



Prudential Approach to Resource Management in Nigerian Education: A Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract

Resource scarcity is a problem experienced by virtually all human organizations. The Nigerian education sector has endured consistently declining levels of federal government funding over the last two decades. This comes in the face of ever increasing inflation rates and a growing demand for formal education. This untenable situation is compounded by the compulsory and free Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme which expanded free education from six years of primary education to nine years of basic education. In addition to lengthening the programme's timeframe, its target population was expanded to include out-of-school youths and adults who, for one reason or the other, did not complete a regular formal education. Unfortunately, this zeal for providing education as a social service in Nigeria has not been matched with a zeal for funding it. The under-funding of Nigerian education has been made worse by recent global economic crises. This paper recommends the exploration of non-governmental sources of funding, and the application of prudent measures for managing existing educational resources.

Keywords: Resourcefulness; resources; prudence; education management; programme; objectives; social service; physical capital; human capital; procurement; distribution; utilization.

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INTRODUCTION

Resource scarcity is a central focus of economics. This is because resources (time, information, money, material and human capacity) are scarce in supply relative to the various uses to which they can be applied. Economics has therefore evolved to establish how to best apply limited resources to achieve the greatest advantage.

This formula applies to educational institutions as organizations. In 2006, Nigeria's population was 140 million with at least 45% of the total population under 15 years of age (Okojie 2008). World Bank country poverty assessments reveal that 88 million Nigerians are living below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 a day (World Bank, 2009). This, in turn, means that a significant percentage of Nigerians cannot invest in sending their children to school. Consequently, the opportunity to acquire an education for a large proportion of the school aged population depends on the provision of education as a social service. For the Nigerian state this means that there are many people to be educated and many educational programmes to be implemented. The resources needed to accomplish this feat are, to say the least, lacking.

A review of previous educational programmes in the country shows that resource inadequacy has long been a central factor in chronic education shortcomings (Fafunwa, 1974; Taiwo, 1985; Aiyepku, 1989). The state resources provided for the execution of education programmes are inadequate and irregular. This inadequacy is compounded by

the meagre budgetary allocations for education in recent years, which have been steadily declining over the past two decades. While in 2007 the education sector was allocated 11% of the national budget, this fell to 13% in 2008, 8% in 2009 and 6% in 2010. Both the global economic recession and a growing demand for education in all developing countries have compounded the already-compromised state of Nigerian education.

In 2009, there was a near collapse of the education sector in Nigeria as virtually all labour groups involved in education embarked on nation-wide industrial actions. Learners at all levels were forced to sit at home for several months and wait for the resolution of the dispute. The industrial actions were intended to achieve greater financial and material support for the school system in Nigeria (Ololube, 2006). The questions that emerged, however, included: should children sit at home because the school system is inadequate? Should education be abruptly terminated because schools are not properly equipped? Should the education sector be expunged from the sectors of organized human endeavour because the government is not providing adequate funds? Many suggestions have since been put forward by researchers and observers to ensure improved funding and more resources for the effective implementation of Nigerian education. This outpouring is, in part, a result of the expectation that the education sector will facilitate technological advancement and economic development in Nigeria, given adequate resources (Ololube, Ubogu & Egbezor, 2007).

Asuka and Paulley (2008), in their analysis of the funding of the Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) in the Bayelsa State of Nigeria, note that the envisaged financial contributions from various sources, particularly local communities and individuals, as proposed by the federal government's implementation guidelines, have not had a visible impact on the success of the programme. They attribute this situation to poor public understanding and the inadequate mobilization of the public by the government. They attribute the low participation of children, especially female children, in the UBE programme, to the poor state of schools in the Bayelsa State which they, in turn, trace back to poor funding. They recommended the further exploration of non-governmental sources of funding and additional public enlightenment efforts on the part of the Bayelsa State government. They see this as the most viable means for achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015, as envisaged by the federal government.

Robert-Okah (2008) concurs with Asuka and Paulley and stresses that the participation of parents and the community will contribute significantly to the achievement of UBE programme objectives. In his treatise, Robert-Okah advises that parents should contribute as monitors, curriculum designers, para-professional aids and primary educators. For its part, the community should initiate and execute specific projects, and provide logistical support and an enabling environment that will ensure safety and the maintenance of infrastructure. He recommends the establishment of strong and viable Parents-Teachers' Associations (PTA) as a medium for getting parents to participate actively and meaningfully in the effective implementation of the UBE programme.

