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# **ACHIEVING EFFICIENCY IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA**

by

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## **Abstract**

Organizations all over the world strive to achieve efficiency for the purpose of attaining organizational goals in the midst of inadequate resources including educational institutions which are consistently faced with the problems of inadequate resources, yet society expects them to be very effective and efficient in all their operations. In spite of these societal expectations, it is quite surprising based on observation that most stakeholders in the education industry have not much concern for educational efficiency which was the reason why this study sought to review the concept of achieving efficiency in educational administration in Nigeria. This paper critically examined educational efficiency by considering it as the transformation of inputs to the most satisfactory outputs in the educational system. Efficiency in educational resource management was also highlighted under three major areas: efficiency in financial management; efficiency in human resource management and efficiency in material resources management. Three issues were raised and addressed in the paper: efficiency in the process of preparing school leavers and graduates satisfactorily; and efficiency in the meeting up of school leavers and graduates with societal and industrial expectations. Based on the issues raised and addressed in the paper, the essential role played in the reduction of wastage in educational administration was discussed. A conclusion was drawn based on the review and recommendations were made among others that school management and board should organize seminars and conferences for school administrators on how to ensure efficiency in the midst of inadequate finances.

**Keywords:** Transformation, Efficiency, Education, Graduates, Efficiency & Material Resources

## **Introduction**

Formal or informal, organization provide for the well-being of members of the society. For organizations to remain important in business, managers and administrators make conscious efforts to deliver on the objectives of their organizations. This is done in a manner that best satisfies the needs of the organization and clients. Ideas, principles and concepts are deliberately adopted to ensure efficiency in goal attainment as efficiency reduces waste and at the same time increases the level of satisfaction (output). Educational administrators and managers are confronted with the challenge of waste in the system in terms of managing educational resources in the midst of inadequate resources. It has become evidently clear that government alone cannot provide all the resources needed for the effective/efficient running of schools.

Consequently, most educational institutions especially those in Nigeria are suffering from financial problems due to inadequate fund provision by the federal government and/or mismanagement. Corroborating the above assertion, Udochukwu (2023) explains that, all levels

of the country's education sector are suffering some form of crisis, that include infrastructural decay, and poor condition of service as a result of inadequate financial provision. Hence, it was stated clearly in the National Policy of Education (2014), that besides the funding by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), tertiary institutions are encouraged to explore other sources of funding such as endowments, consultancy services and commercial ventures and to ensure they efficiently managed. As a result of these, school administrators and other management staff ought to be abreast with the strategies necessary for the generation and effective management of funds in their schools' coffers to ensure that a high level of efficiency is attained and waste is reduced to the barest minimum.

The administrators are the management personnel responsible for controlling and coordinating all school resources whether human, financial or material ranging from sourcing funds to run the school, to managing available funds for effective and efficient administration of the school. Where the school administrator is weak and ineffective/inefficient in generating and managing school finances, success will be hampered and waste will be recorded in the school system. However, it seems that most of the administrators in the education sector, whether at the primary, secondary or tertiary institutions lack the basic skills needed to stimulate efficiency to minimize educational waste. Hence, it has become imperative for educational administrators and planners to appreciate the essential nature of educational efficiency in the educational system.

### **Statement of the problem**

Resources management is a crucial aspect of administration in any given institution. Resources are needed in the school for the production of different manpower required for the continuous existence of the society. Educational resources include human, financial and materials and they have huge financial implications for various organizations. Top on the list of the resources needed in an organization is finance. Finance is needed for different purposes ranging from procurement of educational resources (stationeries and equipment), carrying out school maintenance to the daily expenditure of the school. However, It has become clear that the finance (fund) made available to the education sector in Nigeria is always inadequate as a result of various compelling needs as evident in the yearly budgetary allocation to the education sector by subsequent administrations in Nigeria.

Additionally, the current high inflationary trend in Nigeria mostly occasioned by the removal of fuel subsidies and depreciation of the Nigerian currency by the Federal government of Nigeria has engendered a rising cost in the management of schools especially the cost of utility. Similarly, some administrators are perceived to be lacking the basic skills required for the administration of schools to be efficient. Hence, some institutions are developing faster than others even though they have been given the same financial aid. The difference is in the level of utilization of resources which by no means is attributed to the fact that most of them do not consider the role of efficiency in educational administration. Based on the aforementioned problems, it becomes necessary therefore to look at achieving efficiency in educational administration in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Efficiency is one operational word used by managers and administrators to ensure optimal satisfaction in organizations. The word efficiency finds expression mostly in task execution and in standard. The concept of efficiency had its origin in economics as it is used in the analysis of production which in economic terms is seen as a process of transformation. The Oxford Language Dictionary defines efficiency as the ability to achieve an end goal with little or no waste, effort, or energy. This means that an administrator is efficient if nothing is wasted and all processes are optimized. Hornby (2012) describes efficiency as "the quality of doing

something well with no waste of time or money". Here, Hornby (2012) is particular about quality and cost effectiveness using the least amount of resources to get the output with the highest level of satisfaction. This implies that an efficient educational system is one in which the mix of resources (inputs) used are those best suited for the educational needs of the students, schools and society. The economist views efficiency as something that has the ability to change resources to a more admirable and satisfactory state of affairs. Here, attention is paid to the means employed. These means must be the most satisfying and cost-effective that will generate the best output desired by individuals.

