

Managing Secondary Education to Tackle the 21st Century Development Challenges

Ifeoma Martha-Rose Uwaezuoke¹

¹Lecturer Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria.

Correspondence: marthoify212@yahoo.com¹

ABSTRACT

Secondary education is the intermediary between the primary education and the tertiary education. Students of secondary schools are predominantly teenagers and as such undergoing the period Psychologists refer to as the period of “*storm and stress*”. It is also a period of character formation and personality development and as such very delicate in one’s life, to be precise, whatever goes wrong at this important stage of their life may likely have some irretrievable repercussions. In the light of this, the paper discussed the management principles that can be used to effectively manage secondary education, the problems facing the 21st century development and the strategies to combat these challenges. When the management of secondary education concentrates on the academic as well as behaviour modification which are the barebones of this cohort, the problems inhibiting secondary school education management is thus tackled and transformed to an elevator in achieving not only academic excellence but also bringing forth students whose character is worthy of emulation and who will enter tertiary institution to shun cultism, examination malpractice, substance abuse, gangsterism, kidnapping, armed robbery and other social vices. It is suggested that ICT driven teaching and learning skills be introduced in secondary school as this stands to stimulate the attainment of secondary educational aim and objectives thereby giving the students sound-footing for tertiary education thus healthy living.

Keywords: Management, Secondary education, Challenges, Human and material resources.

Introduction

Secondary education is the bedrock for post-secondary education. The management of education at this level is very crucial as the emphasis is not exclusively on the academics of the students but also on their behaviours. This is essential because it is the foundation laid down during this sensitive period of the students’ growth and development that determines what transpires in the higher institution when they get there. This implies that if the secondary school is faulty, the tertiary education pursuit is bound to be jerky (Okeke, 2007).

To this end, it becomes pertinent that the school management should deem it fit to occupy the students very well by doing the needful which involves setting goals, assigning roles, engaging them in sports, and monitoring intermittently class activities to ensure that no time is left out for indolence which begets deviant behaviours. This the management does through application of principles of management

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appropriately for effective educational delivery services. The secondary school management is however challenged by lack of fund, insufficient human and material resources among others.

This explains why managing secondary education in the 21st century demands prudent and judicious use of the available resources as well as democratic in the style of leadership which implies being professional in theory and practice. The educational manager has to manage effectively and efficiently all the school players as well as the school material resources to achieve a set goal which is turning out responsible, enlightened, progressive and promising individuals into the tertiary institutions for skill acquisition and other man- power training that will make them worthy both in character and learning.

The Concept of Secondary School

Just as the name suggests, secondary education is the second level of education in Nigerian educational system. Similarly, FGN (2014) in her national policy on education described secondary education as the kind of education given to children after primary education which leads them to tertiary level. Continuing, the policy stated a number of specific objectives which was summed up in the following terms;

- a) To turn out citizens who will not only influence their lives positively but that of the populace as well.
- b) To fortify and equip the students for the successful entry and task of tertiary education pursuit.

With the introduction of 6-3-34 system of education, secondary education has two subdivisions which are meant to last for three years duration respectively. These two categories are; junior secondary and senior secondary. Junior secondary is set out to prepare students for pre-vocational which involves skill acquisition as well as for further education for those who have the ability and capability to do so. The senior secondary education with its broad curriculum equips and widens the students' horizon academically for tertiary education.

Okeke (2007); Oladipo (2009) laid credence to the above expositions when the scholars noted that secondary school programme was of six years duration 3-3 structure which means a three year junior secondary school (JSS) and three-year senior secondary school (SSS). The scholars further observed that J.S.S. was both pre-vocational and academic while the S.S.S. is comprehensive both skill acquisition and other man-power development to make the nation great.

The ultimate aim is either to assist learners who possess manipulative skills/dexterity to join out-of-school vocational like apprenticeship system or ensure that students who eventually finds themselves in institutions of higher learning are committed and determined to pursue their course with zeal so as to come out reformed, cultured, educated and civilized individuals who stands to foster national growth and productivity hence boost the national economy for greater Nigeria.

