

LEADERSHIP IN UPPER BASIC EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Educational leadership is the fundamental crux of the sustainable development of Basic education. The paper expounded the meaning and objectives of upper basic education. It explained the meaning of leadership indicating the various levels of leadership in upper basic school organigram and their duties for effective administration, teaching and learning. The paper expressed that the upper basic school is a spring board to sustainable development since it is the juvenile experience of life-long learning and students have powerful retentive memory at this stage. The importance of leadership in upper basic education were pointed out such as frequent supervision and discharge of duties by various units. Its challenges like poor policy implementation were x-rayed for prevention. Recommendations such as improving educational facilities and use of mother tongue were made.

Keywords: Leadership, Basic education and sustainable development.

Introduction

Leadership is the ability to influence and convince a group or organization to accept and carry out pre-determined decisions to attain desired goals. Leadership is also encouraging a group to face challenges and achieve either success or failure in a given situation (Mbakwem, 2020). Life-long learning experience is the basic ingredient in the intuition for the establishment of basic education. To curb illiteracy in Nigeria basic education was introduced for the acquisition both theoretical and formal education for pre-primary, primary, junior secondary, adult and nomadic education. It is designed upon reading, writing and vocational skills to reduce irregularities in social and economic lives of Nigerians. Education is therefore a quality instrument for the development of humans, socio-economic and cultural transformation of a nation. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in Nigeria by the then President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo in September 1999 in Sokoto. It was a reformation from Universal Primary Education (UPE) which he launched in 1976. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) was established by the Nigerian Federal Agency for compulsory, free universal basic education and other related act of 2004 with the mandate to formulate policy guidelines for the successful operation of UBE programme, Bashir & Issah (2019). The Universal Basic Education which is a nine year programme endorsed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (FRN), (2004) is divided into three segments. These are:

- a. 3 years of lower basic education (Primary 1 – 3).
 - b. 3 years of middle basic education (Primary 4 – 6).
 - c. 3 years of upper basic education (Junior Secondary)
- (Upper basic education is the third segment) Akpan, Igwe & Odey, 2020).

The objectives of the upper basic education include:

- a. To provide the child with knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship education.
- b. Development of patriotic young people to contribute to social development and performance of their civic responsibilities.
- c. Inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking who appreciates dignity of labour and

- d. Inspire national consciousness, harmonies, co-existence, irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background (FRN, 2013).

Owing to depressed economy of Nigeria ranging from poor economic policies, low productivity, insecurity, inflation, collapse of manufacturing companies, embezzlement of public fund, unemployment, hunger and poor health conditions to mention but a few, great thinkers of Nigeria saw the pressing need to establish functional education from grass root level (Obi, Nnanna & Ekeada, 2018).

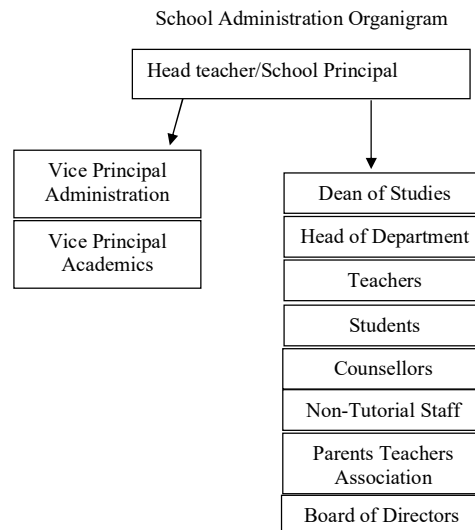
Therefore sustainable development is education for better life especially through entrepreneurship activities and collective ventures to improve the standard of a nation in comparison to global standard. Onyenze, Ugwulebo, Onwuliri & Duruji (2022) reiterated that sustainable development takes care of human and material needs of a nation, presently and in consideration of the future needs with equilibrium. It considers the improvement of human conditions and environment in terms of peace, prosperity, good health, equity, security, self employment, agricultural increase, employment opportunities and job satisfaction. Hence, the need to have good leaders to develop upper basic education where students can concretize knowledge, use it to develop skills early enough, value citizenship education, ethics and morals.

