

Challenges facing Administrators of Public Secondary Schools in Nigeria and the Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

Secondary school education is the education that offered post-primary school education. It is the education that prepares the student for career choice in life. The public secondary school are handled by administrators in Nigeria who oversees the administration and ensure the aims and objectives of the schools are realized. It has been observed that these public secondary school administrators are facing many challenges. This article discusses the challenges facing administrators of public secondary schools in Nigeria. We adopted secondary data to provide empirical fact to support every point raised in the paper. The secondary data were sorted online and through print materials. The paper identified: inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor capacity building programme, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate ICT facilities, shortage of instructional resources, insecurity and poor supervision as challenges facing the public secondary school administrators in Nigeria. Increasing in the funding of public secondary schools were among the recommendations given in this paper for the effective administration of the public secondary schools by the administrators.

KEYWORDS: *Administrators, Secondary School, Challenges*

1. Introduction

Secondary school education is an organized education for children leaving junior secondary school. Secondary school education is the post-primary school education designed for preparing the students for career life. Secondary school education is the education that link the primary school and the higher education. Dubi (2014) viewed secondary school education as education that follows immediately after primary education and before tertiary education. It is also referred to as post-primary school. It is the second stage in formal education. It is an education for the adolescent years, that is, about 12 to 18 years of age.

The National Policy on Education (2013) defined secondary school as the education children received after primary education and before the tertiary education. The broad goals of secondary education shall be to prepare the individual for: a. Useful living within the society and b. Higher education (NPE, 2004). In specific term, the objectives secondary education according to National Policy on Education (2013) include: a. provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background. b. offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles. c. provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades. d. develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage. e. inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence. f. foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.

The responsibility for administering the education sector in Nigeria is shared among the federal, state and local governments. Thus, in the country's constitution, education is on the concurrent list, but the Federal Government is empowered to regulate all its sectors, engage in policy formation and ensure quality control. Also, the provisions of the constitution allow each tier of government to focus its responsibilities mainly on a sector of education. The Federal Government is involved directly in tertiary education. The states take care of secondary education, while the local governments handle primary education.

Public secondary schools in Nigerian are owned by the government. The Federal government colleges are owned by the federal government while the government secondary schools spread across the states are owned by the state government.

The state-level education ministries are responsible for the development and implementation of educational policies, management and supervision of educational institutions in their respective states. Specifically, the responsibilities for maintaining all public elementary and secondary schools are vested in the education ministry. Such responsibilities include: determining the salaries of teachers; recruitment, appointment, promotion and discipline of staff; and provision of guidelines on the establishment of new schools and training and re-training of teaching and non-teaching staff. The oversight functions of the Ministry of Education are carried out through a number of agencies. For instance, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) is responsible for the management of basic education, while the Teaching Service Commission takes charge of senior secondary education at the state level (NEEDS,2014).

School administrators also known as principals are appointed by the ministries of education to head the public secondary schools across the country. Appointment of principals or school administrators is based on the seniority in service. In Nigeria, the position of principal-ship is based on experience and promotion. This is because the Nigerian civil service relies mostly on years of experience and promotion to elevate people from one cadre to the other, especially from the classroom to the management levels (Dubi 2014).

School administrators or principals are appointed to help in the realization of the objectives of the schools. The function of the school Principals/School administrators include: administration of teachers, coordination of student programme, resources allocation and physical resources application, and school community relationship management. Ornstein (2008) viewed the functions of the principal as setting instructional directions, sensitive, result-oriented, team work, judgement, organizational ability, effective communication, development of others and developing self. Dubi (2014) cited Adesina and Ogunsaju (1984) who submitted that all the functions the principal discharges daily are geared towards the fulfillment of the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria. Secondary education occupies a very strategic position in any nation's educational system.

School leadership is very vital to the actualization of the school objectives. Leadership has been identified as a crucial factor in instructional effectiveness. It is a major factor in determining the success and progress of an institution. It is the key to success in every organization because it can either influence the climate of the school positively or negatively. Without effective leadership, even an institution full of talented teachers will surely drift without purpose. It is therefore the key to achieving collective excellence. It is the leader who most greatly affects the organisational climate and provides direction, motivation and inspiration for the school (Dubi 2014). In other words, the success of any institution depends largely on the ability of the leader to maintain a conducive environment for the development of its members.