Management of education at the secondary level deals with the educational manager being in a position to connect the human factor and other material resources through comprehensive planning, organizing, directing, coordinating all the educational resources towards goals attainment. To buttress the above fact, Bundi (2009) opined that management involves planning, organizing, implementing, reviewing, evaluating and integrating the human and material resources in relation to the institution's goals and aspirations. The scholar recommended Henri Fayol's fourteen principles of management namely; division of work, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination individual interests to the collective interests, remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity, stability of tenure of personnel, Initiative, morale

In a similar dimension, Mulder (2018) outlined the elements of management using the acronyms POSDCORB which when written in full stands for;

- 1. P---Planning
- 2. O---Organizing
- 3. S---Staffing
- 4. D---Directing

5. C---Coordinating
6. R---Reporting
7. B---Budgeting

The above listed principles of management apply to management of various organizational sectors for which education is one. The educational manager needs to plan how things should be done to avoid sudden shortage which may impede school activities. Plan and organize the use of human and material factors, direct and coordinate the activities of the school players and usage of the facilities to forestall clash of interest and efficient use of such facilities for optimum results. He reports/communicates to both the super-ordinates and the subordinates on issues that concerns them accordingly. He also budgets at the planning stage to make for judicious use of fund allocated. In education industry, all the above principles of management are incorporated in every activity marshalled out to assist in achieving 21st century development. Be that as it may, there are lots of short-comings responsible for unattainable educational objectives in the 21st century as discussed below.

Management of secondary education also requires ensuring that the teaching/learning interactions are effective through supply adequately needed resources to the teachers. The teachers who work directly with students are motivated, encouraged, inspired to do so by taking adequate care of them through their welfare and remuneration. This is achieved, teachers put in their best and even extra time to make the students' moral behaviours and class participation heightened. This benefit is elusive when the teachers are not well remunerated and their welfare not considered. The students under motivated teachers no doubt do excellently well in their academics as well as moral output.

The management sets up students' personnel services to ensure that all that is pertaining to the students' welfare are explored. Sporting activities are very relevant at this period to allow them divert their energy to games and sports before they use it for juvenile activities. The management could engage the services of school guidance and counselling to monitor and follow up the students through various counselling services. This gives the students focus and direction as to the purpose of being in school and ways of achieving those goals void of distraction that could lead the students astray. The students' needs in school must be supplied and where not obtainable, an alternative ways of satisfying such needs should be provided to forestall students' restiveness and other maladjusted behaviour that more often than not posed hindrance to the school management.

Research Methodology

The current research study aimed to explore education challenges at secondary school level students and discover solutions to tackle these problems. To explore the phenomenon of concern, the researcher collected data from secondary sources. By gathering the data from various institutions, researchers noticed class room strength, material resource like class rooms, building structure etc., furniture, teachers' quantity and quality, computer labs, political influence, funds, health issues and conflicts and security of the institutions and students.

The Concept of Development

Development is an umbrella word that shields every facet of human welfare. It deals with the living standard of the populace in terms of good housing, portable water supply, good food, access to education, health care services etc. The 21st development involves elevating the future of the poor and vulnerable, increase resources, improve health, and provide healthy living, workable environment, productive society, sustainability, peace, security, and information and communication technologies (Hopper, 2020 & Minnersota, 2020). One of the essences of education is to contribute to the national development through the provision of human capital. These labour forces are created through effective and efficient management of schools failing which the educational objectives will be a mirage.

Management of Secondary Education Development Challenges in the 21st Century

In managing secondary education development, there are lots of developmental challenges which have continued to rear its ugly head thereby prohibiting the attainment of realistic development to better the lots of the common man. In all, it is pertinent that a lot of problems have bedevilled the 21st century development, include among others:

Over-crowded Classrooms: Research has shown that one of the problems facing the 21st century development is excess class size. This has affected the teaching learning outcomes adversely in that students have insufficient air and in case of any communicable disease, the students' health is in danger. Similarly, Nkwocha, Onyemerekeya, Iroegbu and Ogwudire (2003) listed classroom accommodation space as one of the issues plaguing learning. Invariably, congested classroom affects drastically attentive listening and comprehension of learned material, results to noise making and uncontrollable class management which in turn hinders class participation and attendance.

