

Effective School Management In Nigerian Secondary Schools: Issues, Challenges And Way Forward

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Abstract: To achieve quality education, effective management of both human and material resources is needed. This paper x-rayed major challenges that militate against effective management of secondary schools in Nigeria. Major functions of a school manager were highlighted. The paper identified some challenges militating against effective management of secondary schools to include fragile school-community relationship, poor governance, indiscipline among staff members etc. Recommended ways of enhancing effectiveness of secondary school management include; teachers' motivation, stable government policies on education, provision of reliable data for planning etc.

Keywords: Secondary School Management, School Administrative Challenges, Nigeria Secondary Education, School Manager.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education contributes greatly to the growth and development of a nation. In general, it is vital in bringing about desirable changes to communities, leading to national development. For any nation to derive maximum dividend from education, proper and effective management of the school system must be the priority of her government. However, education is a major weapon with which we acquire knowledge and relevant skills to survive in life endeavors. Adesina (2011) posited that education is a major force in economic, intellectual, social, and cultural empowerment. He maintains that education has the capacity to bring about character and attitudinal change, as well as reshape human potential for desired development.

The importance of secondary education in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Its establishment was to provoke positive development of students. Thus, effective management is necessary for proper organization and coordination of various activities within the school system to achieve educational goals. Management in school focuses on getting work done through or with teachers, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders in education to achieve educational goals. Before

1999, the traditional roles of school managers were mainly centered on the management of school facilities, the direction, and supervision of teachers, and building positive school-community relations (Hauwa, 2012: 189-191). However, all the issues and challenges secondary school education is faced with in the country are yet to be reconciled.

Inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, unqualified teachers, management challenges and government unfavorable policies are some of the problems confronting Nigeria's educational system that need adequate attention. According to Ajayi (2002) and Omoregi (2005), secondary education in Nigeria is riddled with crises of various dimensions and magnitude all of which combine to suggest that the system is at the crossroad. In light of the above, the paper examines the concept, aims, and objectives of secondary education with its challenges.

II. CONCEPT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

School management involves leading the school towards development through optimum use of human and material resources, physical sources and principles necessary in

achieving all the objectives of the school. In other words, school management can be said to be a continuous process that takes into account all aspects of the school (policies, material and human resources, activities, equipment, etc.) and integrates them into achieving educational goals.

In a simple word, school management is running the affairs of an institute efficiently and effectively. Management in school entails planning, directing, controlling and organizing the institution by making effective use of human and material resources to accomplish a set objective. The primary focus in school management is the improvement of teaching and learning and all the activities of the school. School management aims at bringing aims members of staff of the school, students, head-teacher, and other stakeholders in education to work together as a team in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives of the school. Sidho (2002) highlighted useful principles that can be helpful in the achievement of school objectives. These include consistency with the philosophy of education, democratic approach, optimum contribution by all, respect for individualities, due importance to different programmes, and optimistic outlook.

III. WHO IS A SCHOOL MANAGER?

A school manager is described as an executive head who directs the affairs of the institution towards achieving its primary goals and objectives. He/she is involved in planning, organizing, supervision, controlling and evaluation. Education manager is saddled with the responsibility to organize school activities in such a manner that things work smoothly and effectively. Agih (2015) suggests that for a school manager to successfully accomplish the set objectives, he has to work with other people within the school system and be able to motivate them to collaborate with him in order to achieve the educational objectives.

Every educational institution needs the services of either a principal, vice principal, head teacher, or better still an individual employed as a manager to organize activities within the school to ensure that wastage of time, efforts, money, and materials are reduced to the barest minimum.

A manager evaluates the institution's goals, assesses the resource and formulates an action plan. What makes a good school manager is his adherence to principles, behavioural maturity and openness to critics. Therefore, the place of an administrative head in the school system is mandatory for the smooth flow of activities.

IV. FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL MANAGER

Managerial Practices are all those acts, which school heads engage in while conducting the daily affairs of schools. Managerial practices have as their central focus the enhancement of teaching and learning. All the activities of the management, whether working with the public, the ministry of education, or the professional staff, should ultimately contribute to this end. The administrative roles of the school manager include:

A. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

One of the most important functions of the secondary school principal as an administrator is the structuring of the school for the purpose of instruction. Under this role, Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (2007) noted that the principal should provide: A climate of efficiency, cooperation, services and stimulation within which the school programme, exists and can operate most effectively; Leadership and co-ordination in leadership and continuing evaluations of the effectiveness of the total school programme in meeting the needs of the students; and Leadership and co-ordination in continuing revision of the total school programme to meet the needs of the students.

This means that the principal, according to Olele in Peretomode (2005) should be seen to be playing the role of the team leader in curriculum development. He creates conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning processes. The principal supervises the instructional activities of teachers and establishes methods of evaluating, examining students and reporting students' progress.

B. DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING STAFF

According to Ogbonnaya (2004), the identification of the staff needs is one of the first responsibilities of the secondary school principal. This involves determining the qualifications and areas of specialization of staff recruitment. The principal as well carries out the orientation of new members of staff, students and community members into the school. Ezeocha (1990) stated that the proper orientation could be of immense assistance in helping teachers and students to settle on their new job or school. Another responsibility of the principal in this area is the assignment of duties to staff as well as the supervision of instruction and supervision of out-of-school programmes like sports activities, Ogbonnaya, (2004). Moreover, the principal as a leader must care for and share with his staff. Ukeje et al (2007), opined that to develop high morale among the staff, the principal should take the initiative in becoming familiar with the needs and interests of individual members of staff; recognize the achievement of staff members; provide for staff members to be informed of the work of others in the school and of administrative actions or decisions; encourage teachers' participation in school planning and encourage all staff members to offer suggestions.

C. STUDENTS' RELATION FUNCTION

Adesina (2000) emphasized the services rendered to students. To him, the school is built neither for the teachers nor for the interest of the parents and school administrators but for the students. For effectiveness, the school principal has to provide adequate students services that supplement teaching and learning. Oboegbulem (2004) confirmed this when she identified these services like registration of new students, orientation of new students, classifications, guidance and counseling services, health services, provision of social services and evaluation of reports on students' progress. The role of the principal as a school administrator in all these

involves providing leadership that will render services for the wellbeing and general satisfaction of his staff and students.

D. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

This role of the principal, according to Ogbonnaya (2004) makes it necessary for him to know the community, take an active part in the progress of the community, facilitates community participation in the life of the school and interprets the school's goals and programmes to the community. To carry out these duties, he has to utilize study techniques of social science and education and survey community resources. Ukeje et al opined that the principal must be available as a speaker, consultant and civil worker as well as plan for staff members' activity in community affairs. More so, Ogbonnaya (2014) posited that he (the principal) should initiate parents' workshop, school visitation by parents and organizing for parents and teachers interaction. Further, he stated that the principal should maintain a good channel of communication with the Parents-Teacher Association for the purpose of getting new ideas and acquainting them with the problems of the school. This means that he must apply those qualities of leadership, which will lead to mutual understanding and cooperation.

E. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Concerning financial management in schools, Ogbonnaya (2004) said that it is the most critical of the functions of the secondary school principal. According to Ezeocha (1990:34), this has to do with budget-making and budget administration since the principal is the leader in the school, and the Chief Executive, as well as the Chief Accounting Officer. Meanwhile, the principal has to work closely with the bursar of the school. This is to ensure that funds are spent judiciously and that proper records of receipts and expenditures are kept.

With all these overwhelming functions and responsibilities, the principal as an administrator/leader must be a person of many skills, competencies, and professional standing. He must be one who is equipped to skillfully utilize his many resources and talents in the promotion of extensive and varied school programmes of the highest quality.

V. OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

The Federal Government spelt out the objectives of secondary level education to include preparation for both useful living within the society and higher education. It must be noted that the essence of school management in Nigerian schools be it private or public is to ensure things are done the way they should be in order to achieve the stated objectives. Hence, the purpose of school management includes but not limited to the following:

- ✓ To control and co-ordinate the activities of personnel
- ✓ To plan and implement educational programs in the school
- ✓ For proper handling of both man and material resources
- ✓ To develop goals and policies for school activities

- ✓ For proper delegation of duties and responsibilities to qualified personnel
- ✓ To guide and provide direction to stakeholders towards educational goals

In summary, school management must be built on the manager's thorough understanding and in-depth knowledge of Leadership theories. These theories include; Decision-making theories, Communication theories, Conflict theories, Motivation theories, and Human relations theories. Comprehensive knowledge of these stated theories will enhance the job performance of the manager.

VI. CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

Over the years, the education system has not received the attention it requires due to frequent leadership changes in the country. Despite some effort put in place to elevate secondary education in Nigeria, there are still few bugging issues that need not to be overlooked. Some of these challenges are x-rayed below.

PAUCITY OF FUND

Schooling in Nigeria cannot advance without adequate financing. As blood is to the body so is financing to education. Finance is a requirement to maintain both human and material resources in the system in order to achieve desired goals. According to Akintayo, (2014), the gross underfunding of the educational sector in general, and the maintenance of the physical facilities is absolutely not working, all leading to a decline in academic standards.

One of the biggest challenges secondary schools are faced with is inadequate funds and that as a result often leads to large classes for teachers, few instructional supplies, cheap building constructions and poorly trained teachers. Omwami and Keller (2010) are in agreement that because most sub-Saharan African countries depend on foreign financial aid, it is not surprising that African economies will be unable to provide universal access to education because their national budgets lack the capacity to do so.

