Factors That Militate Against Effective Secondary Education Administration in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper x-rayed major factors that militate against effective administration of secondary education in Nigeria. Major roles of the school principals were highlighted. The paper identified major factors militating against effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria to include poor funding, wrong appointment of school administrators etc. The paper recommended some ways of enhancing the effectiveness of secondary school administration to include, adequate funding, appointment of professionally qualified principals etc.

Secondary education is the education that children receive after the primary education and it is the education which prepares children for the tertiary education. It prepares children for job and for admission into tertiary level of education.

Secondary Education is a very important sector in the educational system because of its laudable objectives in moulding sound citizens. The achievement of any educational objective is sometimes dependent on the effectiveness of the school administrator. This is due to the fact that when the head is faulty, all other segments of the system will also be faulty hence, the saying "garbage in and garbage out". It is generally known that when the school environment is conducive, effective teaching and learning will be achieved with little effort, but when the climate is not favourable, there is the tendency that educational efforts will be hampered.

Considering the fact that school principals play significant roles in enhancing the achievement of educational goals, the in functions in the changing environment
must be appreciated, Robert, Moutor and Williams (1981) identified amongst others, the responsibilities of school administrators as establishing and implementing an implicit or explicit mission and administration that result to:

1. **Supporting** the teaching and learning process
2. Creating a climate for high quality research.
3. Managing the academic personnel
4. Co-ordinating students’ affairs.

These activities highlight the importance of conducive environment which will ensure peace and harmony amongst members of the school community. The changes that are imminent in any school setting are influenced by diverse factors, for instance, when there is instability in a school as a result of unstable government, disagreement between the leaders and the led, or even strikes by workers or students to press for one demand or the other.

This situation in the school is challenging and would hamper the effectiveness of the school administration. It is on this premise that the writer will x-ray the factors hindering the effective secondary school administration in Nigeria and proffer solutions on how secondary schools can be effectively administered for the achievement of the goals of secondary education.

**Concept of Work of Environmental Climate and School Management**

Hoy and Miskely (2008) conceptualized school environmental climate as a relatively enduring quality of school environment that is experienced by teachers, how it affects their behaviours and productivity. They went further to classify school environment in terms of open and closed. According to them, when schools have an open climate, principals and members of staff are acting in cognizance with the laid down principles but when the climate is closed, every one simply goes through the motions of education without education and commitment to duty. The truth of the matter is that it is the leadership attitude that creates work environmental climate in any organization including schools. For instance, autocratic self leadership style creates reluctant climate in which members of the group perform their tasks unwillingly and with no pleasure. Their hearts are not in what they do. They only feel compelled to do it to avoid getting into trouble with the leader. They grumble much and stop work at the slightest provocation. Work in this type of climate is therefore most unproductive.

The autocratic nomothetic leader creates controlled climate with rigid atmosphere in which there is evidence of the exercise of authority from above. Here, life is virtually regimented, the activities of the organization go on like clock-work with little variation and with group members enjoying little sense of freedom to try things out. The working atmosphere is almost noiseless. There is low productivity.
The democratic leader creates an official climate where there is not much interaction between the members (teachers) of the group as individuals except officially. Only one line of interaction and communication is in force.

The democratic idiographic leader creates paternal climate where the members (teachers) of the group are made comfortable in social needs satisfaction, but the leader does virtually, everything. Here productivity is always very high.

In this paper, the school environment connotes the physical structures, human and financial resources, the administrative structures, curricular content and so on. Therefore when the school environment is not effectively handled, it hampers the effective administration of secondary education.

Hoy and Miskel (2008) looked at the environment of a school in terms of the organization's health and postulated that:

"A healthy school is one that is meeting both its instrumental and expressive needs, while successfully coping with disruptive outside forces as it directs its energies towards its mission. The healthier organizational dynamics of a school, the greater are the trust and openness in member relations, and the greater the students achievements".

The Challenges in the Management of Secondary Education in Nigeria

Truthfully, secondary education in Nigeria had undergone series of transformations and changes partly as a result of changes in the leadership in the country. These changes have passed through varying degrees of problems in the process of planning and implementation stages. The problems facing the administration of Secondary Education in Nigeria are x-rayed below.

1. Poor Primary Education

Primary education according to Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) is a type of education given to children between the ages of 6 to 11 years. The major aims of primary education are to prepare the child to be able to read and write and for secondary education. Mbayuav (2013) sees primary education as the recruitment ground for secondary education, and when the section is weak, it will affect the secondary education in the country. The products of the primary education in the country recently have been very poor; hence the product cannot prepare adequate grounds for quality production of secondary education products. Thus, a house built on a weak foundation is bound to fall. The poor and weak products of our primary education which form the foundation of our secondary education makes it very difficult to miraculously change these weak primary school products, hence "garbage
The secondary school administrators find it very difficult to effectively manage this set of students for higher productivity.

