

DECOLONIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE CREATIVITY IN THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Decolonizing educational management and administration in Nigeria is critical for fostering sustainable creativity and aligning education with national development objectives. The persistent reliance on Eurocentric administrative models, centralized governance, and standardized curricula limits institutional effectiveness, suppresses teacher and student creativity, and disconnects education from local socio-economic realities. This paper examines the historical and contemporary implications of colonial legacies on educational leadership and argues for a decolonized framework that integrates indigenous knowledge, culturally responsive leadership, and community-centered governance. Drawing on contemporary empirical studies and policy analyses, the paper highlights how decolonization can enhance institutional performance, stimulate innovation, and strengthen the linkage between education and sustainable national development. The study concludes that intentional, contextually grounded reforms are essential for unlocking the creative potential of Nigeria's education system and achieving long-term socio-economic progress. Recommendations focus on policy reforms, institutional strategies, leadership capacity building, teacher training, and the engagement of development partners to support systemic transformation.

Keywords: Decolonization, Educational Management, Administration, Creativity, Indigenous Knowledge, Nigeria, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

The Nigerian educational system remains deeply entangled with its colonial past, shaping not only curricula and pedagogical orientations but also administrative structures and leadership practices. Colonial educational frameworks were designed to serve imperial interests, privileging Eurocentric knowledge systems and hierarchical administrative models while marginalizing indigenous ways of organizing, learning, and knowing (Sanni et al., 2025; Ojo et al., 2023). This legacy persists in contemporary educational management, where imported bureaucratic structures often take precedence over culturally responsive governance, hindering the capacity of institutions to respond creatively to local needs and contexts. Colonial remnants in administration have contributed to rigid, top-down decision-making processes that restrict innovation and cultural relevance in both policy and practice, ultimately constraining the educational system's potential to cultivate sustainable creativity among learners.

Decolonization in education extends beyond curriculum reform to encompass the transformation of educational management and administrative paradigms that continue to reflect colonial power relations and epistemic dominance. Scholars argue that without dismantling these entrenched structures, efforts at pedagogical change will remain superficial and insufficient (Noutchie, 2025; Sanni et al., 2025). Decolonizing management involves reimagining leadership roles, governance mechanisms, and decision-making processes in ways that privilege indigenous knowledge, local cultural frameworks, and participatory practices over imported models that have limited applicability in the Nigerian context. A postcolonial critique of educational leadership reveals that many current practices reproduce colonial logics of control and compliance, rather than enabling adaptive, contextually grounded approaches to addressing contemporary challenges (Moorosi, 2021; Noutchie, 2025).

The purpose of this study is to critically examine how colonial legacies in educational management and administration have inhibited sustainable creativity within Nigeria's educational system and to articulate pathways for decolonization that support culturally responsive and innovation-oriented governance.

This study will contribute to the push for educational reform by centering the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and locally rooted leadership (Sanni et al., 2025; Ojo et al., 2023). Decolonization is presented here not as a rejection of all external influences but as a rebalancing of power relations in education, where indigenous epistemologies and practices are recognized as legitimate and valuable in shaping how schools and educational institutions are managed.

The significance of this work lies in its potential to inform policy, practice, and research in Nigerian education by highlighting the limitations of colonial administrative legacies and offering a framework for decolonized administrative practice that fosters creativity, relevance, and sustainability. A decolonized approach to educational management can expand the space for critical thinking, innovation, and culturally meaningful learning in Nigerian schools, strengthening the system's contribution to social and economic development. As decolonization efforts gain momentum across African contexts, this study frames educational management transformation as a necessary step toward building an education system that is responsive, resilient, and rooted in the live experiences of Nigerian communities (Noutchie, 2025; Sanni et al., 2025; Ojo et al., 2023).

CONCEPT OF DECOLONIZATION IN EDUCATION

Decolonization in education refers to the ongoing critical process of undoing the long-term influence of colonial power structures within educational systems, especially those that privilege Western epistemologies, governance models, and curricular assumptions over local forms of knowledge and cultural identity (Noutchie, 2025). Rather than merely ending formal colonial rule, decolonization engages with the epistemic and structural remnants of colonialism that persist in how education is structured, taught, and administered.

The goal is to transform educational spaces so they validate and center indigenous, local, and previously marginalized ways of knowing, teaching, and leading (Lopez & Singh, 2024). In this sense, decolonization encompasses not only curriculum reform but also the repositioning of institutional priorities, leadership frameworks, and knowledge hierarchies to better reflect the histories, values, and aspirations of formerly colonized societies.

