



Qualitative Study on management of Primary School level of Education in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract

*Primary schools in Nigeria are facing a lot of challenges regarding management over the years. However, headteachers are charged with the responsibility of overseeing and managing the affairs of their respective primary schools. Based on this the paper is titled *Qualitative Study on management of Primary School level of Education in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. Therefore, concept and objectives of primary education, concept of management were highlighted. Management of Primary Education in Nigerian Primary Schools, ways by which primary schools are managed such as; management of human resources, school records, school facilities, school financial resources and primary school curriculum. Challenges facing management of primary education were also explained and these are; inadequate funding, head teachers' factor, lack of cooperation by the teachers, inadequate facilities, politically motivated appointment. The paper recommended among the following' Government should ensure fairness and impartiality in the appointment of primary school teachers, Sustainable and adequate funding of primary schools should be provided by stakeholders and headteachers should discharge their duties with integrity and fairness, treating all subordinates equally.*

Keywords: Headteachers, primary school management, Teachers, School resources.

Introduction

Primary schools in Nigeria are facing a lot of challenges regarding management over the years; it is a formal organization which requires careful management considering its importance and the major concern of each nation. Primary education is the foundation upon which all other system of education relied on. Bearing this in mind, Primary school requires effective management to achieve the goal it is set to achieve. This is because, school is a goal oriented organization that has reason to exist and operate. As a result of this, primary school management is destined for identifying, planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating, directing and budgeting the already allocated primary schools' resources. Moreover, Management is a universal and unavoidable organizational process by which an individual or a cooperative body relates and directs actions and resources to achieve a common goal. However, Ofoegbu (2014) in Nnadi, (2021) defined management as a universal and unavoidable organizational process by which an individual or a cooperative body relates and directs action and resources to a common goal. Similarly, management is the utilization of physical and human resources through co-operative efforts and accomplished by performing the function of planning, staffing, directing and controlling of all the activities in the school. Headteachers are the overseers and custodians of school resources. The resources are provided and shared to school for effective implementation of primary school curriculum. Thus, the headteacher is destined to maintain and utilize what is available in the school. Therefore, Headteacher is the overseer and chief observer of the school, he lead and guide teaching and non-teaching staff, maintain and store facilities allocated to his school, coordinate the implementation of primary school curriculum, ensure peace and safety within the school environment. Delegate power and responsibilities to the deserving teachers. The school head ensures school-community relationship through Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), School Based Management Committee (SBMC) and other medium that help in promoting high moral and academic standard among staff and pupils, Headteachers should be accessible and approachable by teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and members of the community. He should also make school facilities available for community. The community is to be charged a stipend for using school facilities and arranged



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to be responsible for any damage. Primary school is a formal organization that requires effective management and administration.

Conceptual Clarification

The concept of Primary education, management and primary education management are interrelated concepts that form the foundation and backbone of effective educational administration. However, concept of Primary education, objectives of primary education, concept of management, management of primary education, and challenges of primary education were explained one after the other.

Concept of Primary Education

The first formal organization a child encountered is primary school. Primary school is a formal institution that mould pupils' character and prepare them to face any challenge they may encounter in their future. Similarly, it is expected that pupils will acquire life skills through interaction with teachers, colleagues and school environment. Similarly, Primary Education is the foundation of formal education on which the subsequent level of the nation's education rests, the success or failure of other levels of education depends on it (Gumbi and Ahmed 2017). Therefore, it requires effective management by the stakeholders. These stakeholders are ordained to make wonders in supporting primary school to flourish. Primary school is a system comprising different and multiple components ranging from teachers, pupils, school buildings, school farm and garden, school records, primary school curriculum, sports, school facilities, quality assurance, school safety and security that requires special attention by the headteachers.

Objectives of Primary Education

1. Inculcate permanent literacy, and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;
2. Lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking;
3. Promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity;
4. Instill social moral norms and values in the child;
5. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the changing environment; and
6. Provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability. (FRN 2013).

