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MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian educational system has undergone various stages of development with great impact on the Nigerian society. The secondary school education which is acquired after primary school education and before the tertiary stage is faced with numerous obstacles in Nigeria. The place of the Secondary school 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 secondary school education sector is mostly bedeviled by poor management. This calls for urgent attention to redeem it from total collapse. The ugly situations of many Secondary schools as regards to their inefficiency in management of the teaching and learning activities for attainment of excellence have necessitated this present write-up and paper. This paper examined the management of teaching and learning in secondary school education sector for excellence in Nigeria, looking at the challenges and way forward. Several concepts such as management, teaching and learning, secondary school education sector and excellence were defined in the paper. Further discussed in the paper were the benefits of secondary school education in the Nigerian society and the challenges in the management of teaching and learning in the secondary school education sector for excellence in Nigeria. The way forward towards effective management of teaching and learning in secondary school 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 increase budgetary allocation of fund to the secondary school education sector for effectiveness in the management of teaching and learning for attainment of excellence.

Keywords: Management, Teaching, Learning, Secondary, Education, Sector, Excellence

Introduction

Education, as it is likely said, is the bedrock of a nation. 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 (Arinze and Okonta 2022). 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 but of concern here is the secondary education.

Secondary school education which is the main thrust of this paper is education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN] p18). Adesina (1977) reported that Secondary education in Nigeria started in the year 1859 when the CMS Grammar School Lagos was opened. This was followed by Methodist High School Lagos. But the first Government Secondary school, Kings College Lagos was established in 1927. (NTI as cited by Nyamibo, 2006). Today various Secondary educations have been established by both the government and private sector.

Secondary school education is aimed at developing a child better than primary level, because it is obvious that primary education is insufficient for children to acquire literacy, numeracy, and communication skills (Ige, 2011; Yusuf, 2009). Such education is provided in secondary school, which can be owned by government (state or federal), individuals or community. In the Nigerian situation, secondary education is the second level material provider for the desired future manpower resources. Secondary education is of great importance to the nation because it is a source of mid-level manpower production that is necessary to sustain and improve the economy. It is divided into two phases as follows:

Junior secondary phase: This is the first three years of secondary school education. The curriculum at this phase is pre-vocational and academic in scope. Core, pre-vocational and non-prevocational subjects are included in the curriculum.

Senior secondary phase: This is the next three years after junior secondary phase. It has wider scope than the Junior Secondary (JS) phase and aims at broadening the knowledge and skills of a student beyond the JS level and thus prepares him/her for further education.

Secondary education enable children to imbibe skills, knowledge, attributes and understanding that will enable them communicate effectively with people in their environment and society at large. The goals of secondary 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 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 secondary education sector for excellence especially in the areas of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning processes in the secondary education sector cannot be effective to adapt to a certain degree of excellence without sufficiency in the management of the process.

Management

The concept of Management as defined in this paper is the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the activities of an institution by utilizing human and material resources so as to effectively and efficiently achieve a goal in the secondary educational sector. 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. With this definitions, management of secondary school education sought the following; setting directions, aims and 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 secondary schools, various activities take place, and it is through effective management that task is 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. 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 secondary school 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 learner". 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. For Malamed (2019), 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. In other words, it is used to describe a product, a process, or a function. Learning involves adding new information to your memory. 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". In other words, the effectiveness or quality teaching and learning in the secondary school leads to excellence as proposed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Education (2020) and it 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.

Benefits of Teaching and Learning in Secondary School Education in the Nigerian Society

There are a lot of benefits derived from teaching and learning in the secondary school education sector in the Nigerian society. The Best Leaning Management System (BLMS Hero) mentioned five benefits of secondary school education as including; (1) helping one to challenge his/herself (2) Offers Reflection and Self-Development (3) Allows a child to Create Lifelong Friendships (4) Offers Second Language Proficiency and (5) Provides a Space for Competition and Interaction. And providing students with this education has many positive effects and that includes: decreasing poverty, decreasing child mortality rates, promotes equality and diversity of society, reduces crime rate, and increasing environmental concern.

