AJAMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.6, May-August, 2022 https://ajemates.org

MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION SECTOR FOR EXCELLENCE IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

Primary education is the foundation of every child's learning which inculcates into them certain social skills and abilities that will enable them communicate efficiently within their environment. The place of the primary education sector towards development of every child's personality which can never be overemphasized demands effectiveness in the management of teaching and learning processes of this sector for excellence in Nigeria. It has however been discovered through some scholarly literature and researches that entire primary education sector is mostly bedeviled by poor management. The ugly situations of many primary schools as regards to their inefficiency in management of the teaching and learning activities for attainment of excellence has necessitated this present write-up and paper. This paper examined the management of teaching and learning in primary education sector for excellence in Nigeria, looking at the challenges and way forward. Several concepts such as management, teaching and learning, primary education sector and excellence were defined in the paper. Further discussed in the paper were the benefits of primary education in the Nigerian society and the challenges in the management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector for excellence in Nigeria. The way forward towards effective management of teaching and learning in primary education sector for excellence in Nigeria was discussed in order to draw conclusion on the paper. It was however suggested among others that the government should adequately fund the primary education sector for effectiveness in the management of teaching and learning for attainment of excellence.

Key words: Management, Teaching, Learning, Primary, Education, Sector, Excellence

Introduction

Education is an instrument for social change and human empowerment. It is an aggregate tool for social reconstruction and national development in a society. It is the fulcrum on which the development of any society hinges. No wonder the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) referred to education as an 'instrument par excellence' necessary for effecting changes in the society. With the relevance of education towards the achievement of national goals, different levels of the Nigerian education system have been created such as Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE), Primary and Basic Education, Secondary Education and Tertiary Education to cater for the needs and dispositions of various individuals in the society. Primary education which is the main thrust of this paper is the foundation of every child's learning which inculcates into them certain social skills and abilities that will enable them communicate efficiently within their environment. Therefore, the place and role of the primary education sector towards development of every child's personality is very paramount and can never be overemphasized. Primary education being the foundation of children learning on which other educational levels are anchored, enable children to imbibe skills, knowledge, attributes and understanding that will enable them communicate effectively with people in their environment. Opoh, Okou and Ubung (2014) describing the benefits of primary education attested that this level of education inculcates into children learning, functional skills and ideal information, to act rationally to the expectation of the broader society. Oyekan (2000) writing on the primacy of primary education of the child (as cited in Opoh, Okou & Ubung, 2014) holds that it behooves us to ensure that children are adequately prepared today so that they may find suitable answers to meet the needs and challenges of tomorrow. The goals of primary education according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) as deducted from section 1, p.9 of the National Policy on Education (NPE) are to inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking; promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity; instill social, moral norms and values in the child; give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society; develop in the child the ability to adapt to the changing environment; and provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity. Pursuant of these goals requires effectiveness in the management of the primary education sector for excellence especially in the areas of teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning processes in the primary education sector cannot be effective to adapt to a certain degree of excellence without sufficiency in the management of the process. Management as describe in the paper has to do with proper and adequate coordination and utilization of both human and material resources in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. Observations shows that management of primary education sector coupled with the teaching and learning in the primary schools suffers lots of dilemma, which is generally poor. The poor management of the teaching and learning of primary education sector which continues to affects its excellence, notwithstanding its benefits to the Nigerian society, can be attributed to certain challenges which needs to be resolved for sustenance of excellence. The challenges cropping the efficiency in management of teaching and learning experiences for excellence in the primary education sector has been responsible for the poor quality performance of this sector as indicated by some scholars and researchers like Adesina (2011), Amadioha (2011), Opoh, Okou and Ubung (2014) and others. This paper therefore tried to establish facts based on the poor management of teaching and learning in the

primary education sector which has been responsible for the poor achievement of excellence in this sector by focusing on the management of teaching and learning in primary education sector for excellence in Nigeria, looking at the challenges and way forward. The paper has been divided into several sections in order to review matters relating to the thrust of the paper. It is however appropriate to define a few concepts in order to create understanding to this review, which have been done in subsequent sections.