Efficiency level is demanded by the degree of satisfaction derived from an output. Efficiency in summary can be described as the level of satisfaction individuals derive from the achievement of organizational goals. This entails a level of satisfaction derived from the task execution process up to the end result of production. The key factor is that, not using too much to produce very little but using the slightest means that is most beneficial to achieve the highest satisfaction (output).

Efficiency is best felt at the processing level and at the point of output in organizational activities. But to understand the concept of efficiency clearly, it is important that we compare it with that of effectiveness since many people confuse efficiency with effectiveness. Barnard cited in Okorie (2009) states that "effectiveness relates to the accomplishment of cooperative purpose, which is social and non-personal in character. Efficiency relates to the satisfaction of individual motives and is personal". This implies that the achievement of organizational objectives does not automatically guarantee the efficiency of that organization. Hence, Okorie (2009) opines that an action could be considered effective when a desired end is attained but it can be described as efficient only when the process and the end result satisfy the desires and motives of the persons involved. For example, school organizations pass out graduates and school leavers every year thereby achieving the objectives for which they are established but the questions that come to mind here which this paper seeks to address are:

- Are the processes of preparing our school leavers and graduates satisfactory?
- Are the school leavers and graduates meeting the expectations of society, industries and new levels of education?

Consequently, efficiency goes beyond the mere attainment of a cooperative goal. It is concerned with the equitable distribution of resources that satisfy individual motives and desires in the process of getting the expected output in the right manner. Igwe (2009) defines efficiency as "the balancing of burdens by satisfactions which result in compliance and continuance". It is satisfaction of the individual's needs and motives that keep an organization going. This establishes internal efficiency. The balancing of the burdens of satisfying the expectations of society creates internal efficiency. Both internal and external efficiencies eliminate wastage in a system.

### **Educational Efficiency**

Educational efficiency refers to the transformation of inputs to the most satisfactory outputs in the educational system. It includes the application of a satisfactory process to achieve outputs that meet the motives of individuals and the needs of society. Educational efficiency could be seen from two dimensions which are internal and external. Internal dimensions include the flow of students through the system with minimum waste and the quality of learning achieved in the system. Wastage in the educational system manifests in the form of dropouts, repeaters and wrongly qualified graduates. Another angle to educational wastage could be identified as pupils' low level of academic achievement, unfair distribution of teachers and the manner students in higher educational institutions offer courses which they neither considered satisfactory nor relevant to their future job aspirations.

External efficiency is concerned with output which is the quality and the number of learners who successfully graduate within the required minimum number of years. The same circle may be externally inefficient, if the graduates turns out may not be what the society, or industry or higher levels of education require. The graduates may be wrongly qualified and if this happens it renders them unemployable, become economically redundant or not meeting academic standards for the next level of education. Even with optimum efficiency, an educational system may be wrongly adopted to the needs of society. Such maladjustment implies a considerable waste of human and financial resources in our educational system. To avoid educational wastage, Jones (2017) accentuates that with competing demands for public money, educational administrators should ensure resources for education are used efficiently.

Similarly, the OECD (2011) observes that the efficiency of education depends on a number of interrelated factors, including the number of teachers and their duties (statutory instructional time and other responsibilities), teachers' compensation, teacher working hours, student instruction time, student-teacher ratios, and class size. The OECD considers the inefficient use of human resources, especially teachers, as a core factor contributing to the low efficiency of the Greek education system. This is why, government, ministries and boards must ensure efficiency as well as educational managers and planners.

### **Efficiency in Educational Resource Management**

Educational resources are the inputs required for the smooth running of the school system. These can be grouped into three categories:

- i. Efficiency in finance management
- ii. Efficiency in human resources management
- iii. Efficiency in material resources management

### **Efficiency in Finance Management**

Finance is the life wire of a school system. No school can survive without finance. It is needed for the acquisition of all resources needed in education ranging from human resources to material resources. Hence, the amount of financial resources available to a school administrator, determines the quality of staff that would be hired, the nature of structures that would be erected, the facilities and equipment that would be available in the school and the type of client that the school will attract. However it has become so obvious that lack of adequate finance is a major challenge faced by school administrators. Ebong (2013) observes that financial management in school is one of the core activities which refers to the process of fund mobilization, allocation and judicious utilization for the achievement of defined educational goals. Ukaigwe, (2018), sees financial management as the act of ensuring that funds in an organization are effectively and efficiently utilized through proper planning and control of available funds.

