

**THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING
THE TEACHING OF COMPUTER APPLICATION PROGRAMMES TO
MEET CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper highlighted the role of secondary school principals in managing the teaching of computer application programmes to meet contemporary issues for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Basic concepts such as, principal, computer, entrepreneurship and management were theoretically discussed. Issues such as the role of the principal in managing the teaching of computer application programmes in Nigerian secondary schools, the computer and entrepreneurship and computer application programmes for self-sustainability of secondary school leavers through entrepreneurship were also raised and discussed. Poor supervision by secondary school principals, teachers unwillingness to teach at their appropriate time as well as poor staff motivation were discovered in the process of review to hamper the effective teaching and learning of computer (application programmes) in secondary schools.. The paper concluded that principals should adopt adequate supervision as well as monitoring teachers' progress in the teaching and learning of computer in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Keywords: Principal, computer, entrepreneurship and management

The importance of self-sustainability through entrepreneurship is becoming an integral part of societal and national development through the establishment of medium and small scale enterprises in Nigeria. The need to foster the effective teaching of computer based application programmes in secondary schools become imperative as the problem of unemployment of all levels of graduates including secondary school leavers in Nigeria is on the rise and even envisaged to be more heard of if adequate and practical measures are not taken to curb this daunting problem affecting a high number of graduates.

Following this scenario, it becomes very important for secondary school principals who are the administrative heads and managers to strategize innovative ways of motivating teachers to implement the teaching and learning of computer application programmes with the meager resources at their disposal through supervision and classroom visitation. When this is done, secondary school leavers will be equipped with entrepreneurial skills that will make them self-reliant and in turn foster sustainable development in Nigeria. Rather than becoming job seekers of white collar jobs they will become employers of labour and hence, contribute meaningfully to the society and the nation at large.

The Secondary School Principal

The principal is the person on whose shoulders rest the entire administration, for both the success or failure of the school (Isa, Jailani and Suleiman, 2014). The principal identifies and set goals and objectives of the school, which of course, must be in line with the national objectives, analyses tasks and shares responsibilities to the staff according to specialization and expertise (Uyanga, 2008). The principal is also one who involves himself in managing, administering the curriculum and teaching, pastoral care, discipline, assessment, evaluation and examinations, resource allocation, costing and forward planning, staff appraisal, relationship with the community, use of the practical skills necessary for surviving the policies of organisation such as decision-making, negotiation, bargaining, communication, conflict handling and running meetings (Okereke, 2008 in Isa, *et al* 2014). Further more, the duties of the secondary school principal as a supervisor includes obtaining and making available materials for teachers in all levels, interpersonal relationship/availability of educational information, visiting classrooms often to observe his teachers teaching; basic inspection/supervision of teachers lesson notes and class registers, diaries and teaching aids and offering them professional advice for their proper improvement of teaching and learning in the teaching profession. Marlow and Minehira (2011) posited that school principals must possess a wide array of competencies in order to lead schools effectively towards the accomplishment of educational goals, which has led to changing expectations of what leaders need to know and must be able to do. Different competencies such as capacity building, vision building and/or a team building required of principals to cope with the changing demands of educational system in the 21st century have been suggested by

experts and researchers to be aspects the principal can improve on to boost the quality of teaching and learning in the school, the principal is the critical person in making change to occur in school administration. Since a school is known to be an instrument of change and reforms in the society, the principal is said to be the pivot of such reforms and change (Uyanga, 2008).

The Role of the Principal in Managing the Teaching of Computer Application programmes in Nigerian Secondary Schools

There are certain roles a secondary school principal is required to perform in a bid to foster the effective teaching of computer application programmes in Nigerian secondary schools. These roles are aimed at achieving maximum output and productivity from teachers who are the major curriculum implementers at the secondary school level of education. They are: principal as a supervisor, principal as a motivator, principal as a trainer/developer and provision/maintenance of physical facilities.