Management

Management continues to occur in everyday living and operations of both human beings and different organizations. The concept of management as defined in the paper refers to appropriate coordination, control and utilization of human and material resources for attainment of goals in the primary education sector. Everything about management of an education sector like primary education deals entirely on how the human and material resources are well coordinated through the application of the basic elements of management such as planning, organizing, controlling, budgeting, recording, communication, documentation, supervision, among others. Kashyap (n.d.) described management in education as the practical measures for ensuring the system to work for achieving the goals or objectives of an educational institution in a wider extent bearing the best possible value to the students and the society in a grand scale. So educational management operates in educational organizations or institutions like the primary education sector. It involves the application of theory and practice of management to the field of education or educational institutions. With this definitions, management of primary education sought the following; setting directions, aims of objectives of educational organizations or institutions; planning for progress of the programme; organizing available resources such as people, time and materials in order to accomplish goals; controlling the implementing processes; and setting and improving organizational standards. In sense, in the primary schools, various activities take place, and it is through effective management that task are accomplished in order to achieve school goals and objectives. According to Surya (2011), management of education is a science or process which based on resources managing to reach the productive education goal according to the planning effectively and efficiently. It is the implementation of management principles in education field just as illustrated by Kashyap (n.d.). Ali and Abdalla (2017) referred to management as the set of actions and tasks in relevance to application of the highest order of organization and effectiveness to use resources within to achieve the objectives of the organization. From all these definitions, management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector cannot be sustainable without taking care of the challenges that might hinder the process through appropriate coordination of activities in the schools.

Teaching and Learning

Both teaching and learning is a process involving the development of a child. Learning does not occur without teaching. Teaching as viewed in the paper has to do with impacting knowledge and information to the learning; while learning has been viewed as the process or act of acquisition of knowledge or information useful to make significant contributions and adjustments to a child's life. Ravi (2015) defined teaching as the process of facilitating learning which deals with face to face interactions between the teacher and learning. Such activities involved in teaching which forms its characteristics includes creating a learning situation, motivating child to learn, arranging for conditions which assist in the growth of the child's mind and body, inspiring children, giving information and explaining it, diagnosing learning problem, make curricular materials, and evaluate, recording, and reporting (Ravi, 2015). Libnabi (2011) similarly described teaching as stimulation, guidance, direction and

encouragement of learning. It is the communication between two or more persons, who influence each other by ideas and learn something in the process of interaction. Teaching is to fill in the mind of the learner by information and knowledge of facts for future use. It is a process in which learner, teacher, curriculum and other variables are organized in a systematic way to attain some pre- determined goal. Teaching however, is to cause motivation to learn. For Libnabi (2011), teaching is an important part of the process of education and its special function is to impart knowledge, develop understanding and skill. Good teaching therefore, is not merely to impart information to the students, but it is also to arouse the will of self-learning in them. Learning as defined by Libnabi (2011) is the lifelong process of transforming information and experience into knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes. Learning is the process by which behaviour is originated or changes through practice and training. Learning equally entails the modification in behaviour to meet environmental requirements. Malamed (2019) defined learning from different perspectives. For Malamed, learning is a change in human disposition or capability that persists over a period of time and is not simply ascribable to processes of growth. Learning is the relatively permanent change in a person's knowledge or behavior due to experience. This definition has three components: 1) the duration of the change is long-term rather than short-term; 2) the locus of the change is the content and structure of knowledge in memory or the behavior of the learner; 3) the cause of the change is the learner's experience in the environment rather than fatigue, motivation, drugs, physical condition or physiologic intervention. Learning as further observed by Malamed, (2019)is the transformative process of taking in information that—when internalized and mixed with what we have experienced—changes what we know and builds on what we do. It's based on input, process, and reflection. It is what changes us. Learning is used to refer to (1) the acquisition and mastery of what is already known about something, (2) the extension and clarification of meaning of one's experience, or (3) an organized, intentional process of testing ideas relevant to problems. In other words, it is used to describe a product, a process, or a function. Learning involves strengthening correct responses and weakening incorrect responses. Learning involves adding new information to your memory. Learning involves making sense of the presented material by attending to relevant information, mentally reorganizing it, and connecting it with what you already know. Learning is a *process* that leads to *change*, which occurs as a result of *experience* and increases the potential of improved performance and future learning (Malamed, 2019). With all these definitions, in teaching and learning, teaching does not stay alone in isolation, there is always an interaction between two persons, that is, the teacher and learner (Libnabi, 2011). In other words, the effectiveness or quality teaching and learning in the primary leading to excellence as proposed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Education (2020) should focus on the instructional core looking at such characteristics of the learning climate and environment; classroom assessment and reflection; instructional rigor and student engagement; instructional relevance; and knowledge of content.

