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EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: STRATEGIES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this research work is to find out the challenges of educational administration and planning in Schools during COVID-19 Pandemic. The paper examined the meaning of educational administration and planning and the concept of COVID-19 Pandemic. It vividly discussed the impact of COVID-19 on Nigerian secondary schools in the areas of closure of schools, cancellation of national and international examination, elongation of graduation year, non-payment of salaries of some private school teachers and other social problems associated with it. The paper highlighted some of the school administrators' strategies in promoting teaching and learning in secondary schools in the periods of COVID-19 Pandemic which include; audio conferencing, video conferencing, electronic mail, WhatsApp and internet technology. The paper explained some of the challenges faced by school administrators and teachers in using electronic learning during COVID-19 Pandemic such as technical difficulties faced by teachers and students, network and internet connection problems, inconsistent electric power supply etc. it suggested the way forward on effective strategies for promoting teaching and learning by school administrators during and after COVID-19 Pandemic and recommended that the Federal and State Government should adequately fund education in Nigeria, secondary school administrators should diversity sources of funding school projects and administration, see the need to equip their schools with modern digital facilities that can aid online education and the teachers should be trained and re-trained on the use of e-learning facilities.
Keywords: *Educational Administration, planning, Secondary School, COVID-19 Pandemic.*

Introduction

Educational administration and planning in secondary schools during Covid-19 was challenging in all ramifications. The impact of Covid-19 led to the increase in the cost of school facilities such as ICT materials, cost of maintaining school vehicles, laboratory, school library, studios, workshops, water closet, pit toilets, staffrooms, classrooms, assembly hall etc. have gone beyond the financial abilities of most school administrators. Most principals of schools especially those in urban areas adopted the use of Information Communication Technology in school administration. ICT finds expression in digital technology such as the computer, internet, e-mail, mobile phone, video conferencing and different electronic applications (Omebe 2018). The use of ICT facilities provided a better alternative for administration and planning in secondary schools during Covid-19. However, it was challenging because of high cost of data, facilities maintenance, and lack of expertise in the use of ICT tools in secondary schools administration.

According to Nwori and Omebe (2013), maintenance of adequate communication link is a strategy the management of secondary schools must adopt to have a smooth implementation of goals of secondary education in their institutions.

Meaning of Educational Administration and Planning

Education Administration and planning is a means of achieving the goals of education through effective and efficient manipulation of available inputs. Aderonmu and Ehametalor (2005) defined education administration as

essentially a service, activity or tool through which the fundamental objectives of the educational process may be more fully and efficiently realized. Educational administration is therefore, concerned with the utilization of adequate resources and the harmonization of relationships and interactions in a suitable environment in order to foster the attainment of the goals of teaching and learning. It also involves the prudent management of resources and high degree of accountability on the part of organizational members.

Concept of Covid-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus Disease 2019 is a potentially severe, primarily respiratory illness caused by a Coronavirus and characterized by fever, coughing and shortness of breath. In some people, the disease also damages major organs as the heart or kidney. The most common way that this virus spreads is through close contact with already infected person. When people with Covid-19 breathe out or cough, they expel tiny droplets that contain the virus. These droplets can enter the mouth or nose of someone without the virus, causing the spread of infection to occur. The disease is most contagious when a person's symptoms are at their peak, though it is possible for someone without symptoms to spread the virus. Droplets containing the virus can also land on nearby surfaces or objects and when other people touch such surfaces or pick up the objects and then touches their nose, eyes or mouth, the virus spread.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

The Covid-19 pandemic led to the closure of schools. The Federal Ministry of Education through the permanent secretary on March 19th2020 ordered the immediate closure of tertiary institutions, secondary and primary schools across the nation over the outbreak of the disease in the country. All public and private schools have to shut the doors of their schools following the government directive. It is worthy to note that secondary schools provided adequate learning facilities but when schools closed, children were deprived the opportunities for academic growth as well as academic development. The disadvantages of school closure were enormous for under-privileged students who tend to have fewer or no educational opportunity outside school. The closure of schools, colleges and universities does not only interrupted the teaching of students, it also coincided with key assessment periods and many examinations have been postponed or canceled as a result of Covid-19.