With reference to tertiary education in Nigeria, Okojie, (2008: 163) highlights the human and capacity development expectations of the federal government. In his words, "the academic community is being increasingly called upon to provide useful answers to the countless anxieties of our society, not the least of which is the anxiety over the true foundations of our national development which underlines President Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda." Specifically, the federal government expects universities to offer perspectives on development policies and strategies, the nature of investment resources, modalities for effective implementation of educational programmes, monitoring and evaluation indicators, impact assessments for identified programmes/projects, and the implementation and prioritization thereof over the next three to four years. Describing Nigeria as Africa's great hope transformed into Africa's great disappointment, with a real per capital income of about 250 dollars in 2008, Okojie contends that while Nigeria was once sub-Saharan Africa's most promising and oil rich country, over the last two decades its economy has floundered in the face of political instability and bad governance. It is therefore not surprising that the same government that places such enormous expectations on the academic community allocates a smaller percentage of each subsequent annual budget to education; this at a time when other countries are increasing their education spending.

The prospect of the education sector receiving adequate funding as a social service becomes less likely with each passing day. As such, the best alternative in the effective management of education is prudence in the use of those resources which are available. When a given level of resources is utilized efficiently, more services are provided and more goods produced. Such economy in the use of resources begins with the adequate exploration of all sources of relevant resources. This is the mark of efficiency in management. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the problem of resource inadequacy in the education sector in Nigeria and the importance of achieving managerial effectiveness through the use of prudential measures to facilitate the achievement of education objectives, particularly at the primary and secondary levels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a combination of observation and document materials for facts gathering, which are valuable sources of data about educational research. In short, the type of observation used in this study did not imply a research strategy of immersion. However, some observations were made of the physical settings of institutions and the quality of resource management. The central materials for this study were textbooks, articles and reports. The categories of documents used in the study include both primary and secondary sources. Documents provided me with good insight into what has been written concerning the topic under study. These theoretical sources were used extensively in the course of my analysis of this study. To be able to make full use of the document materials that I located and accessed, I needed to assess their validity and value. Scott's (1990, p. 6) four overlapping validity criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning, served as a framework. In all, it must therefore be recognised that I were able to systematically select documents in a fashion, which looks like a randomized sampling procedure, which helped me put more ideas, color and rigor into this work. And my acceptance or otherwise of the retrieved information were dependent on my selection of information from the review and the interpretation put on it. It is hoped nonetheless that the representation pinched here is a relatively balanced and logically precise one. Though, no researcher is independent of his or her own normative evaluation of a research problem, as such, if any part of this analysis should bear the hallmark of the researcher stance, it should be overlooked and considered as part of the researcher own oversight (Ololube, Ubogu & Egbezor, 2007).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The resources provided by government for the execution of education projects in Nigeria are inadequate and irregular as highlighted by the frequency of industrial actions in the education sector. Moreover, due to the general level of poverty in the country, the contributions of communities and households to educational provision have been negligible. Consequently, the best alternative is prudence in the use of available resources. This is because when a given level of resources is efficiently utilized, more services are provided and more goods are produced than when inefficiency abounds. Prudence in the use of education resources begins with the identification and exploration of all sources of resources relevant to education. It also includes the careful harnessing, rational distribution, efficient utilization and adequate maintenance of the identified resources.

