is no different but more sophisticated. The government uses food stamps and other incentives to win over low-income parents for voting purposes, and this has given students the opportunity to behave any way they want at school. Their parents receive money and spend it irresponsibly; then they have little or no time to take care of their children. As part of the role performed by the government, politicians budget money for problems that they have created.

Impact of Truancy on Society

Student truancy affects society in many ways, including the lack of skilled personnel, a diminished economic productivity, and increased spending on poverty alleviation programs. This creates opportunities for students who attend school regularly and acquire useful skills that can help solve problems in society. If the parents are not empowered to take basic responsibility for their children, the children will see nothing wrong in skipping class and even school to make time to use the way they wish.²⁷

Skilled and qualified citizens serve as the pillar of every nation in the world. Society expects to derive benefits from a skilled workforce because of the investment it makes in students. The government's ability to provide quality, meaningful and affordable education to students has failed due to the self-driven governance.²⁸ This inability has resulted in budgeting money for crime fighting when that is the main contributing factor. Such money would be better spent providing the necessary tools to equip students for their integration into the labor force. This is a worldwide issue; but it is less severe in other countries than in Nigeria, a nation where policies and rules can be averted to suit personal interest to the detriment of others.²⁹

The effects of truancy also truncate government investments in other nations. Nigeria is rich in oil and agricultural products, but still, it cannot

²⁶ LIDC, *Education in Nigeria: The Impact of Bad Politics and a Blueprint for Progress* (2014). <http://www.lidc.org.uk/node/89>.

²⁷ Rosanne Palmer, *Politics in Public Education: The Legislative Agenda* (2011). <http://ezinearticles.com/?politics-in-public-education:-the-legislative-agenda&id=6207666>.

²⁸ LIDC, "Education in Nigeria"

²⁹ Palmer, "Politics in Public Education: The Legislative Agenda"

maintain its resources to sustain the country's economic reserves. This is mostly due to unreliable politicians who fail to fulfill their mandate to the people they serve, visibly displayed in the way politicians respond or the lack thereof to the needs and demands of education stakeholders. The possibility of teaching staff being equipped to face educational challenges is slim.³⁰ In Nigeria, secondary school institutions attach no monetary compensation to additional degrees that teachers obtain.

According to Obayan, politicians in power enjoy investing money on problems that can be resolved when identified rather than when the problems have developed into larger issues.³¹ Poverty alleviation is a good program, but the underlying motif is not. The program is used to propagate the interest of continuity in office, to benefit personal finances, and to give favors to family members. Obayan makes some recommendations on this issue: An electoral reform would diminish election malpractice and encourage the emergence of a government that would reflect the will of the people and incorporate accountability into government to eradicate unnecessary spending.³²

Conclusion

Social change, political forces, economic pressure, insurgency against good governance, and people's perceptions of politics have contributed to the educational troubles the country faces. The issue of truancy may be mitigated to its minimum level if resources are rightly positioned to tackle the phenomenon. Yet, the current political arena is a game of whom you know and whom you serve in the political arena. The wall of Nigerian politics has been built to filter out whoever cannot participate in do-or-die politics, which has formed an obstacle that prevents the nation's survival. This type of behavior has contributed to the nonchalant attitude of our leaders toward follow-through in the policies that control educational institutions. Palmer asserts that politicians' strategies are to buy teachers' union executives to cover up their unproductive actions.³³ Sadly, not surprisingly, the union executives are now selling out teachers to politicians for money, which also leads to teachers abandoning students for longer periods due to strikes. All this inconsistency exacerbates student truancy.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ LIDC, "Education in Nigeria"

³² Ibid.

³³ Palmer, "Politics in Public Education: The Legislative Agenda"

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CHAPTER 3

ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN YOUTHS TOWARD COMPUTER-BASED TESTS: THE EXAMPLE OF USE OF ENGLISH IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

OLANIYI OLADIMEJI

Introduction

Many universities in Nigeria increasingly incorporate computer-based administration of examinations. This development started over a decade ago, when computer-based tests (CBT) were first introduced to examine students on general courses with more than 300 students. Universities that as a matter of compulsion offer the General Studies and Use of English courses have gradually adopted CBT to conduct their exams. This decision was not made without mixed feelings, rancor, and contrasting attitudes toward CBT as opposed to the long-established pen and paper test (PPT) method. This chapter, therefore, attempts to corroborate studies on the use of technology for exam purposes. Previous research includes Joshua and Ikiroma,¹ Alabi, Issa, and Oyekunle,² George,³ and Alunyo,⁴ among others who have investigated the acceptability, use, and students' perception of

¹ Akon M. Joshua, Monday T. Joshua and Blessing Ikiroma, "Computer-Based Testing in Nigeria's University Entrants' Matriculation Examination: Readiness and Acceptability of Critical Stakeholders" (2015).