In order to achieve these objectives, Headteachers should demonstrate and ensure effective and efficient management delivery.

Concept of Management

Management is different thing to different people. However, management is the process of designing strategies that allow all the human, information, technological, and financial resources of the organizations to work together and harmoniously in the achievement of the proposed objectives ... Management exercises its function through the alignment of critical elements such as the mission, vision, values, strategies, and tactics ... that allow the optimization of the diverse resources of the company. (Lopez Morales, 2023). In line with this definition, Management connotes the planning, directing and coordination of school activities in order to achieve the desired goal. Furthermore, Invezz (2024) opined that management refers to the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources within an organization to achieve specific goals and objectives efficiently and effectively. Nevertheless, Kaehler & Grundei, from *The Concept of Management: In Search of a New Definition* (2019) posited that management is a steering influence on market, production and/or resource operations in an organization and its units that may address both people and non-people issues and is exerted by multiple organizational actors through either anticipatory norm-setting or situational intervention with the aim of achieving the unit's objectives.

Management of Primary Education

Management of primary school entails planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, guiding, reporting and controlling primary school activities to achieve specific goals and objectives efficiently and effectively. However, Obed-Chukwuka and Atakpo (2022), defined management of primary education as a "holistic approach" that includes structuring the primary education system, setting goals, supervising and inspecting schools, planning, managing human and material resources, and ensuring adequate facilities, qualified teachers, and continuous monitoring. Furthermore, management of primary education is connected to ensuring effective student-centred learning, maintaining appropriate teacher-student ratios, and adopting relevant digital literacy skills; the definition implicitly includes supervising staff, managing learning environment,



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and adapting management practices to technological tools. (Elenwo, 2025) However, primary education management in terms of its role in achieving educational quality entails planning and implementing programmes, supervising teaching and learning, managing resources (human, material, financial), and ensuring the policies and school practices align to produce quality outcomes. (Jabborova & Pardaboyeva, 2023)

Management of Primary Education in Nigeria

The following are the ways by which a primary school is managed; Management of human resources, school records, School facilities, school financial resources and primary school curriculum. These will be explained vividly.

Management of Human Resources in Primary school

Human resources refer to personnel management, manpower management, staff management and to some administration. Management of human resources focused on the people side of management, seeking to ensure that the objectives. Human resource management is beyond effective human utilization in school rather, harnessing the total human skills, abilities, talents, attributes, attitudes to achieve educational objectives. Primary school is a goal-oriented institution that depend on its human resources to operate and function effectively. These human resources are teaching staff, non-teaching staff and pupils. It depends on how these resources are being used to determine the success or failure of the system. In relation to this, Manga (2015) The management of all the staff in a school is crucial role of the head master and school principal. Teachers in particular need to be properly administered if the goals of any school are to be realized. Furthermore, FRN, (2013) revealed that the success of any system of education is hinged on proper planning framework, efficient administration and adequate financing. However, Pupils are said to be the centre and target of the education process. The pupils are at the centre of the education process, administrative actions should aim at developing their total personality, in deriving this, the headmaster or principal observe pupils population to ensure that the school overpopulated to unmanageable proportions, the head teacher does that by conducting regular consensus to know the exact population of the pupils in terms of age, gender, religion, classes so as to know the flow of primary school pupils in and out of the school. Manga (2015).

Management of Records

There are a variety of reasons why organizations must manage and maintain their records properly irrespective of whether they are private or public. Records management practices hold keys to evidence-based governance, accountability, transparency, protection of rights, fostering social justice and preserving corporate memory. Records have to be created, classified, arranged, described, appraised, protected and made accessible if they are to serve some of these functions (Matina, & Ngulube 2019). In addition to this, Alabi (2017) stresses that effective records management is essential for the organized administration of educational institutions

School records are those records schools provided and kept for future references and decision making. Jumare (2017) In the same vein, Durosaro & Ogunsanju (2002) Defined school records as official copies or transcripts of proceedings of actions, events or other matters kept by the school manager. Furthermore, primary school records are created, protected and kept for reference. Records are the basic requirements and very important in each school. As a result of this, head teachers are charged with the roles and responsibility of regular check of records, organizing workshop for teachers within the school on it, protect and provides facilities for record keeping, ensure that only authorized person have access to records, ensures effective provision of records when needed. This will only be possible when they make provision for files, cupboards and cabinet, computer, cloud storage services (e.g., Google Drive, Dropbox) stores and notice board in their respective primary schools.