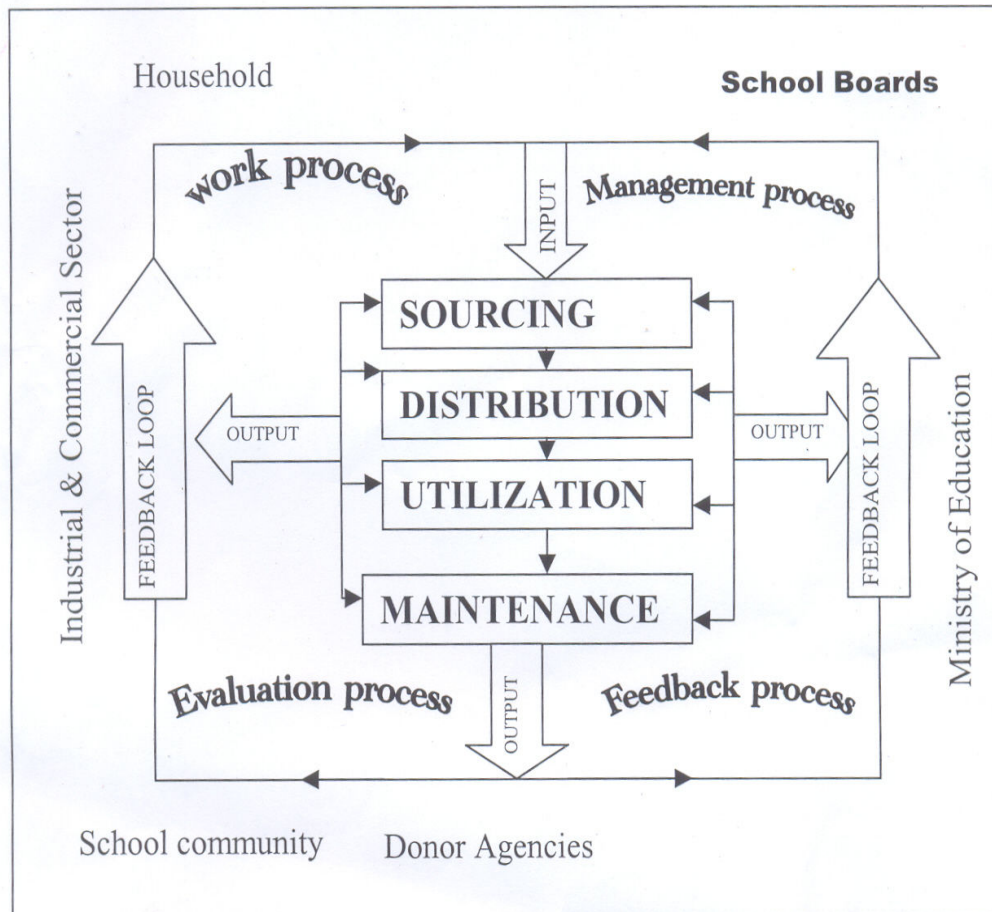
This framework of resource research and usage is established in the System Resource Model of organizational effectiveness put forward by Yuchtman and Seashore in Hoy and Miskel (1987). According to the model, effectiveness is "an organization's ability to secure an advantageous bargaining position in its environment and to capitalize on that position to acquire, judiciously distribute and monitor utilization of scarce and valued resources" (Hoy & Miskel 1987:322-323). In other words, an organization is resourceful when it is able to adequately acquire, rationally distribute, efficiently utilize and regularly maintain scarce resources in implementing its programmes. In turn, such an organization is likely to be effective in accomplishing its goals.

This is true of schools as educational organizations. Schools are not closed social systems and so depend on environmental support for their survival. Yet resource allocation to schools is vulnerable to both state and community politics because of the multiple social programmes competing for limited resources. In this context, it takes a resourceful manager to secure a good bargaining position and acquire more resources from the environment for his or her school. The rational distribution and utilization of acquired resources not only guarantees short term success but also helps to improve the manager's bargaining position for more resources (feedback effect). Thus, the resourcefulness and abilities of the manager can be a major determining factor in the success of an organization. The concern of this paper is to highlight the importance of achieving managerial effectiveness in education from the perspective of the System Resource Model. This conceptualization is schematically represented in Figure 1.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the school is a social system; it has continuous interaction with its environment through input, processes and output. One of the cardinal managerial tasks is to take advantage of the numerous opportunities available to secure the resources needed to execute educational programmes. The proper distribution, efficient utilization and adequate maintenance of these resources will determine the extent and quality of school goal achievement. The output of the school system generates feedback into its environment, which ultimately affects the manager's capacity to secure additional resources. Where output is considered inadequate to justify the initial input of critical resources, securing additional input to sustain the school's production and management process becomes difficult.

The basic processes or inputs required by the school to sustain itself within the system are the work process (teaching and learning), the management process, the evaluation process, and the internal feedback process (from the student). These processes must be properly handled to ensure that the school can be judged as resourceful. As shown in

Figure 1, the Ministry of Education, school boards, households, the industrial and commercial sector, the school community through the PTA, as well as all donor agencies (local or international) are the elements of the environment from which critical input must be secured to sustain school



management.