According to Miks (2020), many international examinations such as Cambridge International Examinations were cancelled. Other international examinations that were canceled due to Covid-19 include; International Baccalaureates, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT). Apart from these, West African Examination Council for West African countries had their examinations postponed. The implications of these examinations cancellation was that, thousands of students were forced to defer the start of their studies for their undergraduate studies to a later year since the online plat form for teaching and learning could not be used to conduct examination or assess student's performance. Also, student's graduation was indirectly elongated. Many families who were less privileged abandoned their children education during the long time schools were closed down. Disruption of education due pandemic resulted to many social problems such as child labour, early marriages, unwanted pregnancies and exploitation among others. Students' dropout rate increased and majority of the disadvantaged students did not return back to school when the government re-opened schools for the continuation of the academic programme.

Teachers, especially those in private schools were not paid during the periods of the lockdown. This made some of them unable to provide adequately for the needs of their families. Covid-19 pandemic created a lot of havoc in the lives of many teachers; they faced a lot of psychological problems such as stress, fear, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness that led to lack of focus and concentration.

School Administrators Strategies In Promoting Teaching And Learning In Secondary Schools in The Periods Of Covid-19 Pandemic

Many school administrators especially those in the urban areas adopted online teaching and learning using the following technological devices:

(i) **Audio-Conferencing**: This process represents a live, two way conversation among groups at different locations connected by telephone lines or satellites. It requires a special microphone with amplifier device, preferably voice-activated at each location (Henich, Molenda and Russell, 1993). That is, it involves the linking of more than two parties in a single call, so that everyone can hear everyone else. At each location or site, there may be participants who are using an ordinary telephone or a group of people with loud-speaking telephone. It is also viewed as a form of twoor multi-way live long distance link between the teacher and student that is provided by the telephone network. This process is simply called teaching by telephone. Audio-Conferencing is such an innovative technique that enables a tutor who is somewhere else to deliver his lecture to his audience in a classroom setting or who are scattered in their different locations. It is a two-way communication activity and as a result has the advantage of high quality of interaction.

(ii) **Videoconferencing:** This is an online teaching and learning method that could be holding between two or more participants at different sites or locations. It is a two-way exchange of both live television images and audio signals between two or more sites and three or more individuals. In this videoconferencing, such facilities as these are used. They include computer with appropriate software, video cameras, microphone and speakers, as well as telephone lines or other cabling to transmit audio and video signals (Roblyer, 2003). Thus, satellite transmission as well as cable transmission has been successfully used for videoconferencing in which two or multi-way audio and television link-ups are involved. For example, this process or device enables a teacher in one location to see, talk and listen to students in one or more remote locations; so also would the students see the teacher. This possibility of a teacher and his students seeing themselves has been one of the most powerful and attractive attributes of videoconferencing, especially in distance education. It thus helps to make the educational transaction at a distance to be virtually identical to a traditional classroom setting (Garrison, 1989). Teaching in such a circumstance will perhaps be easier because concepts and situations can be demonstrated visually.

(iii) **Electronic Mail:** Electronic Mail is general term that is used to refer to systems that enable letters, messages etc to be sent from one individual, department, institution etc to another solely by electronic means, without the use of a conventional postage or internal mail system (Pervical and Ellington, 1988). However, the concept of electronic mail covers a broad spectrum of systems and services whose main common feature is that the messages are converted to electronic signals for the purposes of transmission. The transmission of electronic mail requires a telecommunication network. That is why the vast majority of electronic mail is transmitted as computer-compatible data, and travels along data networks.

(iv) **Videotext and Tele-Text**: The term Videotext applies to an interactive two-way system that is used for transmitting text or graphics stored in computer data bases, through the telephone network, for display on a television screen. A distinguishing feature about videotext is that it is specially intended as a simple to use, low-cost information system that could cater for large number of users. It makes for effective

interaction between the users at the same time. On the other hand, teletext is a non-interactive, one way form of videotext. It does the same thing as the videotext but the difference is that both the sender and the receiver do not have the opportunity of interacting immediately.

(v) **Internet Technology:** The internet is a computer network used for worldwide communication. In fact, internet is the network of networks. A network refers to a group of computers that share communication lines. The internet is veritable resource for online teaching and learning. Teachers and students get current information on different topics in different subject areas. It allows the user to engage in inquiry by exploring nearly unlimited resources available on the internet. Web quest is a method of using internet technology for teaching and learning. Students are guided and assisted to obtain information from the internet in order to write an assignment. The teacher must sort through websites targeting information that are appropriate for students in terms of reliability, clarity, accuracy, readability and graphic appeal. It is those sites identified by the teacher that the students will later go through in the course of writing their assignments or class practice.