Primary Education Sector

Primary education sector as described in the paper is an initial education offered for children between the ages of six to eleven in order to develop their full capabilities which will enable them leave successfully and independently in the near future in their immediate environment. Primary education according to Anero (2014) education given to children within their late childhood. Primary education is given in an institution for children aged 6 to 11 plus, in which the rest of the education system is built upon it and is the key to the success or failure of the whole system (Anero, 2014). The Learn.org (2020) described primary education as an elementary education, provide for

children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Primary education provides students with a basic understanding of various subjects as well as the skills they will use throughout their lives. The basic goal of a quality primary education is to establish, create and offer opportunities to kids of various ages as they enter the education system. Through a balanced curriculum, it is intended to provide emotional and cognitive instruction and to assist in social development. A quality primary education allows children to thrive, to learn how to participate and to study and master the basics of the main course subjects (McGee, 2018). This form of education provides children with some of their first opportunities to meet people from different religions, races and socioeconomic statuses, as well as people with different disabilities. Therefore, primary education school teachers have a unique chance to teach children about tolerance and respect. The pupils are taught basic lifetime skills like reading, writing, spelling, interpersonal communication and concentration, and they also learn good study habits including: time management, multi-tasking and organization, short and long-term planning, and test preparation. Other subjects like: Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, History, Geography, Art and Music, among others are also taught in the primary schools (Learn.org, 2020). Providing children with effective teaching and learning primary education has several benefits which has been discussed further in the chapter.

Benefits of Teaching and Learning in Primary Education in the Nigerian Society

There are a lot of benefits derived from teaching and learning in the primary education sector in the Nigerian society. The Learn.org (2020) pointed out primary education provides students with fundamental skills that will be the foundation for the rest of their academic careers. And providing children with this education has many positive effects, including: decreasing poverty, decreasing child mortality rates, encouraging gender equality, and increasing environmental concern. The main advantage of the primary education sector as indicated by the Locus Assignment Group (2012) is to bring awareness among the children, opens avenues of opportunities along with self-development and reduces inter-generational poverty. Primary education is the first step in the making of welfare and society. It is an out-and-out pre-requisite for continuous development. In order to compete with the world, children are ready for the starting phase of their lives. Primary education ensures to teach children to think analytically, to achieve high living standards, to face the challenges posed by technological development and advancement of citizenship and basic values. From the age of four or five years, the children grew up in their home where they learn about family life, how to interact with people.

The role of primary education is to ensure the development of children personalities. This means that all children are able to develop their social, cognitive, cultural, emotional and physical skills according to the best of their abilities in order to successfully as good citizens of the country. To get a quality primary education, it is very important to attend a good primary school where excellent teaching and learning which can make more influence on children's academic progress than their family background or their gender are effectively provided (Locus Assignment Group, 2012). Anero (2014) mentioned the benefits of primary education as including; inculcating permanent literacy and numeracy, example - basic arithmetic and language skills; and ability to communicate effectively. Primary education provides the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality. Rudimentary skills which will enable the child to cope with basic education are presented to the child considering his physical, social and intellectual abilities. The primary schools apart from teaching basic subjects renders certain services such as: the provision of school library, counseling, fine arts, music, home economics etc, that helps the child to develop the skills that would enable him/her

cope with future studies. Molding the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child. The primary schools are popularly known for imparting societal norms to the children and they do this through storytelling. Primary education offers citizenship and leadership education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society. The primary school education achieves this by enabling the children develop ways of relating with others in a group by co-operatively sharing and carrying out responsibilities. Primary education lay sound and solid basis for scientific and reflective thinking to enable children explore nature and their immediate environment. Basic habits necessary for successful science activities are taught at the primary school level. Some of such habits are hygienic practices such as washing of hands before and after meals, toilet habits as well as sleep and rest. Primary education develops in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment (Anero, 2014). Furthermore, the primary school curriculum goes as far as explaining how the different environments predetermine the nature of economic activities that take place in different areas. By so doing the child is informed in adapting to the different environments. Primary education gives the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity: The primary school as an all-round development agent does not neglect the teaching of any aspect of the child's potential. The school achieves this by exposing the child to several skills. Some such rare skills are the games/sports which may not be easily acquired in the home or any other socialization institution (Anero, 2014). The Locus Assignment Group (2012) further stating the benefits derived from primary education, opined that primary education enables students to make friends who facilitate acquisition and development of communication skills as children attend school. It boosts children self-confidence and offer them the skills they need for the long success in this competitive world. Therefore, schooling at the primary schools provides the following benefits to children as pointed out by the Locus Assignment Group (2012, p.1):

1. Supports Social and Emotional Development of Young Children: The group interaction which takes place in the primary schools helps children to develop sense of respect for others, learn the difference between right and wrong, how to play with cooperation, the importance of sharing, solve disputes, follow instructions, and voice their opinions.

