

# CHALLENGES OF MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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#### ABSTRACT

Management of public secondary school is the ability of the school principal to combine both human and non-human resources provided in the school to attain educational objectives. Secondary school students are mainly teenagers who are boisterous and at the period psychologists referred to as the period of "storm and stress" as such require to be fully engaged. It is imperative to keep them busy with curricular and extracurricular activities so as to curb incidences of behavior maladjustment and other social vices. This could only be achieved through the principal's management tactics in congruence with the other school personnel. The school head has the duty to work in harmony with the teaching and non-teaching staff to achieve desired goals. In view of the above narrative, this study excavates the concept of education, management, public secondary school, management of secondary education, challenges inhibiting effective management of public secondary school and possible suggestions.

Keywords: Education, Management, Public secondary school and Challenges.

#### Introduction

Education is very paramount in the growth and development of any nation be it in economy, politics, socials and cultural. Education holds way to the development of the individual thereby equipping the individual with relevant skills, knowledge and moral values that allows the individual foster in all endeavours. Education is a process of helping the learner unfold his/her potentials so as to enable them be useful not just themselves but to the larger society as well.

In support of the above idea, Ojimba (2021); Okaforcha and Okeke (2018); Ezeaku and Obikeze (2018) education builds potentials in individual and instills worth to the individual which enables the individual to contribute positively to the nation's advancement. This education can be acquired in school system or institutions of learning. Nigerian educational system is recognizably three in number namely: primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Primary is the foundational level of



education which is currently referred to as basic education. This is followed by the secondary school which is the next level after the primary. Immediately after the secondary level lies the tertiary level.

All of the above-mentioned levels of education have their various aim and objectives which could only be achieved through effective and efficient management. The nexus of this study focused on the public secondary schools. As noted by Ojimba (2023); Okeke and Okaforcha (2020); Iloka (2022); Ojimba (2024); Okoye (2017); Okoye (2016); Nwakoby and Nwakoby (2023), the management of the secondary schools lies on the shoulder of the principals or school administrators. On the same note, Ilodigwe and Nwakoby (2021); Iloka (2021); Nwakoby (2023) Nwakoby (2024); Nwakoby and Chukwujekwu (2020), the principal is the chief executive in the secondary school which works in conjunction with other staff (teaching and non-teaching) to achieve stated objectives. The activities of the principal in the managerial cadre could facilitate or hamper the school growth and objectives attainment.

In the management of the school, the school manager requires both human and material resources to achieve the predetermined objectives. The leadership style should be accommodating thus encourages the school personnel to put in their best and work willingly to achieve goal feat. The school manager should be able to coordinate both human and non-human resources with prudency and centre on the areas of need. He should be able to possess maintenance culture so as to ensure the sustainability of the procured facilities. All of these require utter possession and careful utilization of the principles of management.

### Management

In every organization that is peopled, there is need for effective and efficient management so as to reduce the incidences of conflicts and clash of interest which is so unfriendly to progress of the organization. It based on this development that management is defined by Chike Okosa, Ibe and Ojimba (2023); Okeke and Okaforcha (2018), as the systematic way of ensuring that activities are carried out in such a way that the objectives will be achieved. It is the way the leader ensures that both the human factors and the material factors are adequately utilized to foster goal attainment. According to Okaforcha and Okeke (2018); Ezeaku (2019); Nwabashili, Iloka and Ucheagwu-Okoye (2022); Okeke (2022) management is described as the ability of the manager to bond all educational resources (human and non-human) through all-inclusive planning, organizing, directing, staffing, coordinating, implementing, supervising, communicating and integrating the available resources to achieve desired goal.

Stemming from the above viewpoints, Okaforcha and Okeke (2019); Ezeaku (2014); Ucheagwu-Okoye and (2021) reaffirmed that management is the act of taking decisions, implementing decision and utilizing managerial skills. Iloka (2023); Nwakoby and Ilodigwe (2022); Ibe (2022); Ibe, Nwakoby & Ihediuche (2024) reiterated that management involves effective organization and utilization of educational resources systematical in achieving organizational feat. To Nwakoby and Nwakoby (2022); Ojimba (2020); Ehigiator and Ucheagwu-Okoye (2021) management is all about the process that gives rise to effective management namely; planning, supervision, motivation and creating room for the professional growth of the employees for quality assurance.