Although commonly intersecting, decolonization, indigenization, and localization represent distinct yet related processes. Decolonization focuses on challenging the dominance of colonial logics and privileging non-Western epistemologies in education; it seeks to dismantle entrenched structures that sustain colonial hierarchies and marginalize local knowledge systems (Noutchie, 2025). Indigenization, on the other hand, emphasizes the positive integration and upliftment of indigenous knowledge, languages, and practices within the educational process, making them visible and operative within teaching, learning, and governance (Ontario Tech University Teaching and Learning Centre, 2025). Localization involves adapting educational content, leadership practices, and administrative processes to the specific cultural, social, and economic contexts of a particular place rather than relying on imported templates or universalized standards. While decolonization critiques what must be dismantled, indigenization and localization provide constructive pathways that prioritize

community values, indigenous epistemics, and culturally grounded practices (Ontario Tech University Teaching and Learning Centre, 2025).

Decolonization has significant implications for educational leadership and administration because it questions inherited colonial administrative models that emphasize hierarchical, centralized control and often marginalize local agency. Traditional educational management structures in many postcolonial contexts remain rooted in Western bureaucratic norms, limiting opportunities for participatory decision-making and culturally responsive leadership (Nout chie, 2025). Educational leaders can foster more inclusive governance by adopting a decolonial lens, one that values diverse stakeholder perspectives, community wisdom, and cultural relevance. This includes rethinking leadership roles, decentralizing authority, and embedding indigenous epistemologies into administrative policies and practices (Lopez & Singh, 2024). Such a shift not only enhances institutional relevance but also fosters environments where creativity, contextual problem-solving, and culturally attuned innovation are valued as core elements of sustainable educational transformation.

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Educational management and administration refer to the coordinated processes by which educational institutions plan, organize, lead, make decisions, and evaluate activities to achieve defined educational goals. These functions are central to the efficient functioning of schools, colleges, and universities, and constitute the backbone of effective institutional governance. Planning involves setting objectives and outlining strategies to achieve them, including strategic and operational plans that align educational goals with broader societal and economic needs (Mezieobi et al., 2024). Clear, forward-looking planning enables educational systems to anticipate challenges, mobilize resources, and establish priorities that support quality instruction and institutional growth.

Closely related to planning is organizing, which involves arranging human, material, and financial resources into structured units and processes that facilitate the implementation of plans. In the Nigerian context, organizing educational resources requires careful coordination among multiple stakeholders — including ministries, school leaders, teachers, and communities — to ensure efficient service delivery and learner support (Mezieobi et al., 2024). When resources are well organized, institutions are better able to function cohesively and respond to shifting demands in teaching, learning, and administration.

Leadership and decision-making are pivotal in steering educational institutions toward desired outcomes. Educational leadership involves guiding and motivating personnel, establishing a vision for institutional success, and fostering a positive organizational culture. Research indicates that leadership

practices directly influence instructional quality, teacher performance, and student engagement, making them essential to the overall effectiveness of educational management (Egwu, 2025). Decision-making, meanwhile, is the continuous process through which administrators select among alternatives to resolve problems and set courses of action. Effective decisions are typically informed by reliable data and inclusive stakeholder engagement, yet Nigerian educational systems often struggle with data gaps and limited participatory decision structures, which can weaken administrative responsiveness (Ogunode et al., 2020; Mezieobi et al., 2024).

Despite the theoretical clarity of these core functions, the practice of educational management and administration in Nigeria remains strongly influenced by Western administrative paradigms inherited from the colonial era, which emphasize hierarchical structures, centralized control, formalized procedures, and conformity to standardized models of governance. Historical analyses show that colonial educational administration in Nigeria was designed to maintain bureaucratic order and compliance, a pattern that has persisted into the post-colonial period and often limits institutional innovation and contextual responsiveness (Bakare, 2021; Obimuyiwa & Salekhova, 2025). These imported paradigms can constrain transformational leadership and local adaptability, making it difficult for educational administrators to tailor planning, organization, and decision-making to indigenous cultural values and emergent educational challenges. Consequently, critical examination and contextual adaptation of administrative models are needed to foster more flexible, culturally relevant, and creativity-oriented management practices within Nigeria's educational system.

CREATIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Creativity in education refers to the ability of learners and educators to generate original, meaningful, and contextually relevant ideas that extend beyond routine responses to learning tasks. Pivotaly, creativity involves divergent thinking; the capacity to explore multiple solutions, make novel connections, and express ideas in ways that are constructive and adaptive (Abe & Birabil, 2022). In Nigeria, creativity is increasingly recognized as a foundational educational outcome, not only for personal expression but for equipping learners with skills that support lifelong learning and problem resolution in diverse environments. Engaging students in creative activities across subjects enhances their ability to think critically and flexibly, which is essential in a world marked by rapid change and uncertainty (Abe & Birabil, 2022; Obogo et al., 2025).

Creativity underpins innovation, problem-solving, and adaptability, all of which are vital for effective learning and sustainable development. Research shows that creativity enables learners to approach complex problems, reconstruct familiar concepts in new ways, and generate solutions that are both practical and novel (Adeoye & Jimoh, 2023). In the context of 21st-century skills, creative problem-

solving is seen as crucial for preparing learners to navigate unforeseen challenges and to adapt to evolving social and technological landscapes (Adeoye & Jimoh, 2023; Obogo et al., 2025). Creative thinking encourages learners to experiment, take intellectual risks, and explore multiple perspectives; traits that are essential in educational processes geared toward innovation and resilience.

Creativity is closely linked with sustainability and national development in education. Educational approaches that integrate creative learning promote not just individual skills but broader capacities for addressing societal challenges in sustainable ways. Systematic reviews of educational research highlight that creativity contributes to learning processes within sustainable and ecosocial educational frameworks, encouraging learners to apply knowledge in ways that address environmental, social, and economic needs (López-Vílchez et al., 2024). Such integration positions creativity as not only an outcome of education but a mechanism for sustainable community problem-solving, thereby preparing learners to contribute meaningfully to public goods, innovation ecosystems, and national productivity.

By fostering creativity at all levels of education, systems strengthen learners' ability to engage with and solve real-world problems, thereby supporting sustainable development goals and national growth aspirations.

In the Nigerian educational landscape, creativity is increasingly emphasized as critical for sustainable educational development and socio-economic progress. Studies have found that creative skills development in diverse educational programmes, from basic schooling to adult and vocational education, enhances teaching quality, supports innovative educational practices, and prepares learners for the demands of a knowledge-driven economy (Yusuff et al., 2025; Agwu, 2025). Moreover, educational interventions that cultivate creativity are linked to improved problem-solving, adaptability, and responsiveness to community needs, reinforcing the notion that creativity is not an optional add-on but a central pillar of sustainable education. Through deliberate policy attention and administrative support for creative learning, Nigerian schools can contribute to a workforce capable of innovation, resilience, and sustained national development

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF COLONIAL EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

DECOLONIZING EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION.

Educational administration in Nigeria has deep roots in the British colonial experience, which fundamentally shaped the structure, purpose, and governance of formal schooling in the territory. The introduction of Western-style education began in the mid-19th century, primarily under the auspices of Christian missionary societies such as the Methodist Mission, Church Missionary Society (CMS), and

American Baptist Mission (Aminu, 2025). These early efforts were initially directed toward literacy and religious instruction, with missionaries establishing schools that taught reading, writing, and arithmetic alongside Christian doctrine, often as a means of supporting colonial evangelization and training local intermediaries for clerical and administrative roles in the expanding colonial economy (Umoh, 2025).

As missionary schooling proliferated through the late 1800s, the British colonial government began to assert more direct control over education to meet its administrative and economic objectives. The Education Ordinance of 1882 marked a key turning point, as it sought to standardize schooling and extend government oversight of schools previously run exclusively by missions (National Open University of Nigeria Courseware, 2025). Thereafter, education policy and administration became increasingly centralized under the colonial state, with commissions such as the Phelps-Stoke's 1922 Commission and the Ashby's 1959 Commission playing influential roles in shaping the organization, funding, and curriculum of schools (National Open University of Nigeria Courseware, 2025). The colonial administration used education strategically to produce clerks, interpreters, and lower-level officials who could serve the imperial bureaucracy, embedding schooling within the wider framework of economic exploitation and political control.

Missionary and colonial administrative structures also created significant regional and cultural disparities in educational provision. In the southern regions, where missionary activity was most concentrated, Western education spread more rapidly, leading to greater literacy and formal educational attainment (Harrison, 2025). In contrast, the northern parts of Nigeria with entrenched Islamic educational traditions and limited missionary penetration experienced slower uptake of the colonial education system, contributing to enduring inequalities in access, outcomes, and administrative capacity (Harrison, 2025; Onaji & Mohammed, 2026). This uneven development was compounded by the colonial emphasis on education as a tool for social stratification rather than universal empowerment, with access frequently limited to elites or communities with closer ties to missionaries or colonial authorities.