Leadership organs in the upper basic schools

Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and encourage other members to contribute to realizing the effectiveness and success of an organization. Transformational leadership motivates members to do more than they are really expected to do by increasing the sense of importance of the value of task, stimulating their interest to work as a team and passionately directing their energy to rise to higher level of productivity (Evans, 2020). Transformational leadership is a new leadership agenda based on enabling people work skillfully and collaboratively within and outside the company or organization. This generous commitment by members attract fulfillment of moral obligations by leaders to subordinate. (Mbakwem, 2020). In essence, good leadership is needed to pilot the course of upper basic education.

Educational leadership aims at achieving educational goals by facilitating enabling environment, implementing policies through effective use of human and material resources. At this basic level the position of principal/head teachers and sectional heads are crucial to the systematic success of educational programme (Asamonye, 2017).

The illustration below shows the leadership organigram in upper basic school.



Source: Onyemerekeya & Asamonye (2009)

School organizations includes the principal – The Chief Executive/Administrator, the Vice Principal Administration and Vice Principal Academics. Others are the Dean of Studies, Head of Departments, School Counselor, Students, Teachers, Librarian, Bursar, Sectional Heads, Medical Units, Security Outfit, House Master/Mistress, Labour Master/Mistress, Furniture Master/Mistress, Clubs/Pious Associations, Parent Teachers Association and Board of Directors (Anorue, 2021).

Roles of each leadership level towards sustainable development

The Principal is chief administrator of a school. He ensures that security of the school is enhanced; healthy environment, facilities and equipment are maintained for student, teachers and non-tutorial. The principal is in-charge of some statutory records such as Log Book, Visitors book and punishment book. He is accountable to the Commissioner of Education forevents in the school and ensures that schools monies and budgets are genuine (Egwu, 2014).

Vice Principal Administration assists the principal in her duties. She supervises instruction, compiles statistical returns of students and staff to the Ministry of Education. She supervises the works of sectional heads, maintains discipline and issues certificates to students.

Vice Principal Academics allocates subjects and classes to teachers as approved by the principal. He ensures that lessons are taught, inspects diaries of teachers, register new students and ensure high academic standard of students.

Dean of Students among others is in-charge of school tests and examinations. He produces the school time tables, recommends textbooks to principal, signs teachers' lesson notes and supervises instruction. He brings updates about curriculum development and implementation.

School Counselors give academic and moral orientation to students to improve their standard. They invite student to curb indiscipline, keep records of continuous assessment and external examinations like WASC and NECO. They direct students on career choice and keep confidential records of students' behaviours to be retrieved when needed by school heads or parents.

Sectional Heads ensure that teachers attend classes, supervises examination and produces results at a record time. They monitor extension classes.

Heads of Department ensure that government approved curriculum and textbook are used for teaching and learning. A country's curriculum has a lot to say about the effectiveness and educational attainment of the country. Implementation of functional curriculum of the upper basic schools needs to be monitored strictly for sustainable development (Ekwuru, 2021).

Form teachers are direct custodians of students in the school and mark the attendance register to ascertain students who are regular and punctual to school. Their works are enormous including classroom management, teaching and learning through healthy interaction, current teaching methods. The form teacher maintains good relationship with parents and guardians so as to give reports about the wards, ensures that the classroom is neat, supervises students' examinations and produces results. She reports cases of sick and mal-adjusted students to principal. They are "loco parentis" (Imo State Basic Education Board, 2021).

The use of library especially virtual library is important for development of upper basic schools. The Librarian ensures that the provided books and ICT components are well preserved and tagged. He also directs students to have access to their needs. Medical Unit serves for emergency cases in schools. A school ought to have a nurse to give first aid treatment to students in case of emergency before consulting parents and guardians.

Security Unit is essential in all schools because of hostile environment in some areas in Nigeria. Sometimes cows or dangerous animals enter school environment while students are in session. The issue of unknown gunmen is a big challenge to security because they could kill anyone at anytime or even kidnap students.

Parents Teachers Association: No school exists without this body because the parents are the real owners of students and make serious sacrifices for the development of their wards and upkeep of school environment. The teachers collaborate with them in these functions as guardians of the students (Onyemerekeya&Asamonye, 2009).