2. Teaches Independence and Confidence: It is a proven fact that children in their early phase of life who attend a primary school that gives a positive and nurturing environment are more stable than those who do not, this also improve confident and individual young achievers. Early education offers a safe, happy and healthy environment where children can obtain a sense of self and explore new things which learns them about themselves.

3. Improves Children Reading and Communication Skills: The communication and reading skills of children are directly associated with their primary education. Generally, between the age of three and five, a child's communication skills developed, that is why the primary education is essential to child's overall development. Children who attend primary school have much better reading and communication skills than those who do not. Various researchers claim today that getting a good primary education has more influence on children's overall development than their family background. Poor primary education can lead to a child towards negative effects. While primary education determines the development and growth of various aspects of a child in context to the society, on the other hand, having a poor quality of primary education or absence of it can lead children to illiteracy. Consequently, primary education is the most crucial phase of a child's life. It shapes them into a better thinker, learner and human being. Primary education is very advantageous not only for an individual but also

for the country as well. It is the foundation for the further education. It forms the lives of children by promoting their decision making skill. The children who got early education become more productive and skilled than those who do not get this fundamental education. Furthermore, when a nation is educated, it does not suffer many losses due to innovativeness and capabilities of its citizens who are able to bring about the revolution both at the grass root level and national level (Locus Assignment Group, 2012). It is however pertinent that stakeholders of the primary education sector like the administrators, school heads and teachers, among others, to ensure that quality teaching and learning which will lead to excellence is highly projected and promoted. Nevertheless, the challenge for primary school administrators and educators (teachers) is to prepare young minds and using that knowledge to develop instructional strategies to keep students involved in curriculum materials. Primary school administrators and teachers are responsible to deliver standardized learning to meet established standards of education, which is possible to realize by promoting excellence in teaching and learning. For primary education providers also, it is very easy to see the learners as unique individuals. Early education is the time to find out a caring and supportive atmosphere that champions individuality while introducing the values of coordination to reach both individual and group goals. Primary education is measured as the base for the future intellectual developments. The subjects of science and humanities are introduced in the programme of study with the aim of make the child familiar with the human world. Moral education is also bringing together as an important part of the curriculum with the purpose of develops moral sentiment and positive outlook in the early phase of a child. Getting primary education provides a meticulous boost to a child. All the foregoing is obtainable in the primary education sector only if management of excellence in teaching and learning is at the forefront and watch word. It is therefore necessary to give a brief description of excellence which has been done in the next section.

Excellence

Given the importance of promoting excellence in teaching and learning of the primary education sector, there are yet some challenges facing effective management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector for excellence in Nigeria. The word excellence is derived from excel and as described in the paper means that something which is outstanding and of standard quality than others. Excellence means also greatness and the quality of being extremely good. According to Pandian (2016), excellence can only be an extension of quality prescribed by such standards. The Learning Forum International (2020) identified certain keys which will enable any organization just like primary education to achieve excellence and they are: commitment, integrity, right values, remain purposeful and balanced, striving to succeed always, and showcase flexibility. For effective management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector for excellence stakeholders or managers of the system should be guided by the above keys. Nevertheless, in practical terms, achieving excellence in teaching and learning in the Nigerian primary school and education sector seems to be difficult task; and which has been discussed in the next section.

Challenges in the Management of Teaching and Learning in the Primary Education Sector for Excellence in Nigeria

Management of teaching and learning for excellence in schools in the primary education sector is a very vital means for survival of the system. Moreover, there are some challenges affecting the smooth management of teaching and learning in the primary schools which has further been disclosed. These challenges have been broadly grouped into two in the present paper, as they included the internal challenges and external challenges. The internal challenges are those challenges directly affecting the management of teaching and learning in the primary schools and

are equally internal-related school factors or forces as a result of inadequate resources for teaching and learning, large class sizes, use of unqualified/incompetent teachers in the system, poor teaching methodologies, bad leadership in administration of primary schools, among others. The external challenges are those caused by outside related school factors or forces such as poor government funding of primary schools, poor policy implementation, inconsistency of school inspection coupled with lack of implementation of inspectors reports, poor salary/remunerations, poor parental involvement and lack of private sector support for schools, and so on. It is also important to note however that, although there are other challenges affecting the management of teaching and learning for excellence in the primary schools, the most conspicuous ones have been discussed in details in the paper.