² A.T. Alabi, A.O. Issa, and R. A. Oyekunle, "The Use of Computer Based Testing Method for the Conduct of Examination at the University of Ilorin," in *International Journal of Learning and Development*. 2, no. 3 (2012).

³ Y. George, "Students' Perception of Computer-Based Assessment in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria," Research Paper (2011).

⁴ Bello Amos Alunyo, "Effects of Social Networking on Nigerian Youths/Students" (2012). Nigeriaobservernews.com/26022012/sundayobserver/features.html

CBT. These earlier studies paved the way at a time when CBT was still new in Nigeria.

Statutorily, then-President Goodluck Jonathan endorsed the introduction of the CBT by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in 2013 for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). This was constituted in a statement released by Fabian Benjamin, head of public relations department of JAMB, made in Bwari, Abuja. Specifically, the statement read that President Jonathan endorsed CBT during an address to representatives of Cito, an international operating institute for test measurements in the Netherlands. Professor Dibu Ojerinde said that in 153 centers, 600,000 candidates across the nation took the UTME in 2014. The registrar explained that CBT was introduced to curb examination malpractice and other challenges undermining the pen-and-paper-based examination. Through UTME, many undergraduate students who served as respondents in this research were undoubtedly familiar with CBT. However, the primary purpose of this chapter is to explore the students' perceptions toward CBT at Kwara State University, Malete (KWASU), located in north-central Nigeria.

A plethora of literature regarding the application of CBT as well as the role of the internet undermine the arguments being made by education stakeholders that teaching and learning as well as testing represent an indispensable tripod that need to constantly migrate to several ubiquitous platforms. This migration is imperative in order to tackle concerns about the conduct, authenticity and reliability of examinations, especially with respect to the process of hiring qualified faculty members for Nigerian universities. At KWASU, the selected research site of this study, annually more than 60,000 candidates take the post-UTME examination while more than 2,000 candidates simultaneously undergo the Use of English exam. Prior to the introduction of CBT, at least four lecturers were tasked with the responsibility of grading the Use of English scripts, in addition to their departmental course load, which put great strain on their ability to work efficaciously.

In this chapter, while the diverse views of undergraduates are being sought, a positive and objective stance is being held as we juxtapose the remote and immediate benefit of CBT to college scholarship. In Nigeria, the use of CBT for conducting entrance exams to various educational levels, military training, and certification testing by professional groups in various stages and categories of life cannot be overemphasized. In the view of Olu-morin et al., CBT has gained popularity as a means of testing with large-scale professional exams such as the US Medical Licensing Examination

(USMLE) in 1999.⁵ Although CBT is now ubiquitous at KWASU, it became popular through the post-UTME and the main college examinations such as University of Ilorin, Federal University of Technology, Akure, and the Federal University of Technology, Minna. While these colleges are currently maximizing the use of CBT as a tool for undergraduate and postgraduate assessments, Obafemi Awolowo University at Ile-Ife employs the optional mark and recording (OMR) sheets used by WAEC (West Africa Examinations Council) for its objective test exams.

In the words of Mubashrah et al., the inclusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education is required to review, re-evaluate, modify or change the traditional examination methods.⁶ As such, the burden on teachers could be diminished, while the conduct of examinations could be more purposefully facilitated. Computer-based examinations can be further used to promote more effective learning by testing a wide range of skills, knowledge, and understanding in one setting. Also, accessing, managing of information, as well as developing communication skills are possible to assess online, which is not feasible with regular essay-based examinations.

Research Questions

This study was aimed at investigating the perceptions of Nigerian youths regarding the use of ICT for exams, to which answers were sought to the following questions:

- i. What is the attitude of undergraduates to CBT?
- ii. What is the preference of undergraduates—CBT or paper-and-pencil-based tests (PPT)?
- iii. What motivates this preference?

⁵ Charles O. Olumorin, A. M. Fakomogbon, A.Y. Fasasi, O.C. Olawale and O.F. Olafare, "Computer-Based Tests: A System of Assessing Academic Performance In University of Ilorin, Nigeria," *American Academic & Scholarly Research Journal*, 5, no. 2 (2013): 2.

⁶ Mubashrah Jamil, Tariq, R. H., and Shami, P.A., "Computer-Based Versus Paper-Based Examinations: Perceptions of University Teachers," in *The Turkish online Journal of Educational Technology*, 11, no. 4 (2012): 371-381.