Hostel masters or mistresses where applicable supervise students' hostels, kitchen and dining halls to ensure that boarders are well taken care of. They report students need to principal such as food supply, beds and plates. Surroundings are kept healthy for students and cases of indiscipline are reported to principal.

Labour masters/mistresses ensure general sanitation of schools. Periodically, students should be involved in cleaning their surroundings and incinerator. They should be involved in agriculture by teaching them how to handle hoes, machetes, rakes, mowing machines and so on.

Furniture masters and mistresses are responsible for classroom and staff furniture. These are supplied by government. They are to be handled with care and repaired as need arises. Furniture for students is fixed to suit the 21st century teaching and learning methods and programmes (Ihebereme, Abiahu, Ahamefula, & Osuagwu, 2022).

Game masters/mistresses ensure that all students participate actively in games and sports as approved by the school time table. Handball, soccer, basketball, table tennis should be encouraged for recreation and healthy practices. Students get scholarship through sports and raise the school tone too. Students need to be supplied with games equipment.

Patrons of clubs and pious association are to ensure that establishment of approved clubs and pious association could drive away cultism in schools and encourage peaceful co-existence. Debating societies, child right club, dramatic societies and prayer groups help to conscientize the students and improve their academic standards.

The functions of these sub-educational leaders listed above might look cumbersome. They are basically for all round development of students and most Mission and Private schools are consistent in matching their duties to their salaries to ensure beneficial and quality education for their students. Nigeria has recently produced policies and curriculum to be used to improve education standard but implementation by government and school staff have not motivated the students into action (Asamonye, 2017).

Importance of leadership in school administration.

School leadership aims at influencing people through motivation, persuasion, sacrifices and conviction to create conducive environment to achieve optimum teaching and learning. The school administrator needs to plan, organize, direct and evaluate certain variables to attain functional education goals. Okorie (2005) enlists such variables as, personal, faculties, finance, curriculum, students and advisory groups.

1. Personnel

The school leader ought to be a professional teacher who knows what is expected of him and be responsible for what happens in his school. He should insist on having qualified teachers, knowing their sex, number, years of experience and area of specialization to ensure that effective teaching and learning goes on in the class. He should also know the number and sex of students including student-teacher ratio. Responsibilities are to be shared for effective participation and supervision as shown in this organigram. The non-tutorial staff and members of Parents-Teachers Association have to be involved in school decision making for effective leadership. The Head teacher/Principal is Chief Executive of any school.

2. Facilities

The school leader has to ensure that educational facilities such as classroom, laboratories, offices, school fields, staff room, fields, rest room are available for running of the school. These influence academic performance of students (Dorgu, 2012).

3. Curriculum

The ministry of education provides curriculum and the school leader ensures curriculum implementation for proper academic achievement. Supervision of classroom work and diaries are to be done by the leader and others whom she appoints e.g. vice principal academics, Deans, and heads of departments. Results of students should be made available to parents periodically.

4. Finance

Schools cannot function without finance. School leaders ought to make school budgets on time and submit to Local or State Government respectively in order to receive money. It should also create funds through activities such as, crafts, home economics, sports, philanthropists and parent-teachers association. Such moves are used for school management and maintenance of facilities.

5. Students

Students are the main reasons why schools are established. Success of head teacher or principal depends on how effectively he manages the students through exposing them to proper

teaching and learning, discipline, healthy relationship among peers, neatness etc. There should be rare use of punishments, instead correction is necessary.

6. Advisory groups

These help the school leader mainly in decision making, raising fund and forming of committees e.g. the board of directors and P.T.A.

7. Technological advancement

A school leader has to be innovative and follow the new trends in teaching methods and use of ICT components. Without these, the students will be backward in examinations and out of the global market.

8. Mentoring

Mentoring from experienced teacher is a great tool for making teaching experience a lifelong career (Bob, 2016). School leaders have to re-train teachers and staff occasionally to develop new practices for teaching and learning.

9. Use of data

The school leader has to ensure that school records such as registers, examination records, staff records, log book etc. are kept up to date for internal and external consultation.

10. Motivation of teachers

Teachers are great workers in the education system. They need encouragement and support as “Loco Parentis” by way of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

11. Supervision of instructions

The failure or success of school system depends on school head. Human beings need to be reminded or checked to ensure that he does his work. Students also need to be supervised to ensure that they pay attention in class and not loiter in school.