i. The principal's supervisory role: The supervisory role of principals in secondary schools greatly influences the quality of teaching and in turn academic performance of students. When the principal supervises the teaching process, it helps to check the performances of teachers in terms of utilization of teaching period allotted for a subject on the time table, teaching what is in line with the content of the curriculum, etc. such supervisory roles include obtaining and making available materials for teachers in all educational information, visiting classrooms often to observe his teachers teaching; basic inspection/supervision of teachers lesson notes and class registers, diaries and teaching aids and offering them professional advice for their proper improvement of teaching and learning in the system where as he can act as a change facilitator. Marlow and Minehira (2011) viewed that school principals must possess a wide array of competencies in order to lead schools effectively towards the accomplishment of educational goals, which has led to changing expectations of what leaders need to know and must be able to do.

ii. The Principal as a Motivator: The principal as the chief executive of the school owes it a duty to influence the attitude of the staff and motivate them to put in their best at achieving educational goals through effective teaching-learning process. Motivation enhances job performance (Ajayi and Oguntoye, 2003).

iii. Training and Development: A lack of indepth training and development of principals make the principals' task difficult, as they are not guided on the curriculum expectations by the department of education or curriculum developers. This in turn affects the level of productivity of teachers in the teaching profession, as teachers also are not guided properly by their chief executive officer as a result of lack of adequate training and development. It then behoves on the principal to take up the duty of teaching and directing the teachers on the right way of implementing the curriculum of computer studies through effective teaching. It is on this note that Ajayi and Ekundayo, (2010) observed that negligence of this area of responsibility by the

administrators/principals seems to hinder effective performance of teaching-learning activities in secondary schools in Nigeria, that training programmes for principals on curriculum matters and motivational techniques will go a long way in enhancing effective teaching and learning. Since adequate equipment of the principals with relevant information in line with curriculum instruction will go a long way in affecting teachers productivity.

iv. Provision and Maintenance of Physical Facilities

The enhancement of effective teaching hinges on the adequacy of facilities made available to them. For instance for a teacher to competently teach computer application programmes there must be enough computers. It could be laptop computers or desktop computers for practice after the teaching of theoretical aspect of the subject. Principals therefore must be fully concerned with the facilities and even the physical environment around the school. Dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs, abandoned projects, over-grown trees and lawns, dingy and dark buildings that were abandoned by the previous government, etc. have demoralising effects on teachers and students as well (Obidoa 2006). As a result, the principals have the responsibilities of ensuring that these facilities are in good shape. Even with the meagre resources at their disposal, they have the responsibility of providing teachers and other instructional staff with necessary resources for effective teaching (Babayemi, (2006).

The Computer and Entrepreneurship Development

The relationship between the teaching of computer application programmes and entrepreneurship depends largely on the level of practical knowledge and skills students acquire in secondary schools to enable them use same knowledge/skills in the world of business as entrepreneurs and business managers. However, Akin (1998) in Emenike (2008) defined computer as an electronic device for storing and retrieving of information. As an electronic device, it performs tasks, such as calculations, electronic communications, data processing, etc. under the control of a set of instruction called programmes. These set of instructions or programmes usually reside within the computer and the computer's electronics are used to retrieve and process the programmes. On the other hand, entrepreneurship according to Omolayo (2006) is the act of starting a company, arranging a new business venture and taking risks in order to make profit through the skills acquired. Hence, entrepreneurship can be described as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and create wealth. Furthermore, Akanwa and Agu (2005) identified the functions of entrepreneurship in social and economic development of a nation to include identification of business opportunities; selection of opportunities; decision on form of enterprise; allocation and distribution of resources; coordination of other factors of production such as land, labour, and capital; Planning and controlling organizational programmes and activities; mobilization and utilization of local raw

materials; risk bearing, creating of employment opportunities, marketing activities for customer satisfaction, and innovation to meet with needs of local market. The proper training of the mind and hands of the students in computer application programmes by secondary teachers backed up with the competent supervisions and other necessary guides for establishment of new business ventures for sustainable development.

Computer application programs for self-sustainability of secondary school leavers through entrepreneurship

Becoming an entrepreneur requires basic skills like business management, opportunity identification, customer relation, time management, etc. But these skills can only be acquired properly in an organized way in a classroom setting and by professional teachers for a proper understanding for what it is to be an entrepreneur. Therefore the teaching and learning of computer application programmes which are entrepreneurial in nature and fosters entrepreneurial spirit among secondary school students is required to be taught properly for self-sustainability and development.