Insufficient material resources: Material resources include all the school facilities that enhance teaching/learning effectiveness. It includes laboratories for sciences, workshops for introductory technologies and other entrepreneurial subjects. To give credence to the afore mention assertion, Yemisi (2011) noted with dismay that under-funding in education is responsible for shortage of classrooms, furniture, instructional materials, aids to teaching as well as poor welfare package for teachers. The absence or non-functioning of these facilities prohibit effective classroom behaviour. The teachers teach with difficulties and learning outcome is obstructed. In the presence of adequate resources in functional state, the students grasp the learned material with ease and teaching becomes pleasurable.

Insufficient provision of classroom furniture: Classroom furniture involves the chairs and tables for the students, doors and windows, the chalk or marker boards, roofing sheets, ceiling boards, in a nut shell the overall state of the classroom that makes it conducive for learning. Students learn better when they are seated comfortably in the class, with the board strategically positioned unlike when they are standing up while learning with leaking roof, broken doors, windows, ceiling board that constitute health hazards to them. Nwokocho & Anyanwu (2012) and Oladipo (2009) reiterated that dilapidated and acute shortage of school amenities like classroom furniture will cripple teaching/learning behaviours.

Poor quality and quantity of teachers: Teachers are the implementers of educational curriculum and as such determines if the goal of education is achieved or not therefore their quality and competency should be given optimum priority. On the other hand, when these teachers are not adequately provided both in quality and quantity, it gives rise to high student-teacher ratio, teaching/learning becomes a nightmare and objectives becomes a mirage. Poor quality teachers impact negatively on the students which also hampers effective teaching and learning outcomes.

Inadequate provision of computers: this is computer age and as a result students in secondary schools are expected to be computer literate. This becomes unattainable when there is non-availability of computers and even where they are available the number is highly insufficient for the number of students to use it. Most of the time, there is no power supply to use the available ones.

Political interference: The government of the country is unstable and each regime comes with one form of educational policy or the other which may not be completely implemented within the tenure that enacted it. In support of the above view, Achionye (2008) posited that the government policies and programmes are conveyed to the beneficiaries through education and as such as inconsistent as the leadership tenure. This led to non- achievement of the stated objectives thereby posing a problem in achieving the developmental goals. More often than not, there is political interference in choosing who the educational planners and policy makers should be, selection of educational administrators, this is solely dependent on the choice made by the political bigots without minding the professionals in these fields. All of this has been a setback to development.

Lack of fund: Virtually all that is needed in the operation of schools requires fund but unfortunately, in Nigerian nation, education receives the least allocation among other sectors of the economy (fluctuating from 6%, 7%, and 7.5% as against 26% recommended by the UNESCO (Punch Newspaper, 2014). This insufficient fund to a great extent has drastically affected educational development.

The problem of conflict and insecurity: Many schools are built in the secluded part of the community, without perimeter fence and security personnel. This has been seen to expose the students to not only robbery but also kidnappers, cultists, rapists and ritualism. Many cases abound to attest to how insecurity is ruining education in Nigeria. In affirmation to the above view point, Lawal (2018) cited the abduction of 110 Dapchi female students and 300 Chibok Girls and emphasized that many children in the Northern part of Nigeria where insurgency is wrecking are out of school, many parents prefer to leave their children in Quranic schools where they were taught to memorize the Quran whereas the basic skills, numeracy and literacy needed to function effectively in the 21st century are neglected.

Health challenges: In the event of global pandemic like “ebola” and coronavirus (convid-19), many schools were closed nation-wide to curb the spread of the diseases. This drastically affected teaching and learning.

Strategies for Combating Difficulties of Management of Secondary Education Development Challenges in the 21st Century

Standard class size: In other to tackle the problems of management of secondary education development challenges, it is necessary that teacher-student ratio of 1: 40 in secondary schools be strictly adhered to make for good teacher-student relationship/interactions (FGN, 2014). This affords the teacher the opportunity for individualized attention to the students, can easily give assignment/classwork, review and mark unlike when the class size is too large marking becomes an uphill task.