Recently, there are complaints, accusations and reports that the present caliber of principals are deficient, inefficient and not up to the task of bringing about needed changes, because they do not

respond adequately to standard based accountability, guiding and directing instructional improvement and incorporating revolutionary new information technologies in schools (Wayne and Miskel 2008). This is because of the poor performance of students and the general quality of secondary school education in Nigeria. Dubi (2014) cited Nnoli and Sulaiman (2000) who observed that the Nigerian secondary school education has for some time now become a source of concern to Nigerians. The concern focuses essentially on the quality of education which has been declining at an alarming and embarrassing rate.

School administrators are responsible for the failure and success of the schools because is the head in charge of the planning, organizing and ensuring allocation and implementation of the human and materials resources. The performance of the school administrators also depend to some extent of the quality and quantity of human and materials resources available for him/her to deploy for the administration and management of the school. The school administrators are provided with human and materials resources which include teachers and non-teaching staff, funds, instructional resources, ICT facilities, classrooms, administrative block, tables etc. Okeke (2014) sees secondary school administration as involving the provision and maintenance of the necessary manpower to those who teach children with a view to bring about the desired change in the children's behaviour. Ikgbusi, & Iheanacho, (2016), Ogunode (2021) submitted that the school principals faces numerous administrative problems which militate against operative running of their schools. This paper is aimed to examine the challenges facing public School administrators in Nigerian Public secondary schools.

2. Concept of School administrator

The School administrator/Principal is an individual appointed to head educational institutions. The principal is known for heading the secondary schools in Nigeria. School administrator or principal is that professional individual saddled with the functions of planning, organizing, controlling and supervision human and materials resources of the school with the objective of using the resources to actualize the objectives of the school. Ikgbusi, & Iheanacho, (2016) observed that Heads of secondary schools are tasked with the implications of these objectives. The success of secondary school education rests on a good administration involving the local communities, adequate and well qualified teachers, adequate funds for infrastructural facilities, together with interested parents supplying children's material needs and bringing home training to supplement the efforts of the teachers at school. For heads of secondary schools to succeed in the administration of secondary schools, they need the collaboration and sustenance of the parents, teachers, the Post Primary Schools Service Commission and the Ministry of Education. School administrators are strong member of the educational institutions that can that either make, develops and mar academic progress of secondary schools in Nigeria. Analyzing the functions of the principal, U.S. Department of Labour (2011) asserted that principals set the academic tone and work actively with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, formulate mission statements and establish performance goals and objectives. They evaluate teachers, visit classrooms, observe teaching methods, review instructional objectives and examines learning materials (Olachukwu, 2008). Dare (2009) enumerated the following as the functions of the principals in the secondary school:

- i. Cause things to happen and know what he wants to happen.
- ii. Exercise responsible stewardship over resources and turn them into purposeful account.
- iii. Promote effectiveness and search for continual improvement.
- iv. Be accountable for the performance of the unit he is managing and
- v. Set a climate conducive to enable people give their best.

Udoh and Akpa (1990) summarized the responsibilities of the principal as follows:

- i. To prepare annual budget of the school.
- ii. To liaise between the school and educational agencies and organizations.
- iii. To coordinate Parents-Teachers Association's activities.
- iv. To initiate and encourage innovations.
- v. To supervise the activities of all school staff and students.
- vi. To design the physical plant for the school.
- vii. To organize the curriculum and its contents.
- viii. To select the school textbooks, materials and equipment.
- ix. To determine the services to aid teaching and learning activities.
- x. To maintain effective lines of communication within the school and with outside agencies.
- xi. To maintain a high level of discipline and policy formulation governing curricular and co-curricular activities and
- xii. To report school defects either in terms of infrastructures or personnel to the appropriate authorities for rectification.