Basic habits necessary for successful science activities during the tertiary institution are taught at the secondary school level. Some of such habits are laboratory safety such as wearing a lab coat before entering into the lab, covering the nose with a mask, wearing a groove and not eating meals in the lab. Secondary education develops in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment (Anero, 2014). The Locus Assignment Group (2012) further stating the benefits derived from secondary education, opined that secondary education enables students to make friends who facilitate acquisition and development of

communication skills as children attend school. It boosts children self-confidence and offers them the skills they need for the long success in this competitive world. Therefore, schooling at the secondary schools is important to students.

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

Management of teaching and learning for excellence in the secondary school 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 secondary schools which has further been disclosed. These challenges have been broadly grouped into two in this 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 secondary schools and are equally internal-related school factors or forces as a result of inadequate resources for teaching and learning, use of unqualified/incompetent teachers in the system, poor teaching methodologies, The external challenges are those caused by outside related school factors or forces such as poor government funding of secondary schools, 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 secondary schools, the most conspicuous ones have been discussed in details in the paper.

Internal Challenges

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Resources: It is still obvious that many secondary schools are continuously still facing the challenge of poor infrastructure, leaky roofs, lack of furniture especially in rural areas. In many secondary schools most of the students are standing up to learn, thereby, making the environment of learning not conducive for both teachers and students. So many secondary 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 infrastructure/facilities play important role in teaching and learning. 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 secondary school enrolment does not have corresponding increase in infrastructural development in the secondary schools.

Unqualified/Incompetent Teachers in the System: Many teachers in the secondary 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 secondary education sector is responsible for other problems such application of wrong pedagogical teaching methodologies in teaching and learning. Umana (2018) opined that secondary school teachers still operate under very pathetic conditions such as overcrowded classrooms, wide variations in age and with little or no materials for teaching. 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 secondary school teachers through conferences, workshops and seminars are seriously lacking in the secondary education sector. This situation has been responsible for the continuous retention of quacks or incompetent teachers in the secondary education sector affecting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the secondary schools. In line with the above statements, the InfoGuide Nigeria (2020) hinted that teachers are not well prepared to meet the challenge of secondary school education in Nigeria, because teachers lack the requisite and necessary training both at the teacher preparatory stage and while on service. 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. This account for the level of in-experienced teachers in Nigerian secondary 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 secondary 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 student's 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 students 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).

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 secondary 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 secondary education sector for excellence. Umana (2018) posited that the financial resources invested into secondary 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 secondary 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. 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 secondary education level and any plans of transformation are bound to fail.

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 secondary schools. Even when the salary structure is poor, teachers are not paid as at when due. Patricia Arinze and Okonta (2022) opined that 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. Given that secondary school teachers task are very tedious and challenging because of the difficulties in handling students, yet they are neglected and faced with poor salary and remunerations. Supporting the above statements, Wasiu (2019) opined that the problem the secondary schools in Nigeria are facing is low salary and indifferent attitudes towards teachers. 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 secondary education sector will continue to have distracted teachers whose 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.

Inconsistency of School Inspection: The secondary 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 inspector's reports (Arinze and Okonta, 2022). Observation from the bad state and poor conditions of secondary 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 secondary schools and external auditing of schools' accounts to ensure improved quality of secondary education. By implication, better inspection of schools and more accountability in the schools will significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning for excellence in secondary 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 are the primary problems facing most students in secondary schools. Anero (2014) commented that the acquisition of secondary education by the child is dependent largely on the family. Perhaps, it is this view that made Ezekiel–Hart and Adiele as cited by Anero, (2018) 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 secondary education sector.

Conclusion

Secondary 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 secondary 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 secondary school education sector to contribute greatly to excellence in teaching and learning situations in schools.

The Way Forward Towards Effective Management of Secondary School Education Sector for Excellence in Nigeria:

To create a healthy teaching and learning environment for excellence in the secondary school education sector in Nigeria, it is required to tackle and resolve all the challenges affecting this course from happening and 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. 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 secondary schools. The devastating state coupled with the internal management problems of many secondary schools is also a wake-up call for regulatory agencies of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and other Secondary School 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 secondary schools. Both the federal and state government should ensure effective policy implementation at the secondary 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 secondary schools.

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