Internal Challenges

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Resources: Inadequate teaching and learning resources is one of the biggest challenge facing the management of the primary education sector in Nigeria today. It is still obvious that many primary schools are continuously still facing the challenge of poor infrastructure, leaky roofs, lack of furniture especially in rural areas. In many primary schools the learning materials are not available. Most of the pupils are sitting on ground to learn, thereby, making the environment of learning not conducive for both teachers and pupils. So many primary schools have dilapidated structures and facilities, while majority of them face the challenge of not even having much of the required facilities for promoting excellence in teaching and learning in schools. Umana (2018) opined that physical infrastructure/facilities play important role in teaching and learning especially at the primary school age when the sense of imagination is still premature. The availability of adequate school building, classrooms, chairs and other facilities are not only necessary for the attainment of objectives of an educational system but to enhance excellence in teaching and learning as well. However, the increase in primary school enrolment does not have corresponding increase in infrastructural development in the primary schools. A common scene at the primary school environment as further attested by Umana is that of half completed or dilapidated and overcrowded classrooms lacking basic equipment and facilities with unsightly and unhygienic toilet. Primary schools across Nigeria have poor conditions for teaching and learning, and there are overcrowded and classrooms not conducive for both teachers and pupils; while in most of the primary schools' essential facilities are lacking especially in the rural areas. *The* InfoGuide Nigeria *(2020)* highlighted that the issue concerning dilapidated and lack of facilities in the primary schools is because there have been cases of poor management of primary schools in Nigeria, as a result of funds embezzlement by some public officials, in whose offices, education funds were allocated to. So apart from irregularities in the payment of teachers' salaries, diversion of education funds to other programmes of government was one of the problems. This is what a typical primary school classroom in Nigeria looks like; especially in rural areas, as illustrated in figure 1 by InfoGuide Nigeria *(2020) and* Umana (2018):



Figure 1: A Half-Completed, Dilapidated and Overcrowded Classrooms

Poor Maintenance Culture: Most of the primary schools have dilapidated facilities and infrastructure due to age and administrators' poor maintenance culture. Ekpoh (2018) commenting on the importance of facilities maintenance in the primary schools cited some studies. Ekpoh observed that some previous studies have shown a relationship between facilities maintenance and school outcome. Lowe (1990) study (as cited in Ekpoh, 2018) observed that proper maintenance of school facilities will boost teachers' moral through giving them a sense of personal safety, renewed hope and commitment, while lack of maintenance of facilities could engender a feeling of despair and frustration among teachers and students. Sani (2007) study (also cited in Ekpoh, 2018) found that a significant positive and high relationship exist between school plant maintenance and student academic performance. Oyedeji (1998) study (as cited in Ekpoh, 2018) noted that there is a positive relationship between the quality of maintenance and the level of functionality of school plant. Given the above studies reported by Ekpoh (2018) showcases a strong relationship between administrators' maintenance culture and promoting excellence in teaching and learning.

Large Class size: The issue of large class sizes especially in the public primary schools is a serious challenge creating difficulties for achievement of excellence in teaching and learning. This is usually caused by the increase in students' enrollment or admission. Overcrowded classrooms courses more harm than good to teaching and learning, this has been responsible for teachers' poor supervision and close monitoring of pupils work or class activities in schools. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) gave directives on the maximum class size for primary schools which is at teacher-pupil ratio of 1:35. But practically, this rule has been respected by primary school administrators who continue to admit more pupils in the school. Attesting to the above statement, the InfoGuide Nigeria *(2020*) noted that increase in children's enrollment in primary schools in Nigeria has posed great deal of challenge to the management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector in Nigeria, as the ratio of teachers to pupils has increased to about 1:40 or more, thereby disallowing quality, effectiveness and excellence in the teaching and learning environment, as well as the efficiency of primary school teachers.