12. Schedule of duties

School leaders must not do the work alone as already stated. He shares duties with school organigram to ensure that all hands are on deck. He also prepares school time table for effective teaching and learning.

Challenges facing leadership in schools

These include:

1. Bad governance and non-implementation of policies.

The funding of education in Nigeria is poor especially in provision of facilities and payment of teachers' salaries, talk less of gratuity. Only government schools are sponsored, therefore the quality of private or mission schools are neglected by government that does not give them subvention. In all schools, Nigerian children are involved and government ought to be involved.

2. Teacher qualification.

The country does not have enough science and technology teachers. Many technological equipment that were assigned to schools wasted because of lack of teachers. Junior secondary education is full of practical experiences using the 21st century teaching methods such as collaboration, demonstration, critical thinking etc. Vocational and skill training are essential for economic and social sustainability. (Ademola, Asamonye&Iyiegbuniwe, 2020).

3. Non-Information technology compliance

ICT which hub is computer, the bedrock of globalization in socio-economic, political, health and other development is not yet taken seriously at the upper basic level where pupils could learn fast. Provided laptops waste away due to lack of fuel or maintenance of ICT facilities. E-learning, e-governance, e-counseling, e-banking and transactions and all areas of science and technology ought to be promoted in upper basic schools. (Imo State Universal Basic Education Board, 2021). Teachers like bankers could be divided into batches to learn computer for effective and efficient delivery of lessons.

4. Use of mother tongue.

The use of mother tongue in teaching and learning has been recommended by in (FRN, 2013) for retentive memory and practical applications. The same government made English language compulsory for tertiary admissions, causing conflict in knowledge internalization.

Remarkably, Germans, English, Italians etc do not make Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba language compulsory for their students' admissions. Rather, one must learn their language if admitted in such countries to be successful. Nigerian languages ought to be promoted with motivation in admission of students in any University of Paris choice to do any course.

5. *Poor supervision*
Government officials need to continue their monitoring and supervision services to raise the standard of this important level of education. For instance, agriculture is very essential and gainful in any economy especially for food production. The Northners and Middle Belt of Nigeria ought to be really appreciated for food production and crafts(Dorgu, 2012).
6. *Grant of Loan*
Some students that have completed their lower basic education could be school dropouts and might like to do such works as mechanic, bakery, electrical works, seamstress etc. some teachers also need loans for their private practical experiences. These could be supported with soft loans by government to develop their talents and be self-employed.
7. *Functional curriculum*
Government ought to digest former policies before making new ones. There are many practical programme in basic education in both National Policies of Education of 2004 and 2013 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Duplication of policies is not necessary rather implementation of the functional curriculum is essential.

Conclusion

Leadership in upper basic education is essential for sustainable development because at this level of education students are tender and copy right in assimilation of facts, skills and character formation. Various units in school administration should join efforts to raise the standard of development at this level for economic, social and cultural positive growth. Government, parents and philanthropists have to do the needful by funding education and lessen such challenges such as non provision of ICT components and employment of qualified teachers for implementation of functional curriculum.

The Way Forward

1. Principal/head teachers as general overseers of school system should ensure that all organs of the school administration put maximum efforts to raise the standard of education in lower basic education.
2. Government should not relent in funding education despite the huge population and diverse education systems because education is the easiest way to train and settle human beings.
3. Only qualified teachers should be employed and more teachers should be trained in areas of science and technology. Conference and workshops for teacher especially in ICT is of great value.
4. Students should be given access to computer practices on completion of JSS 3 and some of the school leavers could be given loan.
5. Use of mother tongue is essential for easy transfer of knowledge and application. Nigerians should be proud of their languages and help the younger generation to benefit from its value.
6. Supervisors should continue to work in schools because recommendations from supervisors are essential to raise the quality of education in Nigeria.
7. Government should be slow in replicating education policies. They should rather employ 21st teaching strategies and methods using functional curriculum.
8. Students should be encouraged to enroll in sports, moral instruction, clubs and pious associations. These are very essential for behaviour modification of students. They can also help to eliminate cultism in schools.

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