The legacy of centralized control, bureaucratic governance, and an examination-driven system inherited from the colonial period persists in contemporary school leadership and management practices in Nigeria. The colonial model prioritized standardization, hierarchical administrative structures, and curricula designed to support colonial governance rather than local knowledge or innovation. These features shaped the very nature of educational administration, reinforcing rigid lines of authority and often marginalizing indigenous pedagogies, languages, and community participation (Onaji & Mohammed, 2026; Harrison, 2025). Even after independence, efforts to

Africanize or indigenize education struggled to fully dismantle these entrenched bureaucratic norms, leaving modern school leadership and educational management practices still influenced by their colonial origins.

COLONIAL LEGACIES IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Contemporary educational management in Nigeria continues to reflect colonial legacies that privilege Eurocentric leadership models and rigid hierarchies, often at the expense of locally grounded practices. Colonial educational systems were designed to train individuals for administrative roles that served the interests of the colonial state, reinforcing hierarchical structures and bureaucratic norms that persist in post-independence governance (Onaji & Mohammed, 2026; Elemi, 2025). Such hierarchical models emphasize top-down decision-making and formal authority, which can limit teacher and community participation in leadership and weaken responsiveness to local educational needs. The persistence of these patterns reinforces administrative cultures that value conformity and obedience over innovation and collaborative problem-solving; traits that scholars argue are essential to decolonized, creativity-oriented education systems.

Another enduring legacy is the continued reliance on standardized curricula and administrative routines that were originally introduced to produce clerks, interpreters, and colonial functionaries rather than to nurture critical thinking or indigenous knowledge (Adekunle & Meroyi, 2023; Elemi, 2025). Colonial curricula often centered on European history, literature, and perspectives, marginalizing African knowledge, culture, and languages. Such standardization has persisted in many aspects of Nigeria's education system, manifesting in a heavy emphasis on rote learning, examination performance, and Western content that remains central to educational assessment and policy. This focus on standardized administrative and curricular routines limits the flexibility educators need to adapt learning to the cultural and socio-economic contexts of Nigerian students.

The marginalization of indigenous languages, values, and problem-solving approaches remains a prominent consequence of colonial education. Colonial authorities imposed English as the language of instruction and sidelined indigenous languages, framing them as inferior or unsuitable for formal learning (Gbadebo, 2025). This linguistic hierarchy has long-term effects on students' sense of cultural identity, hindered the transmission of local knowledge, and reinforced a bias toward Western epistemologies. As research on decolonizing curriculum reform shows, when indigenous perspectives are omitted from textbooks and classroom practices, learners may feel disconnected from their own cultural heritage, limiting opportunities for culturally relevant learning and problem-solving that draw upon local worldviews (EENET, 2025).

Ultimately, contemporary educational policy and practice in Nigeria still reflect an over-reliance on foreign policy models and benchmarks, which can undermine locally driven educational innovation. Colonial and post-colonial governments often modeled their education systems on British and international standards, prioritizing imported ideas of what constitutes “quality” education over contextual relevance. This has contributed to a system that looks outward for validation and benchmarks, rather than engaging deeply with indigenous ways of knowing and managing educational processes (Okafor & Fatema, 2025). Decolonizing educational management thus requires critically examining and transforming these entrenched practices, promoting leadership, curricula, and policy frameworks that are responsive to Nigeria’s cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic realities.

Policy and Governance Reforms

African leadership paradigms often focus on communal decision-making, shared responsibility, and contextual responsiveness, which can enrich institutional leadership and align administration with the cultural dynamics of local communities (Noutchie, 2025). Leaders who understand and Decolonizing educational policy in Nigeria requires frameworks that are context-sensitive and culturally responsive, shifting away from inherited colonial structures that privilege Western norms over local realities. Scholars argue that the legacy of Eurocentric policy frameworks continues to constrain educational transformation in Africa and must be critically re-evaluated to foreground indigenous epistemologies, languages, and socio-cultural contexts (Noutchie, 2025). By embedding local knowledge systems into national policy discourse, education can more authentically reflect the lived experiences and aspirations of communities rather than reproduce foreign models that were designed for different socio-economic conditions.