Unqualified/Incompetent Teachers in the System: Among the problems and challenges facing excellence in teaching and learning in the primary schools is also the problem of unqualified and incompetent teachers in the system. Many teachers in the primary schools have less the requisite educational qualifications to effectively promote excellence in teaching and learning. Teaching has now become an all comers job. Where both unqualified teachers without the requisite education background and skills are offered appointment to teach. Use of unqualified and incompetent teachers in the primary education sector is responsible for other problems such application of wrong pedagogical teaching methodologies in teaching and learning. In as much as that teaching and learning is supposed to be child-centred at this level of education, many teachers yet still make their teaching more teacher-centred. Umana (2018) opined that primary school teachers still operate under very pathetic conditions such as overcrowded classrooms, wide variations in age and with little or no materials for teaching. Also, incompetence on the part of some teachers and head-teachers leads to poor quality assurance, delivery and supervision in the system. Teachers need to be empowered with adequate skills which will enable them identify their own problems (administrative or pedagogical) and seek solutions to these problems (Umana, 2018).

Inadequate Staff Training and Retraining Programmes: Training and retraining of primary school teachers through conferences, workshops and seminars are seriously lacking in the primary education sector. This situation has been

responsible for the continuous retention of quacks or incompetent teachers in the primary education sector affecting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the primary schools. In line with the above statements, *the* InfoGuide Nigeria *(2020) hinted that* teachers are not well prepared to meet the challenge of primary school education in Nigeria, because teachers lack the requisite and necessary training both at the teacher preparatory stage and while on service. Many scholars have complained about the poor quality of institutional support for teachers' professional development. Institutions responsible for teachers' training and education lacks the basic learning facilities. The usual assumption is that if these gaps are filled, children will learn and learn well. In situations such teacher education institutions as college of education, faculty of education in some Universities are lacking in adequate infrastructure for the training of teachers. Taking other disciplines for example, like in Law and Medicine, students in these disciplines are allowed to undergo strenuous learning practice in order to prepare them adequately for their professional practices, but in the case of student teachers' preparation, the reverse in the case. This account for the level of in-experienced teachers in Nigerian primary schools (InfoGuide Nigeria, *2020*). Banerji (2018) have suggested constant retraining of teachers as clear goals, strong training and retraining, mentoring and monitoring for teachers, systematic assessment and periodic review helped to ensure the programme delivered positive results.

Poor Teaching Methodologies: As a result of inadequate teacher preparation and lack of appropriate in-service training, many teachers in the primary schools do not have appropriate skills to apply best pedagogical practices or methodologies that will promote excellence in teaching and learning. The problem of poor teaching methodologies usually affects pupils learning and academic performances. Banerji (2018) pointed out clearly that adoption of poor teaching style and methodologies from teachers may be at the root of why children are not learning anymore. This problem causes more and more pupils to get left behind early and stay behind forever. Unlike problems of access and inputs that are visible, the situation of low learning caused by the teaching methodologies worsens quietly within classrooms and schools and is invisible to the world outside (Banerji, 2018).

Bad Leadership: Most of the internal management problems affecting the primary schools is as a result of bad leadership. The inefficiency of most head teachers has kept many schools in bad condition and devastating state. Omotayo, Iheberene and Maduewesi (2008) posited that the incompetency of head-teachers due to bad leadership have led to poor quality assurance, poor instructional delivery and supervision in the primary education system. For excellence in teaching and learning, head teachers must sit up to administer the primary schools properly through effective leadership and good government. The head teacher who is the peak or apex of administration in the primary school is responsible for daily running the school. All academic/curricular and extracurricular activities which takes place in the school are administrated by the head teacher, who is the chief custodian of the school. With the position occupied by the head teacher, he or she performs certain roles and functions as identified by Akpakwu (2012) as student management function, staff management function, facilities management function, financial management function and school-community relations function, among others. This makes the head teacher responsible for decision making, planning, organizing, staffing, coordination, supervision and documentation of all activities in the school. All these roles, functions and responsibilities of the school heads warrant that they apply effective and sound leadership practices for goal attainment in the primary schools. They need be guided by the principles of good governance for effective management of the school.

Apart from all the above challenges extensively discussed, other internal problems affecting achieving excellence in that management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector could be attributed to insecurity matters which has pull students away from schooling coupled with issues like poor statistical data to ensure proper management of schools, high rate of absenteeism, poor assessment due to poor quality of teaching, indiscipline, bullying from the part of students and teachers, and teachers' harassment in classroom which affects teaching and learning as well.