The Concept of Resources

While resources have been defined in various ways to suit various purposes, almost all definitions accept that resources are necessary tools for the creation of wealth. According to Williams (1982:1107), the word, “resource” developed out of the Latin phrase “re surgere” literally interpreted as: again (re) to rise (surgere), or “to rise again.” “Re surgere” developed into the French word “resource” meaning “relief or recovery” which, in turn, developed into the English word, “resource” defined as something that can be turned to for support or help; an available supply that can be drawn upon when needed; and/or means that can be used to an advantage. Hornby (2000:999) defines resource as something that a country, an organization or an individual has and can use, especially to increase wealth; a thing that gives help, support or comfort when needed. Longman (2005) provides a more comprehensive and detailed approach to the word by defining it to include:

- (a) Useful land or minerals such as coal, or oil that exists in a country and can be used to increase its wealth;
- (b) All the money, property, skills, etc. that are available and can be used when needed;
- (c) Personal qualities such as courage and determination that are necessary in dealing with a difficult situation; and
- (d) Books, films, pictures, etc. used by teachers and students to provide information.

Resources are the basic tools necessary in the effective performance of tasks and for the growth and development of human organizations. The constitution of a resource is determined by the uses to which it can be put. Generally, a resource is identified by its ability to solve problems, and yield more wealth when applied to economic situations. Resources are classified as visible when they exist and can be quantified in the form of human beings, land, money, property, books, pictures, and so on. Resources are invisible when they exist in the form of skills and physical dexterity and can only be measured in terms of productivity levels and quality of work. It is difficult to determine who has what skill and what level of physical dexterity if tasks are not assigned to human beings. The human beings who possess the skills and the physical dexterity constitute the class of resources known as human resources. The other types of visible resources that can be applied by human resources in the production process constitute material resources.

Black (2003:213) separates human capital from other human and physical resources, by describing it as:

The present discounted value of the additional productivity, over and above the product of unskilled labour, of people with skills and qualifications. Human capital may be acquired through explicit training or on-the-job experience. Like physical capital, it is liable to obsolescence through changes in technology or tastes. Unlike physical capital, it cannot be used as collateral for loans.

Human capital is therefore consciously created through education and training. While accepting the general economic definition of land as the factor of production supplied by nature, Begg *et al.* (1994) believe that the quality of land can be improved by the application of human expertise. Thus a farmer is able to produce better land by applying labour to extract weeds or fertilizer to improve soil balance. Similarly, in the field of education, professionals are required in the effective manipulation of educational resources to achieve the desired balance in the production of educated labour.

According to Black (2003), the cost of creating human capital falls mostly on individuals or their families, philanthropic institutions or the state.

Financial capital is a significant resource often assumed to be a part of physical capital. It is actually the basis for the procurement, utilization and maintenance of all other types of resources. Without a strong financial base, it will be difficult to produce the right types of goods and services in desirable quantity and quality. Since the human economy is a monetary economy, the availability of funds in any organization or institution is vital to its productive process and the quality of its product and service. Defining finance as the science of controlling money, Ogbonna (2001) expands his approach by citing Pandit (1979) who saw finance as a body of facts, principles and theories dealing with the raising and using of funds by individuals, business firms, educational institutions and governments. Ogbonna (2001) rightly deduced from Pandit's definition that finance is the process of raising, allocating, controlling and prudently managing funds for the purpose of achieving institutional objectives.

The foregoing analysis clearly shows that resources are assets only to those who can identify them and effectively employ them for the purpose of achieving clearly defined objectives. This is because resources alone cannot yield additional wealth. They must be drawn upon and put to judicious use to enable them to increase wealth or productivity. Thus, the prudent management of education funds involves decisions on how to procure, expand, utilize and properly account for funds directed at the achievement of education objectives in general or institutional goals in particular.

Types of Educational Resources

That which constitutes a resource in education is determined by the level of education and the type of education to be provided. The standard resources for all education types and levels are prescribed by the federal government. These include professionally trained teachers and qualified teaching staff in all subject areas, government approved curriculum, teaching aids, school buildings and furniture and the right calibre of administrators to ensure effective school management. The resources necessary for the provision of primary and secondary education in Nigeria are prescribed by the national policy on education (FRN, 2004). At the tertiary level, the federal government works in collaboration with the Nigerian Universities Commission, the National Board for Technical Education and the National Commission for Colleges of Education in ensuring the provision and maintenance of standard recommended resources.