VII. INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

There is no doubt that well-built classrooms, laboratories, staff quarters, playgrounds, etc. facilitate effective teaching and learning. As a matter of fact, there is a relationship between infrastructural facilities and students' academic performance in school. Turupere (2016); and Ajayi and Yusuf (2009) maintained that high levels of student's academic performance may not be guaranteed where instructional space such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops, and laboratories are nothing to write home about.

Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005) in Mbayuav (2012) posited that educational facilities are those things that enable a skilled teacher to achieve a reasonable level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are

not provided. Ahme (2003) revealed that in most of the country's secondary schools, teaching and learning take place under unfavorable and this hinders the effective administration of the schools and the fulfillment of educational objectives of secondary education.

VIII. INDISCIPLINE AMONG THE STAFF MEMBERS

The level of unfavorable behaviors among secondary school teachers has become a source of worry to stakeholders in education. It is observed through records that absenteeism, lateness to school, illegal collection of levies from parents, and involvement in examination malpractices have become the order of the day. In Nwakpa (2013), disciplinary behaviours or unethical behaviours have enveloped all the public schools in Nigeria. He maintained that the cause of the cankerworm is not farfetched. According to him, the level of indiscipline in our schools has actually brought down the standards of education in Nigeria.

However, Asiyai (2012) stated two major causes of pupil indiscipline. First was the constant negative labeling of pupils followed by teachers' lateness, absenteeism, poor school environment and poor teaching

IX. FRAGILE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

The supposed relationship that should exist between the school and the host community where the school is established has lost its taste over time. This could be as a result of insecurity in the country or inadequate training on the part of the school administrators on the subject matter. If there is good interaction between both parties, the community could be the school's greatest friend and as a result, help in financing some of the institutions educational projects.

In pursuit of quality teaching and learning, institutions of learning must see themselves as open systems deriving their energies from a network of relationships including those of host communities (Ayeni 2010). He further suggests that good community relations enable schools to receive learning resources, enabling environments, and possibly attract competent and professional educationists from the community to the school.

X. SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Higher institution of learning has failed to produce enough teachers who are qualified to take over Nigeria education to the next level. It is appalling that greater numbers of graduates in the 21st century are mediocre. Many teachers lacked teaching experience; teach science in abstraction, lacked adequate knowledge of subject matter and the competence to deliver (Abdullalu, 2007). Odia and Omonfonmwan (2007) pinpointed that teacher training institutions in Nigeria produce teachers that are not competent enough regarding knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills.

There is a dire need for competent teachers with the right knowledge, skills, and commitment, and who are empowered to perform their tasks professionally (Akindutire and Ekundayo, 2012). Quality output in education to a great extent depends on the quality of teachers. The success or failure of any nation's development is traceable to the classroom to a large extent. Qualified teachers according to Aina et al. (2015) are crucial to the success of any educational system and the success of any nation in general.

XI. UNNECESSARY CHANGES IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

A frequent change in school curriculum by in-coming administration is uncalled for. The regular changes affect both the primary and secondary education and this has proven overtime to be one of the major challenges education system is battling within Nigeria. The moment primary school curriculum is altered without due process it affects secondary level education. The resent is the forceful addition of Islamic studies which is been lobbied to be a compulsory subject for students. For education system to remain stable, the country's leadership must continue to live above self.

XII. LACK OF MOTIVATION/LOW TEACHERS' MORALE

Morale refers to principles, teachings, the mental and emotional condition of an individual or group with regard to the tasks at hand, a sense of common purpose with respect to a group, or the level of individual psychological well-being (Webster Dictionary, 2012). A hungry man they say is an angry man. Perhaps, public school teachers are angry at the level of negligence they have received from both the Federal and the State Governments. Low wages have been linked to teachers' inability to perform their tasks as when due. School teachers play important role in the development of the nation and as such should be motivated more than every other civil servant.

Lack of proper motivation and recognition must have accounted for the mass exodus of their male counterparts from the profession. The few who are left have their eyes on other businesses and as such leaving their primary responsibility to suffer. Lumpa (1997) mentioned the success and satisfaction of the students depends upon the level of teacher satisfaction. However, when teachers are involved developing a cooperative environment, the link with higher morale and learner accomplishment becomes evident.

POOR GOVERNANCE/CORRUPTION

Education sector in African is characterized by corruption and poor administration. The level of decadence has affected the cradle of all activities in Nigeria; the educational sector is not left out. There have been reported cases of extortion, bribery, and malpractices of various degrees in our schools these days. School managers allow parents to pay mercenaries to write examinations for their wards in the name of getting

financial rewards. They also collect lump sum from parents to release exam questions to their children.

Bad governance and misappropriation are another problem bewildering the educational sector in Nigeria. The paucity of funds most at times is a result of diversion of budget allocation meant for education. The level of decadence has reached a point to declare a state of emergency in the education sector.