External Challenges

Poor Government Funding: Majority of the poor achievement of excellence in teaching and learning is as a result of poor government funding. The money or budget allocated to schools by the federal and state governments are two small to promote effective teaching and learning for excellence especially in the primary education sector. Moreover, adequate funding checkmates and ensure enforcement of other activities such as teachers empowerment, training, motivation and development, provision of teaching resources, instructional supervision, among many others, which is necessary for the management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector for excellence. Umana (2018) posited that the financial resources invested into primary education act as a lubricant for the system and without these financial resources programmes cannot be properly planned and policies implemented. Therefore, in the absence of adequate funds and proper management, any plans of transformation are bound to fail. Funding issues in primary education plays a crucial role in determining the level of success, development and change. Adequate funding entails a timely supply of funds, qualified teachers, administrators and infrastructural facilities to ensure success in any organization. Indeed, primary education sector is an industry that attract huge capital out lay. Primary education is a social service that requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of Government for proper execution of educational programs, schemes and policies. Ebong (2006) indicated that financial resources are made of monetary inputs into a system such as the education system. Hitherto, without availability of funds and proper management to carry out any work at the primary education level and any plans of transformation are bound to fail. Funding issues in primary education sector plays a crucial role in determining the level of success, development and change. It also helps to direct attention towards the achievement of set goals at all levels of education (Ebong, 2006).

Poor Policy Implementation: The inability to efficiently and effectively implement the primary education policy is also responsible for poor attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the schools. To buttress this point, Anero (2014) opined that government can be held responsible for poor management of primary schools by committing some fouls in policy implementation. The reckless manner government handles policy implementation issues related to primary education justifies the statement made by Anero (2011) who described government as being political, only a policy maker, a powerless supervisor and squander of meaningful programmes targeted at improving the services rendered by the primary school subsector. The view that government is not meaningfully committed to demonstrate sagacity and doggedness in implementing policies and programmes to improve primary education has many proves. Omotayo, Iheberene and Maduewesi (2008) also stressed that the issue relating to poor policy implementation strategy which has led to the poor management and lack of quality assurance in the sector, has equally been a responsible factor that contributed to the failure of the UBE to attain its goals since its inception more than ten years ago.

Poor Salary/Remunerations: The poor salary structure coupled with inadequate remunerations such as inadequate rewards and incentives, staff

welfare, among others, has continued to seriously affect achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the primary schools. Even when the salary structure is poor, teachers are not paid as at when due. As a result of poor salary structure coupled with delay in payment and inadequate remunerations, all these have continued to de-motivate teachers from going extra miles to put in their best in teaching and learning. There are several situations in which primary school teachers complained about poor salary which has continued to affect their motivation, dedication, commitment, effectiveness, performances and productivity while executing task. Given that primary school teachers task are very tedious and challenging because of the difficulties in handling children and toddlers, yet they are neglected and faced with poor salary and remunerations. Supporting the above statements, Wasiu (2019) opined that the problem the primary schools in Nigeria are facing is low salary and indifferent attitudes towards teachers. In a country like Nigeria, teachers are seen like nonentity and the treatment towards them in terms of payment is nowhere to be mentioned in the committee of nations, so this leads to a major problem on the students and the primary school industries at large. So it a single problem that spreads its tentacles, no one wants to teach anymore and the talented ones are losing interest and focus in the teaching profession at a very young age. Anaziah (2020) opined that the problems associated with poor teacher's salary is that the primary education sector will continue to have distracted teachers who focus is mainly on trading on the inside coupled with poorly motivated people not suited for the job and who are just keeping a job basically. A general malaise in Nigeria.

Inconsistency of School Inspection: The primary schools lack inspection and monitoring of teachers by the local government authority or other external bodies. Inconsistency of school inspection is affected by lack of implementation of inspectors reports. Observation from the bad state and poor conditions of primary schools in the country has showcased that there is a failure in implementation of the inspectors reports and recommendations after inspection have been conducted in the schools. Contrastingly, George, Olayiwola and Adewole (2013) opined that for school's continual improvement and progress, regular inspection visits to public primary of schools and external auditing of schools' accounts to ensure improved quality of primary education. The above mentioned researchers in a study confirmed that an examination of institutional indicator, revealed that inspection of schools by public and private inspectors and external auditing of schools accounts had positive and significant impact on pupils' performance especially in Mathematics, English Language and Raven Tests. By implication, better inspection of schools and more accountability in the schools will significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning for excellence in primary education.