Management of facilities

Primary school facilities play a vital role in achieving the main goal of primary school. In Nigeria today, the main objective of utilizing primary school facilities is to supply a concrete basis for enhancing curricular and extra-curricular activities. However, primary school facilities include buildings such as classrooms, assembly halls, libraries, and workshops, instructional materials such as audio, visual and audio-visual learning materials, devices such as modern educational hardware and their software in the form of magnetic tapes, films and transparencies. Educational facilities therefore, are the materials that facilitate teaching and learning processes in primary school setting. It is the responsibility of primary school administrator to appoint and delegate power to teachers so as to reduce the work load and to be in charge of the

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available facilities. These officers help in maintaining, servicing, repairing, cleaning, supervise the renovation and refurbishing of primary school facilities in order to protect them (facilities) from damage and destruction.

Management of financial resources

This is another important aspect of primary school management. Primary education finance is the process of raising and spending money for the purpose of promoting teaching and learning in primary school. In line with this, Ogbannaya (2000) opined that education finance is a process by which tax revenues and other sources are derived for the establishment and operation of educational institutions, as well as the process by which these resources are allocated to the institutions for educational use. In the same vein, Jumare, (2016) described educational finance as funds generated by educational institutions through Federal, State or Local Governments grants, internally generated funds (through business, consultancy services, sales of forms and students registration fees among others) donations within and outside Nigeria and any other fund used to achieve educational goals. From this conception, Primary education finance is the process of raising funds derived from the source, in order to run the affairs of primary school. The sources raised through federal, state and local government, Non-governmental organizations such as UNESCO, USAID, UNICEF, TASSA FAO etc., PTA and SBMC, Capital Grant, Proceed from primary school activities, community effort and donations, property taxes, old boys/Alumni are to be utilized, spend judiciously by the primary school management so as to provide conducive school environment that promote teaching and learning.

Management of Primary School Curriculum

Curriculum in primary school is the bedrock and foundation of school programmes. Primary school curriculum encompasses all the curricular and extra-curricular activities that requires planning, coordination, organizing, directing, and implementing educational programmes to achieve learning objectives. However, Curriculum management is an essential component of educational institutions, incorporating the design, implementation, monitoring, and revision of educational programs. Effective curriculum management in Primary school ensures that educational goals are met, teaching methods are up-to-date, and students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their academic and professional lives. This article explores what curriculum management entails, outlines best practices, and highlights emerging trends and challenges in this field. However, in managing and planning primary school curriculum, factors such as society, learners, culture, teacher, social structure such as ethnic composition of the society as well as political organization must be considered in order to design and implement curriculum that will ease and ensure effective teaching and learning in primary school.

Problems Facing Management of Primary School

There are many problems militating against the effective management of Primary schools, for the purpose of this study, the paper considered: inadequate funding, head teachers' attitudes towards school management, lack of cooperation by teachers, inadequate facilities and politically motivated appointments (Gumbi, & Zaid, 2019)

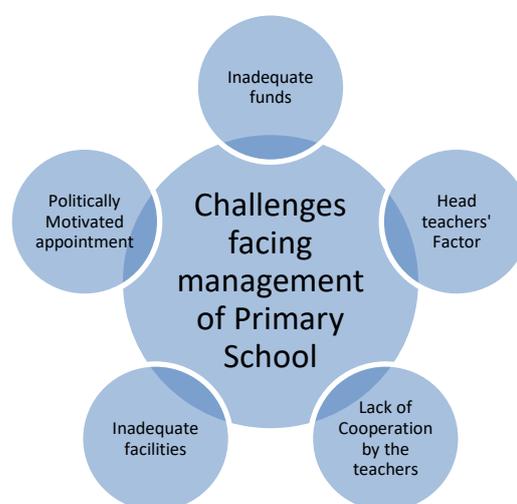


Figure 1: Challenges facing Primary School Management in Nigeria



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Inadequate Funding of Primary Schools in Nigeria