Similarly, Ukaigwe (2018) postulates that administrators should endeavour to collaborate with School Management Committees (SMCs) towards galvanizing the support of their host communities and leveraging on such social capital to raise necessary funds for effective school administration. Smith (2020), explains the importance of using cloud software to automate school management processes to bring about a positive impact in the classroom and on pupils' health and well-being. Smith opines further that having more efficient financial management processes frees up budget and time that could be spent supporting students and enumerated the following as ways cloud software can automate financial administration;

- Streamlining purchasing processes, resulting in fewer errors, queries and adjustments.
- Reducing cost per order
- Accurately predicting future income and expenditure, facilitating better budget allocation.



- Assisting with statutory and legislative reports.

Another way of managing finances in education is through revenue generation. Revenue generation is an important strategy through which school administrators can generate finances for their schools. Corroborating the above assertion, Osiobe (2021) mentions that revenue for schools can be generated both internally and externally. The internal sources include services rendered by the school such as the sale of research, intellectual properties, and the use of school facilities such as halls, fields, and hostels, while the external sources include donations from governmental and non-governmental organizations. Ogbonnaya (2018) suggested the inclusion of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) in raising funds for school administration. External aid is another avenue for fund generation in schools. In the opinion of Gidado (2020), external aid is the assistance given to an agency, institution, organization or even to the government by a foreign nation or foundation. Such organizations include the World Bank, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), and International Labour Organization (ILO) among others. The foreign nations and these organizations render assistance through the supply of school equipment, provision of instructional materials, and renovation of school buildings, organizing workshops and training programmes.

### **Efficiency in human resource management**

Human resources management in education, according to Obasi and Asodike (2007) involves the practice of engaging people with appropriate skills, abilities, knowledge and experience to fill job vacancies in the school system. It includes human resource planning, job analysis, recruitment and selection. Generally, these activities are carried out based on the different educational levels depending on the category of staff required. These members of staff are distributed based on their areas of specialization according to the needs of the school in question. Administrators must therefore insist on the best in terms of skills, abilities, knowledge and experience. This will in turn impact on the quality of graduates (output) that will be produced annually and help in the reduction of the percentage of repeaters. Consequently, learners' enrolment into the school at the various levels should be well monitored to ensure appropriate placement. Learners should be placed in classes based on their mental abilities and not necessarily their age level to ensure effective and efficient utilization of teaching materials which should be suitable to learners' abilities. It is the ability of the administrator to properly mobilize and utilize the school personnel that will determine whether the content will be well covered or not. The administrator owes the school the duty of developing in the staff the culture of efficiency by creating "no wastage awareness" in the school system.

### **Efficiency in material resource management**

Material resources cover all school equipment and all forms of school facilities. Material resources are important elements needed for the realization of educational goals and objectives. School equipment and facilities comprise all the things that have been put in place to aid effective teaching and learning. The main equipment and facilities in education according to Shuaibu (2016) include the following:

- i. Equipment: laboratory and workshop equipment, sporting equipment, teaching aids, typewriters and photocopiers, computers etc.
- ii. Permanent and semi-permanent structure: classroom, workshop, hostels, staff quarters, assembly / dining halls, administrative blocks, libraries, laboratories etc.
- iii. Furniture: desks, table, chairs, beds etc.
- iv. Library books and stationery
- v. Vehicles

- vi. Electrical Infrastructure: meters, fans, generating sets, air conditioners and other electrical fittings.
- vii. Water Supply Infrastructure: tap water, well, water tanks, boreholes etc. The maintenance of all the above facilities and equipment is an important aspect of school administration.

### **Indicators of Organizational Efficiency**

Here are some indicators of organizational efficiency which are applicable to school organizations.

- There is group incentive and motivation;
- Staff flexibility and adaptation;
- Personnel's need dispositions and goal consensus;
- Staff information management and communication;
- Group participation and shared influence in decisions/policy formulation;
- Planning goal-setting strategies;
- Group satisfaction and stability;
- Personnel training and development;
- Utilization of environmental values and human resources (Igwe,2009:112)

### **Conclusion**

Efficiency is what an effective leader can stimulate to produce excellent results. It is an atmosphere of satisfaction during task execution, resource allocation and at the point of output. Organizations are effective when they achieve their objectives. This does not mean that an effective organization is an efficient one. Organizations are only efficient on the condition that individuals' needs and motives are satisfied. Therefore, to achieve educational efficiency, the process of preparing graduates must be satisfactory to teachers and students. Another dimension is that the school leavers or graduates must meet the expectations of society. Finally, wastage must be minimized by ensuring efficient use of resources.

### **Recommendations**

The following are recommendations made to ensure an efficient educational system:

1. There should be adequate and satisfactory provision of infrastructural facilities needed for realistic educational services
2. Facilities should be made available to where they are needed, and they should be used judiciously for the benefit of learners.
3. There should be provision of adequate financial resources when and where needed and avoid wastage.
4. School management and board should organize seminars and conferences for school administrators on how to ensure efficiency in the means of inadequacy for effective school management.

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