Poor Parental Involvement: Lack of parental involvement in the school has made many parents not to pay adequate attention to their children or wards education. From the poor or lack of parents' involvement, clothing, feeding and buying of books coupled with writing materials to support the teaching and teaching are the primary problems facing most pupils in schools. Anero (2014) commented that the acquisition of primary education by the child is dependent largely on the family. It is the family that presents the child for primary education. Perhaps, it is this view that made Ezekiel–Hart and Adiele (2008, p.7) (as cited by Anero, 2018, p.59) to say that "no matter how highly qualified the teachers are, and no matter how sophisticated the infrastructure, the quality of preparation given to students (inputs)…the family plays significant roles in determining the end products of the school system. Until the family is able and willing to support their children and perform their roles effectively, not much would be expected from the school in the overall attainment

of quality education. This showcases that adequate parental involvement which must be highly encouraged is requisite for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the primary education sector.

Lack of Private Sector Support for Schools: This has also been a contributive factor responsible for poor management of primary schools in the country. Many private sector institutions like the non-governmental agencies, financial institutions, private business owners are reluctant to support schools in all ramifications. This is the reason why the theory of change explained the push from within the government as well as from external and outside the school environment to ensure the timely provision of adequate funding, inputs, facilities and to point out the urgent need to build institutions that support schools and teachers (Banerji, 2018). There is a need however, to address these difficulties in other to move the nation's primary education forward on a path to progress and development. All these challenges and problems, if well fixed or corrected, will go a long way not only in promoting excellence in teaching and learning but will have great significance in changing the lives of primary school pupils positively for feature benefits in the country and economy.

Conclusion

Primary education sector is widely accepted as the sure route to national development and socio-economic prosperity in the Nigerian society because of her contribution towards the preparation and training of tomorrow's leaders. The key to scientific and technological advancement in the country is only when excellence in the management of teaching and learning in the primary education sector is highly promoted and boosted. This means that all the challenges inhibiting the achievement of excellence in teaching and learning with reference to the internal and external factors/challenges needs to be highly curtailed, if possible eradicated from the school system. Therefore, adequate provisions should be made through effective management of the primary education sector to contribute greatly to excellence in teaching and learning situations in schools. Thus, effective management of the primary schools through fostering of excellence in teaching and learning is required to foster national development.

The Way Forward Towards Effective Management of Primary Education Sector for Excellence in Nigeria

To create a healthy teaching and learning environment for excellence in the primary education sector in Nigeria, need be to tackle and resolve all the challenges affecting this course from happening. To promote excellence in teaching and learning in the management of the primary education sector in Nigeria, this must start with adequate funding and financial inputs from the government and other private sectors such as financial institutions, international organizations, voluntary organizations, private individuals, parents, among others. School administrators should learn to promote effective school-community partnerships through good governance and excellent leadership. Again, teachers should be supported with adequate motivation in order to promote excellence in teaching and learning. This should come as good pay, adequate remunerations, continuous staff development, training and retraining and effective reward system. This is significant in the words of Akpakwu (2012) who opined that staff motivation is always a critical determinant of workers and students' performance in educational organizations. Use of qualified and competent teachers who are critically exposed to sound pedagogical principles, theory and practices should be maintained in the teaching and learning processes in the primary schools. The devastating state coupled with the internal management problems of many primary schools is also a wake-up call for regulatory agencies such as UBEB/SUBEB, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and other Primary Education Boards who

should however ensure that regular, constant and consistent instructional supervision and inspection are conducted in the schools and whose report must be fully and effectively implemented for excellence in teaching and learning. This will also ensure effective management of the primary schools. Both the federal and state government should ensure effective policy implementation at the primary school level in order to promote excellence in teaching and learning. Adequate parental involvement and private sector support for schools should be highly encouraged for management of teaching and learning for excellence in the primary schools. Primary school administrators should maintain appropriate class size of maximum of teacher-pupil ratio of 1:35 as directed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) to ensure that excellence in teaching and learning is enhanced. Generally, in all the above, the watch word in order to promote excellence in teaching and learning in the management of the primary education sector lies in the provisions of the following: excellent funding system, excellent leadership, excellent infrastructure and facilities, excellent teachers with excellent teaching methodologies, excellent pupils' assessments procedures, excellent instructional supervision and school inspection, excellent continuous teachers' development and retraining, excellent teacher motivation and remunerations, excellent parental and private sector involvement, excellent policy implementation, excellent class size and so on.

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