Educational resources have been classified into four groups and include (a) physical resources such as school plants, classrooms, offices, recreational facilities and the entire school ground; (b) material resources including instructional aids, stationeries, education plans, objectives and prescribed methodologies; (c) human resources (both teaching and non-teaching staff); and (d) financial resources made up of all monetary input into the education system directed towards the achievement of specified educational objectives.

Time is a resource that is highly limited in supply and critical to education, but often taken for granted by the providers of educational resources. Time is a vital complementary resource that is indispensable in the effective harnessing and utilization of the physical, material, financial and human resources in the school system. Ebong (1997:13) defines time as "the continuum in which events succeed one another from the past through the present, to the future." All school system activities are carried out within a time frame which may be limited to minutes, hours, days, months or even years. Time mismanagement constrains the effective achievement of the objective for which a particular educational resource is required. Effective resource management will be difficult to achieve in any school where time is disregarded.

Information, another vital resource that complements the use of other resources identified in this work, is critical in the effective management of any organization. Information is defined as "facts or details that tell you something about a situation, person or event" (Longman, 2005). Specifically, information is a service facility for applying facts or news, and law; it is a numerical measure of uncertainty of an experimental outcome (William 1982). Adequate information and its proper management are central to effective decision making (Opeke 1984). The relevance of information as an educational resource cannot be over-emphasized. It is believed that most educational management problems in Nigeria are traceable to inadequate information and a general lack of proper information management techniques (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2008; Akinwumiju & Agabi, 2008).

In light of the above analysis, two classes of resources can be identified. The first consists of concrete resources that can be physically quantified and their effect on education achievement measured in terms of their quantity and quality. In this class of resources belong human resources, school plant facilities, funding (financial resources), and instructional materials. The second class of resources (of equal importance), which consists of abstract

resources such as time and information, can only be measured in terms of their effect on job performance. Good knowledge and the appropriate utilization of these major classes of resources are vital in the achievement of effectiveness in resource management in the school system, especially in the present context of global economic crises and a consistent decrease in federal monetary allocation to education. The school manager must be well informed of the existence of education resources and know when to collect and use such resources. He/she should also be able to adopt a classificatory method that is suitable to the level of education at which he/she is operating.

The Role of Resources in Educational Management

The importance of resources in the management of education cannot be over emphasized. It is not possible to deliver effective education without some level of relevant resources. This has been highlighted by various education analysts and professionals. As observed by Nchor (1998), instructional resources provide a solid basis for conceptual thinking; increase the propensity of the brain to retain information; make learning more interesting; and take care of differences that may exist among learners. Finance, as a resource, plays a crucial role in the development of education (Kosemani, 1995: 8). This supports Fadipe's (1990) opinion that proper funding and a good supply of qualified teachers can greatly improve the facility index of a school.

In addition to all these benefits, it is important to note that the quality and quantity of resources available to any education system provides a basis for the assessment of the managerial abilities of an education manager. This is because even the most resourceful manager requires a resource base upon which to exhibit resourcefulness. For instance, a school principal in a rural school with unfurnished classrooms, a large enrolment, poor supply of instructional materials and a grossly inadequate number of trained teachers cannot be said to have a good resource base. His counter part in a sub-urban area, who is managing a school with a similar teacher-pupil ratio, well furnished classrooms, and a regular and good supply of instructional materials, has a better resource base. Efforts at resourcefulness may yield better results for the latter because of an improved resource base.

Resource Wastage in the Nigerian Public School System

Various studies have established that even with shortages in the provision of educational resources, the education system in Nigeria records enormous resource wastage, especially in the areas of human resources and technical science education equipment. Most of these wastages occur as a result of over-utilization while others can be attributed to under-utilization.