Education attracts considerable attention in public expenditure due to its position as a social service with direct economic significance. Though Teachers emoluments constitute the dominant item in the funding by the government, the school relied on other sources such as Parent teachers association levy, endowments/ donations, intervention by the foreign organizations, internal efficiency, old boys associations and community based organizations to run the affairs of school. There is need for sufficient funds that facilitates teaching and learning. Over 90% of primary schools' activities relied solely on its financial strengths without which the school will significantly be influenced by the poor infrastructure,

Head Teachers' Factor in Primary Schools

Head teachers are custodians of their respective schools. They are charged with the responsibility of overseeing the affairs and maintaining the primary school standard, However, their attitudes towards primary school management is worrisome. Majority emphasized on bestowing power and too much priority on relationship than practical know-how among their staff, which lead to assigning responsibility on the wrong person and this create chaos, misunderstanding and faction which hinder the management of primary school in several ways such as; poor communication, low morale, decreased in pupils performance, excessed workload, ineffective implementation of policies in the school.

Lack of adequate Cooperation by the Teachers

Effective primary school management requires a collective responsibility. Therefore, there is need for teachers to participate in running the affairs of their respective schools. However, many teachers show no concern in the management of primary schools. This may be as a result of Low cooperation from educational institutions and lack of commitment by teachers Furthermore, School is a system which relied on the collective efforts of teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and pupils. Head teacher alone cannot do it all he/she requires the helping hand by them.

Inadequate Facilities

Availability and adequate primary school determined the attainment of primary education goals. Effective management of Primary school facilities is among the prime responsibilities of head teachers. However, as a result of poor management, a significant number of public primary school facilities are not in good condition, some are damaged, and lead to difficulty in meeting the standard, raised safety concerns, promote inequitable access, demotivate teachers' ability to discharge his/her duties. Conversely, teachers are to be engaged in managing primary school facilities by assigning teachers with the responsibility of managing the facilities.

Politically Motivated Appointment

Nigeria adopt the democratic system of government with multiple parties and positions to contest for, therefore, every citizen primary school teacher inclusive have every right to vote and be voted for based on the right and freedom given to all. Nevertheless, the attitudes of politicians in power permeate education sector where they appoint and transfer teachers based on their selfish interest. However, politically motivated appointment across Nigerian public primary schools steered to lack of expertise, bigoted interest, nepotism and favoritism, instability and turnover lack of understanding of local contexts, needs and state of affairs, conflicting priorities such as political agenda and abuse of the system, attrition of trust.

Conclusion

In conclusion, managing primary education in Nigeria is a complex task that requires effective leadership and management skills from headteachers. As instructional leaders, headteachers play a critical role in shaping the quality of education in their schools. Their responsibilities, including instructional supervision, teacher professional development, resource management, and community engagement, are essential for creating a conducive learning environment. To improve the quality of primary education in Nigeria, head teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to manage their schools effectively. This can be achieved through capacity-building programmes, mentorship, and support from policymakers and stakeholders. Ultimately, the success of primary education in Nigeria depends on the ability of head teachers to lead and manage their schools effectively. By prioritizing teacher support, community engagement, and resource management, head teachers can create a positive learning environment that fosters academic achievement and social development for all students.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges raised, the following solutions were recommended



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1. Sustainable and adequate funding of primary schools should be provided by stakeholders.
2. Headteachers should discharge their duties with integrity and fairness, treating all subordinates equally.
3. Teachers should be involved in decision-making processes and the management of primary schools.
4. Relevant and adequate facilities should be provided in each primary school.
5. The government should ensure fairness and impartiality in the appointment of primary school teachers.

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