3. Challenges facing Public Secondary School administrators

There are many challenges facing school administrators in public secondary schools in Nigeria. Some of the challenges include: inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor capacity building programme, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate ICT facilities, shortage of instructional resources, poor supervision and insecurity problems.

3.1 Inadequate Funding

School funds refers to monies made available for administration of schools. School funds is viewed as those funds that belong to the school for the purpose of deploying it for implementation of school programme. Funds is very important in the school administration and management. School administration cannot be possible without availability of funds. The amount of funds available for school administration determines the level of the school administrative programme. Adequate funding of school aids the school administrators to carry out the programme on time. Inadequate funding is one of the major challenges facing the administrators of Nigerian secondary schools. The budgetary allocation for the secondary school administration is inadequate. Funds released for internal school administration is inadequate to implement the programme of the secondary schools. School administration in Nigeria is very cost intensive. Large amount of monies are needed to provide the services that will aid delivery of academic activities. Ogunode (2021) opines that the problem of inadequate funding is affecting the secondary school administrators in Nigeria. There are many factor contributing to limited funds of the secondary school education in Nigeria; lack of political will to implement UNECSO 26% recommendation for education, mismanagement and corruption, oil price and inflation. The inability of the secondary school administrators to access adequate funds to manage and administer the secondary school across the country is affecting their performance. Ajayi (2014) reported of public crises of various dimensions such as poor funding, poor educational infrastructure—which include inadequate classrooms, inadequate and low quality teachers, and polluted learning environment. Ogba and Igu (2014), one of the biggest challenges of secondary school management and administration is poor funding. They stress further that the extent to which adequate educational programmes are achieved depends largely on the economic provisions

supporting the programme. Insufficient funds often leads to large classes for teachers, skimpy libraries, very limited instructional materials, low-priced building construction and poorly trained teachers. Keller (2012) submitted that insufficient funds to maintain schools and pay teachers' salaries are among other factors that militate against the smooth administration of secondary schools. Secondary school problems are attributed to inadequate funding of the system, collapse of the educational infrastructure, poor salaries for teachers, examination malpractices, cultism, incessant strikes in the system, anti-intellectual attitudes of past regimes, others attributed it to the inability of principals to coordinate, direct and supervise instructional activities in their schools (Nnoli and Sulaiman 2000). The lack of adequate funds puts enormous pressure on school administrators, because as Anderson and Lamby (2005) point out that there is a high degree of pressure on school heads to raise funds so that their schools are fully efficient.

3.2 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Infrastructural facilities include classroom, administrative blocks, libraries, ICT facilities, chalk board, tables, chairs, desks, water, electricity, internet services and good roads. Many school administrators of secondary school in Nigeria do not have adequate infrastructural facilities to deploy for implementation of teaching programme. Many public secondary schools do not have adequate classrooms, tables, chairs, offices, water, electricity, internet services etc. Alagbu, (2003) observed that administration of secondary school is becoming difficult due to inadequate infrastructural facilities. Alagbu, (2003) also argued that large number of secondary schools suffer an immense deprivation of facilities that aid teaching and learning. It has been observed that teachers' ineffectiveness in delivering their duties is attributed to inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities for effective teaching and learning. This kind of situation has consistently presented enormous challenges to school heads. Factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian secondary school include inadequate funding, lack of strategic plan on infrastructural facilities, overpopulation, poor planning and institutional corruption. Ikegbusi, (2014) observed that in a school, where these infrastructures and amenities are not well provided, heads of secondary schools' efforts to administer schools diligently will be disenchanted. Probable outcomes of this kind of situation comprise unruly and disorderly students, non-literate population and an unresponsive teaching workforce. These hinder the fulfillment of educational objectives.