Bassey & Nkwo (1998) examined the teaching of vocational, prevocational, introductory technology, science, and technical subjects in the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria's Cross River State. Their study focused on the availability of workshop equipment and manpower. Fifty three teachers were randomly sampled as respondents to a twenty-item questionnaire. The results of their data analysis revealed a minimum teacher-pupil ratio of 1:262 and a maximum of 1:772 (in cases where every student in the school was offered science and technology subjects). The study also showed that in 33.3% of the cases, workshop equipment was either unavailable or grossly inadequate, while 2.56% had equipment that was not installed. The study identified the causes of these inadequacies as poor funding; manpower shortage and wastage from over-utilization; and facility wastage from over-utilization due to resource inadequacies. They concluded that poor workshop equipment and the inadequacy of allied facilities constitute major constraints in the teaching of science and technology based-subjects in Nigerian schools.

Ebong & Agabi (1999), in a similar study, examined the level of wastage in manpower utilization in the Cross Rivers State. Fifty three schools were randomly sampled in two of three state education zones. The data analysis revealed a gross wastage of teachers through over-utilization due to an overall shortage of teachers in the school system. The nature of the wastage was attributed to work overload in the form excess teaching periods, high pupil-teacher ratios and the assignment of work not related to areas of professional training. Their results did not show significant differences between schools in rural and urban areas. The analysis of Ebong & Agabi's (1999) is supported by the work of Rugai & Agih (2008), which established that teachers' experience and qualifications had potent impacts on their job performance. They concluded that an experienced and widely trained teacher performs better than a less experienced teacher with a lower level of training.

Wastage of educational resources in Nigerian schools is further discussed by Akpotu (2008) from the perspective of classroom utilization. In a study of classrooms in Delta State secondary schools, Akpotu revealed that classrooms were considerably inadequate in both urban and rural areas and that there was an excess supply of teachers in the secondary school system. Akpotu's study revealed a teacher-student ratio of 18 for the state, 15 for urban areas,

24 for riverine areas and 28 for rural areas. It also showed an average of 4.3 teachers per class in urban areas, 1.2 in riverine areas, 2.7 in rural areas and 3.4 teachers per class in the state as a whole. The relatively normal classroom situation in the riverine areas was attributed to the community development efforts of multi-national oil prospecting companies that engage in constructing school facilities for host communities. Akpotu's study recommended that the practice of two schools (e.g., I and school II) operating on the same premises should be abolished, and that more schools should be constructed to accommodate the growing number of learners and to provide adequate work for the excess supply of teachers already in state employment.

The works reviewed in this paper show that the Nigerian government has yet to strike a balance in the distribution and utilization of educational resources, even in the face of rising inflation, and a general reduction in the level of statutory fiscal allocations to education by federal powers. The importance of prudence in the management of education cannot be over emphasized, especially given visible government indifference to the welfare of Nigeria's education sector.

Managerial Resourcefulness

The primary goal of management is to ensure that system goals are optimally achieved through the clear allocation of roles and resources, and through the monitoring of organizational tasks. The level of efficiency achieved in the performance of managerial tasks is highly dependent on the manager's resource management abilities.

Resourcefulness can generally be defined as the ability to act effectively in the achievement of goals that require the use of resources. In defining resourcefulness as the ability to find quick, clever and efficient ways of doing things, Hornby (2000:999), identifies a resourceful person as one who is "clever at finding ways of doing things." These definitions highlight that resourcefulness in management is a combination of effectiveness and efficiency in handling organizational matters. Effectiveness enables the manager to keep the organization's goals in constant view, while efficiency enables the manager to aim at prudence in the achievement of organizational goals. Akubue (1991:134) describes prudence as "the ability to plan, regulate, and calculate possible causes, effects and results as well as to cover loopholes for fraud, cheating and temptation." Here, prudence is a sensible and careful attitude that averts wastage in the use of resources. A resourceful education manager is therefore prudent in the application of scarce resources to the implementation of education policies and programmes.

Resourcefulness measured in terms of productivity can be defined as the ability to combine various factors of production to achieve a desired level of productivity. The education sector, as the sector charged with the production of highly valued human capital, cannot afford to be wasteful in the use of resources if it is to achieve its goal of producing relevant and educated manpower.

The achievement of economy in the use of educational resources includes good knowledge of educational resources and the ability to adequately explore the many sources of such resources. The education manager in this case is expected to have good knowledge of various sources of educational resources. However, knowledge of resource sources is inadequate without an accompanying knowledge of what constitutes relevant resources for the particular level and type of education being managed. The most common sources of education resources are the government, local communities, philanthropic organizations and international aid. Likewise, knowledge of educational resources and their various sources is not enough if such resources, harnessed by the school system, are not effectively manipulated to achieve educational objectives. Effective resource manipulation skills are also necessary in the achievement of prudence in resource management. Resource manipulation in this case includes distributing resources into task areas, and ensuring that they are properly utilized in task performance.