Provision of well-equipped library and laboratories: Well-equipped library enables the students to make consultations when assignments are given especially when the students do not have their own texts. It also helps the students to develop good study habits when compared with where the students are left to rely on only the ones their parents can afford. Well-equipped laboratories assist teachers in their pedagogic duty by making it easier for them to experiment on the theories learnt in the class and the students understand better. In the absence of well-equipped laboratories, teaching and learning becomes difficult, clumsy and vague.

Adequate provision of teachers both in quality and quantity: Another way of combating development challenge under secondary school management is by ensuring that the teachers are provided according to their educational qualifications as well as to match with the number of students in the class. This is to avoid fixing a square peg on the round hole and having too many students to one teacher which definitely disrupt teaching/learning effectiveness. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) recommended Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification for teaching. There is also compulsory teacher education certificate for graduates from other discipline. All these are to ensure that teachers are qualified as to fortify students to battle effectively with the 21st century challenges.

Provision of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in sufficient quantity: This is the era of technological advancement. Every country of the world is trying to meet up with globalization. This can only work out where there is adequate provision of the computers to schools for effective teaching and learning. There should also be stand-by generator in the face of epileptic power supply.

Emphasis on entrepreneurial course: In the face of mass unemployment, there is needed to lay more emphasis on skill acquisition that creates job opportunities for the grandaunts. This is to make the graduates self-reliant and job creators.

Institution of modern teaching aids and skills: The use of e-Record keeping techniques and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). According to Pradeep, Ventrivel, & Bhupathi (n.d)

types of technology bases learning environment are M-learning, E-learning, teleconferencing-audio, video, computer, and Desktop etc. To the scholars, m-learning is the delivery of learning to students through the use of mobile phone, voice recorders, pen scanners and so on. E-learning is the techniques that utilize digital technologies while teaching in and out classroom. It dwells richly on the use of electronic devices and internet.

Educational Policies: Government tenure system should spare the educational setting when in office. Educational policy made by experts in the field of education should be allowed to exist despite of change in governance.

Provision of Libraries: Adequate provision of libraries should be made for students tap from the wealth of knowledge therein. The books should not be obsolete. E-library should also be embraced.

Medical Unit: In the face of any pandemic such as Covid-19 that led to closure of schools, online teaching should take the centre stage “ceteris paribus”.

Conclusion

Secondary education being a prerequisite for entry into the tertiary institution is engrossed on its ability to attain the stated objectives which in turn depends on the management. Effective and efficient management of secondary school relies on the way the teaching and non-teaching staffs are coordinated, organized, allotted duties, directed to discreetly utilize the available educational resources for advancement of schools’ set goals. This is achieved without undermining the students’ needs and interests to deter them from engaging in students’ misdemeanour rampant among school children. However, managing secondary education in the 21st century is challenged by inadequate provision of educational resources, poor funding, conflict and insecurity. It is suggested that adequate allocation of fund be made available to education so as to avert scarcity of resources which is detrimental to the realization educational predetermined objectives.

Suggestions

Following the above elucidations, the under listed suggestion were outlined;

- ❖ In secondary education management Information and Communication Technology (ICT) network is suggested (e.g. e-record keeping) among the school players to avert lack of team solidity, vague messaging, unexploited time and resources.
- ❖ It is also suggested that for educational resources to be creditably and judiciously utilized there is need to have adequate provision and facility maintenance unit that will prevent premature breakdown/damage of school facilities because prevention is better than repairs.
- ❖ Another suggestion is that technology driven skills and method of teaching should be introduced to ensure that the students are not left behind in this technological advancement.
- ❖ The fourth suggestion is that computer literacy should not only be taught in theory but also in practice and this explains why computers are to be sufficiently provided.
- ❖ School managers should as a matter of necessity be prudent in managing scarce resources and ensure that fund provided is used with strict adherence to the scale of preference. Other means of generating fund in schools should also be sourced and utilized to avoid total lack of money. This could be through PTA, well-meaning individuals, school cultural troupe etc.

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