(vi) **WhatsApp:** It is another online platform for teaching and learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. Class works, assignments are posted in the WhatsApp. The teacher and the students meet at the agreed time to learn using WhatsApp platform. The students are required to have Android phones and buy enough data that will last throughout the lesson periods.

Challenges Faced by School Administrators and Teachers in using Electronic Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Teachers and students faced many technical difficulties which slowed down the teaching-learning process. Not all the teachers and students had access to digital devices and internet. Children in rural communities in Nigeria were left behind as they were not equipped to adapt to the new methods of learning (Yusuf, 2005). A lot of Nigerian parents cannot afford to provide three square meals for their families not to talk of buying mobile phones or laptops, data and other online devices for their children in order to participate in online learning.
2. There was no direct communication between the learners and the teachers. All students are not the same, there are variations in their level of confidence, capabilities as well as understanding. According to Albirini (2006), some students who are slow learners may not comprehend easily without the teacher being around to put them through. Some of these slow learners depended on their friends to re-explain the concepts of what has been taught by the teacher, but now that they are isolated from others how will they manage the situation? These learners may never catch up with their peers and they will continue to feel the effect of this gap long after the pandemic has ended.
3. **Management attitudes**: The attitudes of various managements in and outside institutions towards the development of e-learning related facilities such as the internet and procurement of computers is rather slow in some instances, and in others, there are no aids or support by the government at all.
4. Scheme of work differs from school. The topic that was scheduled to be taught in a term in a school may be scheduled for second term in another school. There was no clear stipulation by the government in their educational policies, there was no uniformity, adequate quality control as well as e-content delivery in the learning process.

5. **Network and Internet connection problems**: Unavailability of proper digital tools, inter-connection problems can cause serious setback to many students in their learning process. Also, most of the schools that took part in the online teaching and learning find it difficult to assess their students. When the teachers give assignment, they find it difficult to mark it and give students feedback except the assessment questions are objectives.
6. Inconsistent Electric Power Supply in most parts of the country and also inadequate network services especially in the rural areas adversely affected e-learning.
7. Non-Inclusion of ICT Programmes in teachers training curricula and at the basic levels of education. There seems to be no clear and definite ICT policy or curriculum for all levels of the Nigerian education.

The Way Forward on Effective Strategies for Promoting Teaching and Learning by School Administrators During and after COVID-19 Pandemic

The Federal and state governments should adequately fund secondary education in Nigeria. However, secondary school administrators should diversify sources of funding school projects and administration. Alternative sources of financing secondary education could provide a viable supplementary source of government efforts in financing secondary education. Martins (2011) and Okunamiri (2002) advocated that secondary school administrators should be involve in a wide spectrum of income generating activities from agricultural venture, catering services, renting of school hall, extra-mural classes, parent-teachers association projects, appeal for fund raising, communityinvolvement in school projects, donations from rich individuals, among others.

Supporting the above alternative source of financing secondary education in Nigeria, Ocho (2005) indicated that one of the sources of funds for secondary education development is fund raising. He opined that sources such as education levy, donations, rentals, old students financial assistance could help in provision of infrastructural facilities and smooth school administration.

In addition, secondary school administrators should see the need to equip their schools with Modern digital facilities that can aid online education. According to Taiwo (2005), the Federal and state governments should ensure that the inclusion of online teaching such as integrated digital learning platforms, video lessons teaching programme should also be incorporated into the school time-table.

The teachers should be trained and retrained on the use of e-learning facilities. Capacity building is critical step for entering into the new global economic and educational development. It should be considered as an alternative medium through which teachers and students are empowered.

Finally, parents should pay personal attention and supervise their children until they adapt to online teaching environment.

Conclusion

The catastrophe posed by Coronavirus in Nigeria has revealed to us the benefits of online teaching and learning. However, online education was seriously hampered by so many factors such as high cost of computers, phone, problem of network services, inadequate knowledge of use of e-learning facilities by teachers and students. Therefore, the Federal, state government and non-governmental organizations should partner with secondary school management in providing e-learning infrastructures and adequately fund secondary education in Nigeria for effective service delivery.

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