According to Ushie (2004) there are three types of software programs the computer uses to enhance the functionality of the hardware components of the computer system. These are:

- (a) System software
- (b) Environmental software and
- (c) Application software

But this work is however, hinged on the application software. The application software has several application programmes available to convert the PC into a tool for increasing productivity and reducing paper work. The most popular application programmes secondary school students require to be taught in school to enable them fit into the world of business is as follows:

A. Word Processor: The word processor is a computer based program that turns your PC into a super typewriter. Some of the popular word processing applications include MICROSOFT WORD, WORD PERFECT, LOCTUS AMIPRO, etc. with word processor you compose texts using the keyboard just as you type on the normal typewriter keyboard. However, because the characters are recorded electronically rather than on paper, you can correct all your mistakes and any changes you want before printing the text out from the printer. You can also erase words, phrases, or whole blocks of text, insert new ones, or move them from one place to another with few keystrokes. Then you can store your document on a storage device and go back to it at any time. You can print the document or revise it whenever you want or you can copy it and store multiple version of it. You can view your document on your PC before printing it out. You can change margins, line spacing, or tab settings and the effect shows immediately on the screen. This is called on-screen formatting. You can scroll through your document by moving backwards or forwards through the document, a page or section at a time.

The Microsoft office word (MS WORD) is one of the most commonly used word processing programmes by several people for typing letters, projects, reports, lecture notes, handouts, assignments, term papers, etc. when secondary school students are properly exposed to the use of such programme, they can start a business of their own after writing the senior school certificate examination and become usefully engaged, and even become employers of labour rather than job seekers.

B. Desktop publishing: Desktop publishing programs let you produce documents that look like they come off a printing press. You can combine different styles and sizes of text with graphics on the page. Such programs use a graphic display to show your document you have prepared how it looks like onscreen. What you see on the screen is exactly what you get when you print your document with a high-quality printer. With desktop publishing, you can produce impressive reports, proposals and newsletters. Examples of desktop publishing programmes are COREL DRAW, PAGE MAKER, and VENTURAL PUBLISHER.

C. Spreadsheets: Spread sheet is an application package that has become widely used in computerized environment. The fundamental power of the spread sheet is its ability to store and manipulate large amount of numerical data such as budgets, financial analysis or production forecast. The electronic spreadsheets or grid is made up of rows and columns. The intersection of each row and column is called cell. There are several spreadsheet applications programs which can be used to manipulate large amount of numerical data. There are MICROSOFT EXCEL, LOTUS 1-2-3, etc.

D. Graphics: Graphic programs let you display information as a graph or chart e.g. pie charts, bar and line graphs or scatter-graphs. Graphic programmes make it easy to summarize large amounts of data or to identify trends. Often graphs are used in reports or as presentation aids. Examples of presentation are: MS POWERPOINT, LOTUS FREELANCE GRAPHICS, HARVARD GRAPHICS, etc.

These programmes and more cover what the computer application software offers for market use but it depends on how well students in secondary schools are skilled in the use of this programs through the knowledge acquired in school. The principal therefore has a lot to do in the teaching and learning process of computer programmes in secondary school. He needs to regularly supervise the teachers and maintain an atmosphere fitting for teaching and learning in school.

Conclusion

Making of laudable educational policies and programmes in Nigeria is worthy of note. The problem usually is not the making of policies but the implementation of such programmes by educational managers and teachers. For instance since 2001 when the national information communication technology policy was launched for implementation in Nigerian secondary schools, teachers were either incapable of handling the teaching of ICT subject or the principal not adequately supervising or

monitoring teachers progress in the teaching of computer. This actions hamper the acquisition of computer application programmes skills required by students as entrepreneurs after leaving the secondary school for entrepreneurial and sustainable development to enable them contend with the problem of unemployment in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the study:

1. Principals should adopt strategies for monitoring teachers progress in the teaching of computer application programmes as an ICT subject in secondary school.
2. Teachers should always engage the students with practical class task that will help them get acquainted to what they are taught.
3. The principal as the school manager should make the learning environment user friendly for both staff and students to enhance learning
4. Computer teachers should be encouraged with good remuneration by the government to foster better teaching and learning of computer in secondary schools
5. Government should provide adequate computers for students and staff to enable effective lesson delivery of computer studies.

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