3.3 Poor Capacity Building Programme

Constant training programme is one important way of improving performance of school administrators by updating their knowledge and skills, through exposure to latest research in the areas of knowledge. Staff development is the responsibility of the employers to develop the capacity of the employee with the aim of improving their performance at work. It equips staff with modern skills, knowledge and attitudes required on the job. Staff development has the tendency of impacting positively on the learners through the involvement of other people whose primary responsibility relates to teaching and learning (Adesina and Ogunsaju 1984). Poor capacity development programme of public school administrators in Nigeria is among the factors responsible for poor performance. Many public school administrators in Nigeria are not exposed to constant training and retraining programme to improve their leadership skills and knowledge. Dubi (2014) cited UNESCO (2000) who submitted that most secondary schools principals in Nigeria have not yet been adequately trained or exposed to the tasks they perform, because many of them are inexperienced. Dubi (2014) cited Ozigi (1982) who stated that in Nigeria, most secondary schools principals are new in the profession. This implication of this is that the school administrators need training. The Federal Ministry of Education in a survey which analysed the problems of education sector revealed that principals require training in instructional leadership to enable them function effectively in curriculum implementation and coordination of instructional activities. This is because the

organization, instruction and purpose of the school, reflect to a great extent on the personality of the head. Over the years, leaders of secondary schools in Nigeria have been accused of various lapses (Hale 2009). They are said to be inexperienced and accused of failing to provide direction and adequate leadership for their schools. Ukeje and Ethiametalor (1998) stated that most of our educational leaders display non-collegial system which breeds informal groups, conflicts, cleavages and ultimately crises. Education is an ongoing process which is constantly changing. Therefore, the educational leader must constantly keep abreast of such changes in the society. The educational leader should be at the forefront in providing educational leadership to staff with regards to the new ways of doing things, methods of teaching and changes taking place in the society (Dubu 2014).

3.4 Shortage of Professional Teachers

One of the basic function of the school administrators is to ensure that teaching and learning take place and to ensure this, the school administrator needs adequate and quality teachers. School administrators need the teachers to implement the curriculum. School administrators are powerless without the teachers. The teachers determine the success of the school administrators. In Nigeria, one of the major challenges facing the public secondary school principals is the problem of inadequate professional teachers. Many public secondary schools in Nigeria do not have adequate professional teachers. School principals do not have enough professional teachers to deploy for teaching in various classes. Ikegbusi (2014) remarks that the success of secondary school administration depends on the availability of teachers. This implies that for proper running of a secondary school, quality and efficiency of staff determine to a great extent the successful achievement of its educational objectives. Ikegbusi, & Iheanacho, (2016) observed that many secondary schools are understaffed and are still facing inadequate subject teachers, in other words, most principals are forced to teach some classes in addition to their official work of administration. Secondary schools are faced with challenges which include; inadequate and low quality teachers, inadequate funding to maintain schools and paying teachers' salaries, intrusion by parents. Others are lack of accommodation for students, indiscipline behaviours on the part of teachers and students and uncooperative assertiveness of other school staff. Where the heads fail to arrest these situations and problems, the smooth running of secondary school is conceded (Ikegbusi, & Iheanacho, 2016). Ige (2012) submitted that preponderance of unqualified teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria will have serious implication on the quality of education which students will acquire at the end if other factors that may influence the training are constant. The student-teacher ratio of over (40) per class shows that teachers are over tasked, while students do not get sufficient attention from teachers. Reasons for shortage of professional teachers in the Nigerian secondary schools include inadequate funding of secondary schools, inadequate teacher institutions, lack of strategic plan on manpower development for educational institutions, corruption and poor motivation of teachers.

3.5 Inadequate ICT Facilities

Another problem public school administrators especially the public secondary schools are facing in Nigeria is the problem of inadequate information communication technology (s) facilities to deploy for the implementation of teaching and learning programme and for carrying out administrative functions. Many public secondary school principals do not have adequate ICT facilities in their offices and in school in general to support the school administration. Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar, (2020) observes that the application of information communication technology in Nigerian secondary schools is low. Many secondary schools in Nigeria have not fully been integrated into the ICT world due to many factors and challenges. Research has it that the utilization of information communication technology in Nigerian secondary schools among the students is low. Many Nigerian secondary schools students do not use ICT for their learning process. The students still learn without making use of ICT facilities in their schools and in their classes. It observes that teachers teaching in