The prerequisites for resourcefulness in educational management include:

- Professional training;
- Knowledge of relevant resources and their uses in education;
- Knowledge of the various sources and the ability to acquire them through regular exploration of the identified sources;
- Ability to effectively distribute vital resources to areas of educational need;
- Good understanding of the importance of time and accurate information in school management; and
- Ability to effectively apply time and information in managerial activities.
- Ability to maintain educational resources in good working condition through regular utilization, servicing and replacement as often as necessary.

Resource Management Tasks of Education Managers

From the structural perspective, management is the policy level at which major organizational decisions are taken, and at which policies and programmes of activity are defined and stated. Education policies and programmes define education resources. The manager's role thus includes the provision of appropriate guidance in resource acquisition and distribution in line with education policies and programmes for subordinate structural levels. Emetarom (1991:54) recommends that in the pursuance of the accomplishment of the goals of education, the school principal who plans the affairs of the school should be prudent by allocating available resources in such a way and by using such methods that will lead to the realization of much of the set objectives of the school in a concise time frame. The school head, whose primary responsibility is the provision of functional managerial services, is expected, in addition to planning the daily activities of the school, to allocate available education resources *vis-à-vis* education time. To this end, Akubue (1991:6) provides the following ten point guidelines for effective resource utilization:

- Set objectives for using available resources;
- Formulate plans for achieving the objectives;
- Categorize activities into groups or departments;
- Define tasks to be done;
- Group the tasks into jobs;
- Staff the jobs with people;
- Initiate work activities;
- Supply incentives to stimulate productivity;
- Set up controls for measuring achievement of objectives and monitoring performance; and
- Take remedial actions for unachieved objectives.

Conditions for Effective Resourcefulness

Conditions that are vital to the effective application of prudence in the management of education include a conducive work environment, resource maintenance, the recognition of resource input, staff maintenance and the provision of curriculum and instructional leadership.

(a) A Conducive Work Environment:

In view of the low level of statutory financial allocations available to school managers and the vast area of curricular coverage expected of them, the establishment of an environment that fosters positive interaction between the school and the host community is very important. In maintaining a positive and conducive school environment, the school head should be able to: act as the spokesman of the school to the public; interpret system-wide policies and develop supplementary policies; secure, present and interpret school and community information for staff use; develop a co-ordinated and positive programme for community relations; and encourage joint school-community discussions of policies, programmes and issues as they relate to schools. Such an environment is then conducive for establishing access to the resources available in the community.

(b) Reducing Resource Depreciation:

The value of most school resources depreciates with age and regular usage while others depreciate from poor management and non-utilization. Resource maintenance should be directed at keeping school materials in the proper places prepared for them. Maintenance processes should ensure that buildings are kept in sanitary conditions and that machines and electrical appliances are in good and safe working conditions. Resource maintenance also includes the provision of pest control and fire prevention services. All of this will enhance the protection and durability of school plant and instructional resources and minimize wastage that may arise from poor maintenance.

(c) Recognizing Relevant Resource Inputs:

The school head should be able to identify relevant resource inputs for the attainment of education goals. Human and material resources must be present in the proper proportions to facilitate the achievement of optimal efficacy in school

management. This will help to minimize wastage from over-utilization and also eliminate the problem of under-utilization.

(d) Staff Maintenance:

Appropriate training, appropriate job placement and regular supervision should be given to members of staff (both teaching and non-teaching). This ensures the sustenance of desirable productivity levels. In the opinion of Ukeje (1992), a school principal should be able to tell when an employee needs to be retired, retrained, promoted or laid off. Regular supervision and evaluation of school personnel, with special emphasis on teacher performance, will enable the principal to perform this role effectively. The principal should also make the school open for inspection by higher authorities.

(e) Curriculum and Instructional Leadership:

The school head provides curriculum and instructional leadership in the school. His or her functions in this regard include:

- Promotion of quality instruction;
- Supervision and evaluation of instructional activities;
- Allocation and protection of instructional time;
- Curriculum co-ordination;
- Promotion of content coverage; and
- Monitoring of student progress.