Closely linked to this is the imperative for decentralization and community-based governance in education. Decentralized governance redistributes authority from centralized bureaucracies to regional and community stakeholders, enabling decision-making that is locally informed and contextually relevant (Massa, 2024; Chitanda et al., 2024). This approach enhances transparency, accountability, and participation, empowering parents, educators, and community leaders to shape school policies and management in ways that align with indigenous values and local priorities. Such community involvement is central to dismantling colonial legacies of top-down authority and fostering governance structures rooted in collective responsibility.

Leadership and Administrative Practices

Decolonized leadership in educational administration embraces culturally grounded leadership models that draw from indigenous norms, values, and relational modes of governance rather than replicating

rigid Western hierarchies. Post-colonial scholars emphasize that traditional integrate these values are better positioned to navigate complex social terrains and cultivate inclusive school environments.

Alongside this is the need to foster participatory and collaborative decision-making within schools. Participatory governance invites multiple stakeholders including teachers, parents, students, and community elders into strategic discussions about school direction, resource allocation, and institutional priorities. This contrasts sharply with colonial administrative models that concentrated authority in distant bureaucratic offices, limiting grassroots involvement. Furthermore, decolonized administration calls for adaptive and flexible administrative structures that can respond quickly to emerging challenges and opportunities, moving beyond static, one-size-fits-all policies to more dynamic management systems that encourage innovation and local problem-solving (Noutchie, 2025).

Curriculum and Knowledge Production

A key dimension of decolonizing educational management is the integration of indigenous knowledge systems into both curriculum and institutional practices. Research on decolonizing education in Africa highlights that colonial schooling historically marginalized local languages, histories, and epistemologies, privileging Western content and pedagogies (Noutchie, 2025). Incorporating indigenous content into curricula validates local histories and cultural practices, fosters learner identity, and promotes epistemic justice the recognition that multiple legitimate ways of knowing can coexist in educational spaces.

In practical terms, decolonized curriculum reform promotes local innovation and problem-based learning, where students engage with issues drawn from their own communities and contexts. This not only enriches learning relevance but also builds critical thinking and adaptive skills needed for sustainable development. Additionally, promotion of multilingual administration and instruction—especially through the inclusion of indigenous languages alongside official languages—enhances access to learning and respects the linguistic diversity of Nigeria’s educational landscape. Such multilingual practices support cognitive development, cultural continuity, and more equitable educational outcomes for diverse learners (Noutchie, 2025).

Capacity Building for Creativity

For decolonization to be sustainable, educational systems must invest in training administrators in indigenous leadership values and culturally responsive management practices. Capacity building that foregrounds local epistemologies and community-centred leadership prepares educational leaders to guide institutions in ways that honor cultural heritage and promote contextual problem-solving (Ajani,

2025). This type of training contrasts with traditional professional development models rooted in Western theories that may lack relevance for local educational challenges.

Equally important is professional development focused on innovation and creativity, equipping administrators with the tools to foster environments where creative thinking thrives among teachers and learners. Training in creative leadership encourages experimentation, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and responsiveness to socio-cultural change (Mansfield & Lambrinou, 2024). Finally, a re-orientation of teacher education institutions is necessary so that pre-service and in-service training programmes include modules on decolonial pedagogy, indigenous knowledge integration, and culturally sustaining instructional strategies. Such reforms ensure that future educators enter the profession with the mindset and skills needed to support sustainable, creative educational transformation in their communities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1. Improved Institutional Effectiveness

Decolonizing educational management has significant implications for institutional effectiveness in Nigeria. When educational systems integrate indigenous knowledge, culturally responsive policies, and context-aware governance, institutions can better align their goals with community needs and national priorities, improving relevance and operational performance. Research on decolonizing education in Africa highlights that curriculum and leadership reforms rooted in local realities can make institutions more adaptive, innovative, and accountable (Noutchie, 2025). In this regard, reshaping curricula to include local content and problem-solving competencies fosters institutional responsiveness to societal challenges, enhancing outcomes beyond standardized test performance toward meaningful learning and application. This shift can also help counter persistent challenges in institutional governance and planning that stem from rigid, inherited administrative structures.