Nigerian secondary schools have not been using ICT constantly to deliver their teaching. The usability of ICT among Nigerian secondary schools teacher is below average while Abubakar, (2016) discovered that there is low ICT utilization among school administrators in Nigerian secondary schools. Many school administrators have not been using ICT facilities to aid their administrative activities as important as ICT is to aid effective school administration. Many factors have been identified for the poor utilization of ICT by school administrators in Nigeria to include poor computer knowledge, inadequate ICT facilities, poor internet connection and services, and high cost of network services. Research has likewise confirmed a low level of ICT mindfulness in a majority of Nigerian post primary institutions. UNESCO (2005), ICT is defined as the combination of all the computers, telecommunication, and media technologies. They are also electronic technologies used for accessing, processing, gathering, manipulating, and presenting or communicating information in the education system. Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities use in educational institutions include hardware, software, networks, and media for the collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice, data, text, images, etc.) as well as related services. Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar, M (2020) identified inadequate funding of ICT education, inadequate ICT facilities in secondary schools, unstable power supply, High Cost of ICT facilities, poor implementation of Government policies on ICT, poor network service and coverage and poor ICT literacy as the challenges preventing effective administration of ICT in the Nigerian secondary schools.

3.6 Shortage of Instructional Resources/ Teaching Aids

Aditya (2020) defines teaching aids as those objects (such as a book, picture, or map) or devices (such as a DVD or computer) used by a teacher to enhance or enliven classroom instruction (Merriam-Webster). They could be audiovisual teaching aids such as videos and guest lectures or tactile like 3D models. Instructional materials (IMs): Instructional materials are defined as resources that organize and support instruction, such as textbooks, tasks, and supplementary resources (adapted from Remillard & Heck, 2014). It refers to the human and non-human materials and facilities that can be used to ease, encourage, improve and promote teaching and learning activities. They are whatever materials used in the process of instruction (IGI global). The great Soviet encyclopedia defines IMs as educational resources used to improve students' knowledge, abilities, and skills, to monitor their assimilation of information, and to contribute to their overall development and upbringing. *Instructional Materials*, also known as *Teaching/Learning Materials* (TLM), are any collection of *materials* including animate and inanimate objects and human and non-human resources that a teacher may use in *teaching* and learning situations to help achieve desired learning objectives. Teaching aids is any device that helps teach can be called a teaching aid. These devices can be traditional items such as blackboards and flannel boards as well as modern devices such as tablets and projectors. Scientific tools such as telescopes and microscopes could also be used as teaching aids in a given context. Two overarching common factors between most teaching aids: mediums that promote sensory engagement and stimulation. Non-electronic – Chalkboards, flip boards, slates, photos, telescopes Electronic (Powerpoint slideshows, videos, Augmented reality/Virtual reality goggles, AV-room equipment) Traditional resources: (lectures, talks, writings, project rubrics, guidelines, textbook primers, reference books, extra-readings, teacher and student-created summaries, workbooks, supplementary material such as flashcards and charts) and the Digital media: (Videos, photos, presentations).

3.7 Poor Supervision

Poor supervision of school heads in Nigeria is affecting their performance. Ofojebe (2007) viewed supervision as a process of assisting, directing, stimulating, and motivating teachers to enhance teaching and learning in educational institutions. Muodebelu, (2008) submitted that lack of

supervision and monitoring of schools are regarded as the major drawbacks in the education sector. Dare (2009) outlined the rationale for school supervision as follows: i. To improve teaching and learning activities in the school. ii. To assist teachers to develop the required teaching skills. iii. To equip teachers with the skills of curriculum development. iv. To ensure that schools are run effectively and efficiently. v. To evaluate the conditions of teaching and learning in the school. vi. To ensure and sustain the link between the school and the Ministry of Education vii. To evaluate and improve schools for external examinations. viii. To carry out investigation either in respect of a petition or for school upgrading. ix. To ensure that schools use the curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education. x. To assess the adequacy of staff and facilities in the school. Factors responsible for poor supervision of secondary school education in Nigeria include inadequate supervisors, inadequate funding of supervision programme, insecurity challenges, lack of transportation, inadequate supervision materials and institutional corruption. School administrators need constant supervision to improve their performance. The problem of ineffective external supervision is affecting the performance of school administrators.