### **Public Secondary Education**

Secondary school is the second tier when listing the education system in Nigeria. Secondary school serves as feeder to tertiary education. It lies at the middle of primary and tertiary education levels. In tandem with the above discourse, Okaforcha and Okeke (2019); Ezeaku (2012); Okeke (2023); Okoye (2018) posited that secondary education school programme was of six years duration which has 3-3 structure. This structure implies a three-year junior secondary school (JSS) and three-year senior secondary school (SSS). The scholar further explained that junior secondary school is designed for learners who possess manipulative skills to join out-of-school vocational while those who possess the capability to further education could continue to senior secondary school.

On another dimension, Ezeaku (2012); Okoye (2021); Ani, Iloka and Nwakoby, (2021) espoused that secondary school is marked by youth exuberance making the secondary school period sensitive period in the life of the learners. Going further the scholar maintained that if the secondary school is faulty, tertiary education definitely suffers loss.

### **Objectives of secondary education in Nigeria**

The objectives of secondary education in Nigeria as enshrined in the national policy on education (FGN, 2013) are as follows:

- a) Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of sex, social, religious and ethnic background.
- b) Diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course.
- c) Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.
- d) Develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage.
- e) Raise generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims and live as good citizens.
- f) Foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
- g) Inspire students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life.

With the above itemized secondary school objectives, management is therefore of essence as it determines the success or failure of the goal attainment. It is truism that when the school makes remarkable success, the management takes the glory, the same applies when the school fails, the management takes responsibility too.

### **Management of Secondary School**

In the Nigerian secondary school system, the principal is at the helm of affairs hence pilots the dairy routine of the school. As noted by Okaforcha and Okeke (2020), he is the administrative head of the school who dictates the modus operandi which is goal driven. The principal as the school head has enormous tasks to perform so as to realize stated goals. In line with the aforementioned assertions, Ibe and Udeoji (2019) Ucheagwu-Okoye (2019) opined that the principal has the following roles to play in the school management;



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- 1.Planning and decision making; it is the duty of the secondary school principal to prepare the strategies to adopt both academically and financially. The principal has to earmark the collection of the school curriculum from the ministry of education. He assists the teachers to break it down to scheme of work and equally provide materials for its proper implementation. He also creates the budget for the materials needed for the school operation.
- 2.Supervising; internal supervision of teachers is the responsibility of the school principals excepted when the duty is assigned to designated authority. The supervision is meant to assist the teacher improve on the responsibility for better classroom performance.
- 3.Staff development; this is the process of helping the teachers or any interested staff improve on their work capacity. It helps to improve the teachers' knowledge, learn new skills, new teaching techniques and better ways of delivering their lessons. It also helps to elevate the teachers' status thus boost the teachers' morale for deep involvement and devotion to duty.
- 4. School facilities maintenance; the principal has to ensure that the facilities procured are well kept and safe-guided. Good maintenance culture elongates the school facilities by keeping in good shape for use as well as prevents damages. The principals ensure that the teachers do not manhandle these resources or expose it to vandals. He should avoid under/over utilization while maintains optimal usage.
- 5.Students' personnel services; the principal should spread his tentacles to the students' welfare because they are the reason other school players are in school. In the absence of the students, there will be no principal, teachers and other non-teaching staff. This explains why students' services should be created and taken care of. Students' affair unit is essential to handle students matters and reconcile them with utmost dispatch. Provision stores should be provided for them to pick any vitals they may need from time to time. The toilets should be kept clean using the people in charge. Students' health centre is also very crucial in case of sudden ill health. This health centre or sick bay as the case may be should be exclusively managed by the health professionals while the principal assists where need be.
- 6.Maintain good rapour with the school community; most host communities tend to be hostile with the school personnel which often leads to vandalism, encroachment into the school land and attacks from such ill behavior. This is why it is very imperative that the school principal establishes good relationship with community members, the prominent individuals and chief of that community. The principal should also incorporate them into some of the school community such as advisory committee etc.