2. Enhanced Student and Teacher Creativity

A direct educational benefit of decolonized practices is the enhancement of creativity among both students and teachers. Integrating indigenous knowledge systems and culturally relevant pedagogies encourages creative thinking, critical analysis, and context-driven problem-solving skills that are often underdeveloped in traditional, exam-focused systems. Studies on integrating indigenous knowledge into formal education in Nigeria demonstrate that hands-on learning with culturally grounded content enhances students' cultural understanding, empathy, and critical engagement, leading to more active and innovative learners (Ebele, 2025).

When teachers are supported to adapt their instruction to local knowledge and learner needs, classrooms become environments that value innovation, experimentation, and relevance, countering rote memorization and strengthening professional creativity among educators.

3. Stronger Linkage between Education and National Development

Decolonization also strengthens the connection between education and broader national development goals. Education systems that produce graduates with skills relevant to local economic and social needs contribute more directly to workforce readiness, community development, and sustainable economic progress. Research on education for sustainable development emphasizes that teacher education and curricula must be deliberately oriented toward equipping learners with the knowledge, competencies, and values needed to address complex development challenges (Ikwelle & Orimba, 2024). Fostering critical competencies like problem-solving and cultural intelligence transforms education into a direct driver of national growth and inclusive innovation, moving it beyond a system for awarding credentials.

4. Reduced Dependency on Imported Administrative Models

Finally, decolonizing educational management helps reduce dependency on imported administrative models that often fail to reflect Nigeria's socio-cultural realities. Colonial and post-colonial reliance on foreign curricula, governance structures, and pedagogical standards can marginalize local identities and suppress contextual relevance (EENET, 2025). Prioritizing indigenous educational frameworks, multilingual instruction, and community-based leadership enables Nigeria to build systems that honor local knowledge and ensure self-reliant policy development. This reduces the over-reliance on foreign benchmarks and external validations that may not align with local needs, fostering a more autonomous, resilient, and sustainable educational landscape.

CONCLUSION

This paper has critically examined the need to decolonize educational management and administration in Nigeria as a strategy for fostering sustainable creativity and innovation.

The analysis demonstrates that the current dominance of Eurocentric administrative models, centralized governance structures, and standardized curricula constrains institutional effectiveness, suppresses teacher and student creativity, and limits the relevance of education to national development (Noutchie, 2025; Ikwelle & Orimba, 2024). Decolonization offers an alternative framework that integrates indigenous knowledge systems, culturally responsive leadership, and community-centered governance, thereby aligning educational practices with local realities.

Reaffirming the central argument, decolonization is not merely symbolic but a practical imperative for nurturing creativity, promoting adaptive problem-solving, and strengthening the linkage between education and socio-economic development. To achieve these outcomes, intentional reforms are required across policy formulation, leadership practices, curriculum development, teacher training, and institutional governance. Without such reforms, Nigerian education risks perpetuating dependency on foreign models, underutilizing local intellectual resources, and failing to equip learners with the competencies necessary for sustainable national growth.

SUGGESTIONS

Effective decolonization of educational management and administration in Nigeria requires coordinated action across multiple stakeholders. The following suggestions provide strategic directions for policymakers, institutions, educational leaders, teacher training bodies, and development partners to foster creativity, enhance institutional effectiveness, and strengthen the alignment of education with national development.

1. Policymakers

Policymakers should ensure the design and implementation of education policies are culturally responsive and contextually grounded, with a focus on decentralization and community involvement. Adequate and sustained funding must be prioritized, with mechanisms for accountability, monitoring, and evaluation that reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies and political interference.

2. Educational Institutions

Institutions should institutionalize participatory governance, curriculum innovation, and culturally relevant practices. Embedding indigenous knowledge, promoting problem-based learning, and strengthening partnerships with local industries can enhance creativity, skill acquisition, and graduate employability.

3. Educational Managers and Administrators

Educational leaders must engage in continuous professional development emphasizing indigenous leadership values, innovation, and adaptive management. Administrators should foster transparent, performance-driven decision-making while promoting collaborative practices that empower staff and learners to participate in institutional growth.

4. Teacher Education and Training Bodies

Teacher preparation programs should integrate decolonial pedagogy, culturally sustaining instructional strategies, and creativity-focused professional development. Pre-service and in-service

training should equip teachers with the skills to incorporate indigenous knowledge and contextually relevant practices into everyday teaching.

5. Researchers and Development Partners

Researchers should examine the outcomes of decolonization initiatives on learning, creativity, and institutional effectiveness, providing evidence to guide policy. Development partners can support capacity-building, technical assistance, and the sharing of best practices to strengthen local systems and innovation in education.

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The author(s) declare that it is not applicable.

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