



Management of Educational Facilities for Effective Learning Outcome in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This paper is on managing educational facilities for effective learning outcome in secondary schools of Rivers State, Nigeria. Educational facilities are used during teaching and learning process. The paper recognizes that it is the fundamental responsibility of the school administrator to manage the available facilities; this is to ensure the provision and maintenance of the facility. The paper identifies educational facilities as machines, equipment, land, and other infrastructure to be use in the school system, and therefore recommends that principals of secondary schools should be trained on the management of educational facilities. Finally, it advocates government should take the funding of secondary schools very seriously.

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Introduction

Educational facilities refer to the physical structures such as buildings and other items such as furniture, machines and other equipment that are used in school to support teaching and learning. This suggests that educational facilities are those material resources that contribute to teaching and learning, it may also be described as educational plant. It is pertinent to state that the society is dynamic in nature; in this regard, the changes in the society may directly or indirectly determine the school curriculum. To this end, the educational facilities are subject to the changes at all the levels of education.

The term management may not land itself to a single definition; it has been defined in various ways by different scholars. The term management is a process that involves a specific task such as planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and budgeting. This implies that management is aimed at achieving a predetermined objective. In this same vein, these ideas and terms are also application to the management of educational facilities. This is to ensure effective learning outcome in secondary school system. The management of educational facilities involves the making of decision in terms of educational needs of the school and ensuring the effective and efficient utilization of the available facilities for effective teaching and learning outcome.

According to Bamidele (2010), educational facilities involves some crucial activities such as determining the present and future educational facility need of the school and as well as the maintenance of these facilities to ensure its optimum utilization. Johnson (2013) stated that through the provision of facilities in the school system is important but its management is very important. Orisa (2004) supports of Johnson when he asserted that the management of educational facilities entails the provisions and distribution of facilities to all the areas of need and also ensure that they are maintained from time to time. Suffice it to state that facilities management is a process that ensures that building and other furniture items

are provided in the school system to support teaching and learning.

It is the fundamental responsibility of the school administrator to manage the available educational facilities. However, it is imperative to state that the school administrator may not be absolutely knowledgeable in the management of educational facilities such as building, furniture and fittings, library materials, laboratory equipment and safety equipment but his or her subordinates may be allowed to make their input especially during decision making. This is necessary because it is the school manager and his staff that will make use of the facilities. It is responsibility of the school administrator and his staff to ensure that school facilities are regularly maintained for efficient and effective use on daily basis.

Students and teachers can enhance classroom learning by using educational facilities that are provided by the school to support teaching and learning in the classroom. Our secondary school system is likely to achieve quality education if educational facilities are provided. One cannot overestimate the use of educational facilities in the everyday life of the academic. This is because educational facilities have to come to stay as veritable tool in the teaching and learning process. The provision and utilization of educational facilities and the ability to manage them will enhance effective teaching and learning which will result to effective learning outcome.

In fact, it has been established that educational facilities are portent tools for quality education. It is not surprising that secondary school system' ability to achieve set goals is no longer dependent on the quality of the school manager, but more importantly is a function of the ability of the school administrator and his staff to provide and regularly maintain the school facilities in its original state as possible. In attempt to achieve this and other objectives for which the education facilities are provided, the school administrator must use the teachers, students and staff in the school system. This also suggests that they should be well informed on their roles.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that managing educational facilities entails a thoughtful and dynamic process by which the school principal determines the facility need of the school, identify the needs at the various units, ensure the efficient allocation of the facilities across the identified areas of need as well as making sure that funds are available to ensure that the facilities are in good condition.

Paterson (2008), states that educational facilities include modern computers, furniture, library materials, building that are used in school for effective teaching and learning. The impact of educational facilities and the imperatives for its management cannot be over emphasized. This is because of the provision that effective utilization of educational facilities is hoped to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Educational facilities are set of tools that come in various forms. Dece (2010), describes educational facilities as those buildings, equipment, tools, and machines that are provided in school to promote teaching and learning, research and administrative functions.

According to Owhouda (2014), effectiveness of the school system is dependent on its ability to achieve its stated objectives. However, effective learning outcome in the context of this study refers to a situation where the stated objectives of the lesson are achieved. In this regard, the secondary school system is using educational facilities to competitive favourably with their counterparts in the world especially in this era of globalization. The growing complexity of the secondary school system in Nigeria and the world at large, and the educational imperative to achieve the broad aims of the national policy on education makes the management of educational facilities necessary for quality education and an effective necessity for quality education and effective learning outcome. Mbaya (2013), states that educational facilities such as buildings, equipment and other infrastructural facilities used should be managed and maintained in order to achieve the school goals.