#### Challenges hampering effective public secondary school management

Despite the humongous roles of the secondary school principals, there lots of up heavies distorting the managerial flow therefore prohibits its optimal goal accomplishment. This observation was attested by Ibe (2019); Okoye (2017); Ezeaku (2013); Okoye and Ucheagwu-Okoye (2021); Nwogu and Nwakoby (2021); Ughamadu, Okaforcha and Okeke (2015), Atanda and Papoola (2019); Uwaezuoke (2022) as here under streamlined:

a) Over-crowded classrooms; over-crowded classroom in the public schools is responsible for spread of communicable diseases. This is so because there is insufficient air leading to suffocation. The class is unmanageable as students indulge in noise making and other deviant behaviours which the principal could have ordinarily enforce all things being equal.



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- b) Insufficient material resources; in most of the schools there are insufficient provision of instructional materials which makes it detrimental to achieving desired goals.
- c) Inadequate provision of classroom furniture; there are inadequate supply of classroom furniture even where they are seen, they are in a sorry state. students stand up while in the class during learning. Some seat on broken desks which are hazardous their health. This has drastically affected effective teaching and learning.
- d) Poor quality and quantity of teachers; there is notable poor quality of teachers who resorted to teaching as the last resort. There is also inadequate number of teachers to teach the teeming students population.
- e) Political interference; this is in terms of change of those in power and its attendant change in educational policy. This incessant change derails the school operation.
- f) Lack of fund; fund is needed to run every organization but when this fund is grossly insufficient, most of the necessary resources could not be obtained some of the principals of school embezzle the fund for their selfish means. There could also cases of misappropriation of fund which could cause liquidation.
- g) Heightened insecurity; in recent times the rate of insecurity in country has led to the closure of schools especially when a bus conveying the students were hijacked by the kidnappers. School children have also been used for money rituals and human trafficking syndicates.
- h) Poor planning; when one fails to plan or did not plan well, that one is doomed. Planning helps to overcome emergency situations. Activities when planned well moves systematically towards goal achievement. Planning reduces conflict and clash of interest.
- i) Poor monitoring and supervision; in public secondary schools, poor monitoring and supervision is evident. This is because the supervisory arm of the ministry does not have means of transport to go round the schools couple with poor road terrain. In some instances, the principal is so occupied with the school management which makes supervision a mirage.

### Conclusion

Secondary school is the middle man between the primary and tertiary education levels. It marks the conclusion of the primary level and a preparatory stage for the tertiary education. The secondary school students are at teenage level of development thus energetic and unruly in their behaviours. It is therefore very essential that the management should be such that takes all of these into consideration thus provides all resources needed for their proper molding both in character and learning. The government on their own part should provide sufficient relevant educational resources to achieve this goal feat. When the secondary school education is properly managed, the students are better positioned to move to tertiary education ready to embrace teaching/learning and research for acquisition of high-level manpower needs of the society.

### Suggestions

Following the challenges bedeviling the effective management of public secondary schools, the under listed suggestions were made:

a) Over-crowded classroom; this issue should be tackled by erecting more classrooms. This is to dislodge the over-crowded one to enable students have good and comfortable classroom accommodation space for effective teaching and learning.



- b) Appropriate government agency responsible for schools should as a matter of necessity provide sufficient learning materials. This facilitates teaching and learning effectiveness.
- c) The ministry of education should ensure adequate provision of classroom furniture such as windows for cross ventilation, good desks and chairs for students to sit comfortably. This positions them for attentive listening and active in class.
- d) During recruitment, teachers' qualification in relevant field should be prioritized so that students would be taught adequate informed knowledge and skills. The teacher-student ration should also be made sufficient for the teacher to manage the class effectively.
- e) The principal should embark on strategic planning by identifying the goals to be achieved, means of achieving and ensuring that the processes are duly executed.

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