XIII. WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

National Policy on Education sees education as the most important instrument of change and fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society (NPE 2004). To further achieve the goals of education, efforts must be geared toward overcoming most of the challenges facing secondary education. There is a need to improve the quality of secondary schools education in the country in the following ways:

CONSTANT/ SUFFICIENT FUNDING: The issue of insufficient funds has been a major setback in the education sector. The government through the assistance of private firms, investors, and foreign aids could raise enough funds in order to procure the necessary materials needed to enhance the quality of secondary education. Since the government cannot bear the financial burden alone, it becomes imperative to seek the help of public-private partnerships. Meanwhile, school heads should come up with workable plans to generate more revenue for their school without increasing tuition.

APPOINTMENT OF QUALIFIED TEACHING PERSONNEL: To salvage Nigeria's education system from decadence, the Ministries of Education should ensure that only well-trained and certified teachers are engaged. School head or Principals must have the minimum qualification as stipulated by the Ministry of Education to assume the position of the school head. With this approach, only qualified personnel who exhibit professionalism in carrying out their duties are promoted to lead.

STABLE GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON EDUCATION: The Federal Government through the Ministry of Education should ensure that policies on education are maintained irrespective of who comes in as the Head of the State. Nigeria's education in recent times has suffered setbacks as a result of frequent changes in political power. New administration usually discontinues education programmes put in place by the old administration thereby disorganizing the sector from growth. Therefore, the way out of this mess is to sponsor a bill that ensures education programme continues and built upon.

PROVISION OF ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES: Infrastructural facilities are an important input in the educational system. It will be difficult, if not impossible to realize laudable educational objectives without a functional and adequate physical plant in Schools. Based on this premise, these suggestions are made to solve physical plant problems in secondary schools: renovation of abandoned buildings in secondary schools so as to serve their expected purposes; construction of new structures in schools where there are inadequacies; establishment of maintenance units in schools so

as to ensure regular inspection of the physical plant and carry out minor repairs before they get out of hand; and the old students, religious associations, parents, philanthropists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be sensitized on areas where their effort is needed to improve physical plants in Schools.

IMPROVED LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: School administration officials are usually former teachers or principals who have worked hard to qualify for their position and have many years of experience. Education administrators must at all times adhere to policies whether or not they agree with them. Good leaders work without sacrificing the integrity of the system. Administrators should have open lines of communication with their subordinates and their superiors. This will encourage regular face-to-face interaction which is important for both the teachers and the students.

FIGHT INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION: The government should fight all institutions' corruption in the ministry of education. The government should put in place measures to ensure accountability of funds allocated to the ministry of education. Authorities in the field of education have recommended that the anti-corruption fight must be guided by legislative framework for transparent and accountable government; political will and commitment to fight corruption; a comprehensive strategy that is systematic, comprehensive, consistent, focused, publicized, non-selective and non-partisan; protection of Whistleblowers; political reform to curb political corruption especially election rigging; reform of substantive programmes and administrative procedures; mobilization for social re-orientation; independent media; adequate remuneration for workers to reflect the responsibilities of their post and a living wage; code of ethics for political officeholders, business people and CSOs; independent institutions especially electoral, human rights and gender commissions and a movement for Anti-corruption.

ADEQUATE SECURITIES: No meaningful development can take place in the administration of education without security. The government should take giant steps to address the issues of insecurity in the country especially school attacks by bandits in Northern Nigeria. The government should also ensure the school safe programme is fully implemented across the states of the federation.

PROVISION RELIABLE DATA FOR PLANNING: Data is very important in the administration of education for planning purposes. The administrators of education need reliable and current data to plan the education. To enhance the effective administration of education in Nigeria, the government should ensure reliable and creditable data are generated for education administrators.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Secondary education is vital following the foundation it sets for higher education. To save the system from its deplorable state, reform is required and should include adequate funding, provision of school facilities, the appointment of qualified personnel, marking out disciplinary measures against staff and students. Other factors such as overpopulation, teacher involvement in examination

malpractice, corruption among major stakeholders inhibit school management and need to be addressed.

XV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the issue at stake, the following recommendations are made:

- ✓ Teacher motivation through praise, recognition, and salary increment should be done often so as to boost their morale.
- ✓ Government should seek the assistance of public-private partnerships and international donors in funding secondary school education in Nigeria.
- ✓ Unscheduled external supervision to be carried out on regular basis to ensure that rules and regulations are adhered to. To this effect, indiscipline among the teachers will be reduced to the barest minimum.
- ✓ Favouritism should be banned when appointing the school head. The Ministry of Education should ensure that appointments to some sensitive positions must be based on merit.
- ✓ Necessary equipment and materials should be given to the school managers to enable them to perform their duties effectively.

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