2. The Appointment of School Principals

The appointment of school principals in Nigeria for a very long time now has been politicized. The appointment of principals in Nigeria at times is being influenced by the Government in power, hence relatives, friends and well wishers who may not be qualified to head the schools are appointed to the detriment of the effective administration of the schools which invariably would affect achievement of the objectives of secondary education.

For instance in Ebonyi State, during the regime of Dr. Sam Egwu when the state commissioner for Education was an N.C.E. holder, and later was replaced with a Dentist, and currently under Governor chief Martin N. Elechi, a Barrister is the commissioner for Education a non education professional and thus, the appointment can be seen as a misfit. The continuation of appointing unqualified school administrators in Nigeria will practically hamper effective school administration (Nwiyi, 2003).

3. Poor Funding of Secondary Education

Mbayuav (2012) opined that the gross under funding of the educational sector in Nigeria is general, and the neglect of the maintenance of the physical facilities, instructional and living conditions have deteriorated in these schools, classroom blocks, libraries and laboratories are nothing to write home about. According to Nwiyi (2012) adequate funding is very important in education as there are many compelling education needs like purchase of equipment, instructional materials, in-service training programme, seminars, workshops and conferences for teachers. These items require adequate funding in order for the system to actualize the millennium Development Goals. Adequate funding will assist the school principals to effectively actualize the goals of secondary education.

In the contrary the government's budgetary allocation to the educational sector is grossly inadequate as it is below the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the Nation's Annual Budgetary Allocation. This impedes effective administration of secondary education in Nigeria.

4. Inadequate Facilities in Schools

School facilities are material resources that help to facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools.
Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005) in Mbayuav (2012) posited that educational facilities are those things which enable a skilled teacher to achieve a reasonable level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided. Ahmed (2003) revealed that in most of the country's secondary schools, teaching and learning take place under unconducive environment Schools are lacking the basic materials and this hinders the effective administration of the schools and the fulfillment of educational objectives of secondary education.

5. Examination Malpractice

Admittedly we have had to contend with examination malpractices at all levels of examination especially in school certificate Examinations and there have almost called to question our integrity and the worthiness of some certificates and diplomas inclusive (Mbayuav 2012).

School administrators are faced with this challenge because most teachers in secondary schools that are supposed to assist the school principal are also involved in aiding and abetting examination malpractices. Visits to secondary schools during WAEC/NECO examinations by the writer revealed that teachers now write solutions to examination questions on the chalk boards for students to copy. What a secondary education! This is why many products of secondary schools with good grades in certificate examinations like WAEC/NECO cannot defend their certificates when the need arises. This has affected the performance of these students in tertiary institutions and the general development of the Nigerian economy. This situation is giving the few Godly principals in secondary schools a serious headache in administering their schools.

6. Indiscipline among Staff/Students

Indiscipline is an act of negative behaviour or unwanted behaviour which could be exhibited by a student or a teacher/ non teacher in a school setting. Nwakpa (2013) opined that today disciplinary behaviours or unethical behaviours have enveloped all the public schools in Nigeria, and the cause of this cankerworm is not far fetched. Nwakpa (2013) maintained that the high level of indiscipline in our schools has actually brought down the standards of education in Nigeria.

Secondary schools in Nigeria are currently faced with the problem of indiscipline which is on the increase. The newspapers are full of reports of unrest, examination malpractices, Kidnapping, secret cult activities fighting among the students and staff, drug abuse, rape, dishonesty and so on (Nwiyi and Kalagbor, 2013).

Nwakpa (2013) was of the view that there are many indisciplinary behaviours among students and teachers that are confronting the effective running of
secondary schools in Nigeria by the school Principals. The most pressing among them are:

1. Examination malpractices.
2. Lateness
3. Absenteeism.
4. Poor teaching.
5. Poor invigilation of examinations.
7. Poor handling of examination results.
8. Sexual immorality.
9. Loitering.
10. Alcoholism and smoking.
11. Cultism etc.

This situation does not guarantee effective teaching and learning and smooth running of secondary schools. This situation possesses great concern to parents, government, teachers, principals and almost all stakeholders in the Secondary Education.

Conclusion

Going by the deplorable situation in secondary schools in Nigeria a reform is required to improve the performance of secondary school administrators. The reformation, definitely should include adequate funding, adequate provision of school facilities, appointment of qualified principals, marking out disciplinary measures against staff and students’ anti-behaviours for effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. The appointment of school principals should be based on merit and qualification. Thus, politics should be discouraged in the appointment of school principals.
2. Primary education whose products are recruited into secondary schools should be adequately funded to achieve its objectives and aims as poor raw materials must beget poor products.
3. There should be adequate supervision of secondary schools to ensure that rules and regulations are carried out as expected. This will go a long way to checkmate indisciplinary behaviours in schools.
4. Government should see that the UNESCO 26% of National budget goes to education as this will enhance effective school administration.
5. Adequate number of professionally qualified teaching and non-teaching staff are made available in every public secondary school in Nigeria to actually assist the school principals in school administration.
6. Finally, the welfare of both the teachers and students must be taken seriously for them to give their full support in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria.

References