3.8 Insecurity

Ogunode (2018) observes that insecurity in educational institution implies the human resources within the educational institutions are in the state of fear or threat and lack peace to carry out their respective function. It is a situation where both school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students are in the state of fear. Insecurity challenge is another major problem facing the secondary schools in Nigeria especially in the Northern part of the country. Insecurity have prevent effective administration of secondary school programme in the country. Many school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students have been killed. Some school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students have been kidnapped and many infrastructural facilities destroyed by Boko Haram members. Secondary school programme have been disrupted due to closing down of school in Northeast Nigeria. Atiga, & Ogunode, (2021) observes that insecurity is another great threat to effective secondary school management in Nigeria. Effective School management cannot be possible in an unsecured environment. Nigeria as a country is battling with insecurity challenges and this is affecting the entire educational institutions. The public secondary schools seem to be the most target sectors of the educational institutions in the country. The insecurity problem in Nigeria has led to killing of students, teachers and school administrators. "In north-eastern Nigeria, as of late 2017, there were 1.6 million IDPs, including an estimated 700,000 school-age children, as a result of violent attacks on civilians by Boko Haram, which began in 2009," the report read in part. "Boko Haram has destroyed nearly 1,000 schools and displaced 19,000 teachers. Reports indicated it had killed almost 2,300 teachers. The education needs assessment found that out of 260 school sites, 28% had been damaged by bullets, shells or shrapnel, 20% had been deliberately set on fire, 32% had been looted and 29% had armed groups or military in close proximity." UNESCO lamented the shortage of qualified teachers in the northeast, stating security and poor remuneration as reasons why the teachers are emigrating from the region. "Ongoing safety concerns, coupled with teacher salaries that do not cover even basic expenses and delays in payment, perpetuate a shortage of qualified teachers," UNESCO added. Insecurity challenges is a challenge to the development of secondary school education in Nigeria (Cable, 2020, Atiga, & Ogunode, 2021). Reasons for high insecurity in the county include high rate of unemployment, over-population. The shortage of instructional aids in the primary schools is affecting the administrators of the schools.

4. Way Forward

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

- A. The government should increase the funding of secondary school education in Nigeria. This will provide the school administrators with funds to carry out their functions.
- B. The government should employ more professional teachers. This will help to reduce the high students-teacher ratio in the classes
- C. The government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities like chairs, table, desks, water, electricity, ICT facilities, classrooms, administrative offices, libraries, laboratories and whiteboard.
- D. More instructional materials should be provided to all the secondary schools.
- E. The government should sponsor school administrators on a regular basis for in-service training, seminars, workshops and conferences to update their knowledge as this will help them in their administrative and human relationship with teachers and students.
- F. The government should use ICT and effective monitoring and evaluation system to fight all forms of institution corruption in the agencies of education and specifically in secondary schools across the country.
- G. The government should come up with welfare packages to motivate school administrators and prevent them from leaving the educational institutions especially the secondary schools.
- H. The government should provide adequate security in all public secondary schools.
- I. The government should provide adequate ICT facilities to all public secondary schools.

5. Conclusion

It have been observed that many public secondary school administrators are facing challenges and these challenges is frustrating their efforts of realizing the objectives and goals of secondary school in Nigeria. This paper discussed the challenges facing public secondary school administrators in Nigeria. The paper identified the following as the challenges facing the public secondary school administrators in Nigeria to include: inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor capacity building programme, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate ICT facilities, shortage of instructional resources, insecurity and poor supervision. To solve these challenges, the paper suggested the following: secondary school education funding should be increase, more professional teachers should be employed and deploy to secondary school across the country, more infrastructural facilities and instructional resources be provided in all public secondary schools, adequate security should also be provided in the schools. Effective training and retraining programme for school administrators at the secondary school level should be regular and effective external supervision should be ensured to support the capacity of secondary school administrators.

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