Contemporary Challenges to Effective Resource Management in the Nigerian School System

The contemporary school manager in the Nigerian school system is faced with a number of problems, some of which include:

- a) The politicization of educational leadership positions. This is a situation in which school managers are appointed not by merit and professional qualification, but by political affinity.
- b) Pressure on existing resources: The demands on existing education resources far outweigh the supply and the ability of the school manager to acquire additional resources through non-statutory sources. Nigeria, under President Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda, is committed to reviving education in order to create more equality, and develop citizens who can function more productively in today's world. However, national expenditures on primary education, as a percentage of the GDP since 1999, have not yielded a substantial drop in youth illiteracy rates, even with the UBE scheme on course (Okojie, 2008).
- c) A lack of funding has plagued the education sector since the history of formal education in Nigeria. As Nwadiani (1998) observed, public schools in third world countries (Nigeria included) are heavily affected by macro-economic aggregates such as budget deficits, fluctuating foreign exchange rates, inflation, and increasing debt burdens. This situation is made worse by the fact that public schools are non-competitive and slow to change. Additionally, public school managers exercise very limited powers of initiation in the procurement of education resources.
- d) Political instability makes education policies as tentative as the political environment in which they are executed. From 1977 to 2004, the national policy on education in Nigeria has been revised three times to accommodate social, political and economic changes in the country (FRN, 2004).

The school head therefore needs to regularly update his knowledge of education policies and programmes by participating in national workshops usually organized for such purpose and at which education policies and programmes are interpreted.

Since state resources for education are not always adequate, a resourceful education manager should be able to explore all available resource sources. The purpose of this exploration is to attract more resources to the school than would have been the case if he/she were to depend only on statutory sources. To achieve efficiency in resource utilization, there is also the need to adopt an effective method of resource distribution, utilization and monitoring. At

the top structural level, where education management involves making major decisions and developing education policies and programmes, resourcefulness includes a clear identification of the resource needs of education programmes, the acquisition of the identified resources and the appropriate distribution of such resources to areas of education need vis-à-vis policies and programmes.

Recommendations

In view of the discussion presented in this paper, the following recommendations are deemed necessary for the achievement of prudence in educational resource management.

1. **Professional training:** All managers of education, irrespective of the level at which they are operating, should be professionally trained. This ensures that they have adequate knowledge of relevant resources for particular education programmes. Opportunities for regular retraining should be provided by government to enable managers to update their knowledge of education resources and how to manage such resources.
2. **Appropriate location of physical resources:** Physical resources like libraries, laboratories and workshops should be located as close to learners as possible. For instance, if a school has three campuses located in three different towns with only one library located at one of the campuses; the use of the library by students and staff at the other two campuses is hampered by distance. Ideally, each of the campuses should have a library that takes care of its own research needs.
3. **Regular supervision and inspection:** These are system monitoring activities that enable the school manager to identify areas of resource need and maintenance. Instructional supervision and regular inspection of the school also enable the manager at the policy level to identify areas of resource misallocation and thence to correct the situation. Supervision of instruction and inspection of school facilities should be carried out on a regular basis.
4. **Resource relocation:** This involves the movement of resources from an institution where they are not needed to an institution where they are most needed. The problem of misallocation of resources often occurs at public primary and secondary levels of education. At these levels every school is assumed to deliver the same recommended curriculum. The fact remains that some schools are more favoured than others in terms physical structures and education facilities. Consequently, the irregular inspection of schools may result in a general distribution of resources in a way that renders some resources redundant in some schools and inadequate in other schools. In this case, the school manager with the redundant facilities should facilitate the relocation of such facilities to institutions where they are needed by reporting to the appropriate quarters (primary schools board, post primary schools board, state Universal Basic Education Board, etc).
5. **Maintenance of school-society rapport:** In the successful exploration of all available resources, the school head should establish a conducive environment for positive interaction between the school and members of its host community. Anti-social behaviour by members of the school should be discouraged and due respect should be given to the norms and values of the society. This is very important because no society desires to spend its resources on a school that produces what are regarded as deviants.
6. **Liaising with non-governmental organizations:** The school administrator should make the resource needs of the school known, not just to statutory education management agencies, but also to national and international non-governmental organizations who are interested in facilitating the development of education as a social service.

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