Concept of Resource Management

Managing the educational facilities implies the provision or the distribution of these facilities to all the areas of need, and regular maintenance of these facilities to ensure optimum utilization. Suffice it to say that educational organizations need facilities for the production of quality output; therefore managing educational facilities is the proper coordination of the available resources for the purpose of producing quality products in the system. In fact, resource management is a panacea for effective learning outcome. In fact, educational organizations are established to produce competent persons in form of human resources; this is to ensure the development of the society. To achieve this laudable objective, it is imperative that the available educational facilities will encourage the regular provision and maintenance of the facilities. The educational managers are seen as the ones who should ensure that facilities are managed for the achievement of educational objectives. Incidentally, a manager who is supposed to lead members of his school organization in working diligently for the careful use of the school facilities could engage in bad practices and thus constitute a log in the wheel of progress. If this happens the hope to achieve quality education would be a mirage.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is general system theory. Thus, a system may be defined as an assemblage of a set of constituents or elements in active organized interaction, or a bounded entity so as to achieve a common goal or

purpose which transcends that of the constituents in isolation (Ukeje, Okorie and Nwagbara (1992). It can be argued that an organization exists for the achievement of a purpose; therefore, the interplay of all the variables in the system will enhance the attainment of organization goals. This suggests that both materials and human resources are very important in the organization. Therefore, good educational managers must carefully and effectively manage the school facilities, particularly buildings, machines including computer, teaching technology, and other infrastructures that are under his custody. The importance of this theory is hinged on the fact that facilities are portent tools for quality education.

Rationale for Managing Educational Facilities

As pointed out earlier, the ability of the school system in the attainment of educational goals depends not only on the availability of the teaching staff but also on how the school facilities have been judiciously and prudently managed. On this premise, the following facts constitute the rationale for menacingly managing educational facilities:

1. Maintenance

There is need to ensure that facilities (buildings, machines and instructional materials) are maintained. This is because such maintenance is hoped to increase the life span of the facilities and thus, reduce the cost of replacing them. From all indications, the cost of replacing the school facilities will be very minimal if they are well managed by the educational administrators and the users of the facilities.

2. Quality Education

The provision of educational facilities and consequent impetus on its prudent management will facilitate quality education. Suffice it to state that the quality of education at any level of education is a also function of the quality of facilities that are provided for such education. It is no secret that our educational system is suffering because the available facilities to support teaching and learning are grossly inadequate, and they are not properly managed. It should be noted that there is a strong relationship between facilities and students academic performance.

3. To create a healthy environment

It is essentially necessary to manage educational facilities to ensure a healthy education environment. Facilities such as classrooms, office accommodation hostels, computer etc will provide rich learning environment.

4. To ensure quality control and distribution of facilities to all the areas of need in the school system, this is needed to ensure that the relevant needs of the students are met.

5. For Accountability

Educational facilities are part of government assets, and as such, the school administrator should ensure that they are properly managed so that he will be able to give account of these facilities in his custody. It could be clearly seen that the more prudent the school principal is in the management of school facilities, the more important quality he shows in his administrative competence.

6. There is need to ensure that the right type of facilities are provided at the right time, and they are also put in the right place. Interestingly, the educational manager must ensure that the right quantity of facilities are procured and in stock for the purpose of teaching and learning in the classroom.

7. To provide the right type of facility. It is certain that educational facility is also a determinant of quality education; therefore, its management will ensure that the right type of facility needed for a specific use is provided at the right time

and in the right quantity. This is to ensure effective teaching and learning outcome.

8. Educational resources are relatively scarce so they must be properly managed so as to avoid the wastage of such facility. In this regard, the resources of the facility should be identified and the need for regular maintenance should be clearly stated.

9. It is imperative to properly manage educational facilities to ensure that the facilities meet the relevant need of the users, and more so, to make sure that some guidelines are stated so that the students, teachers and users of such facilities yield themselves to such stated guideline.

10. It is pertinent to state that education is dynamic in nature therefore there is need to adjust to the changes that was effected by the educational system. As the changes occur, some facilities will become obsolete. The school principal or a designated person has a duty to constantly monitor and evaluate the available school facilities; this is to ensure that some of these facilities are modified to meet the needs of the student.

Types of Educational Facilities

In the recent time especially in this 21st century, educational facilities are so many such that it is different to identify all of them. However, it is important to emphasize that educational facilities are supposed to facilitate teaching and learning. It is against this back drop that educational facilities are grouped according to the functions(s) they perform. To this end, the following types of educational facilities are identified.

Instructional facilities

Instructional facilities are those facilities that are provided to directly support teaching and learning in the classrooms. Their presence in the classroom has a direct bearing on the quality of teaching which in turn determine the students learning outcome. This suggests the imperativeness for adequate provision of instructional materials in the school system; such facilities include classrooms, desks and tables, laboratory equipment, workshop equipment, library materials, studio, chalkboard, computer and internet, agricultural farms, project and film, etc. As the name implies, instructional facilities affect teaching and learning therefore, it is essentially necessary to provide them adequately.

Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities are those facilities that are meant for sports and games. Students must be engaged in extra curriculum activities because such activities are hoped to keep them healthy, and more so, some talents in sports need to be identified and trained for national and international competitions. The national facilities include field, pitches, lawn tennis court, sports kits, football, and table tennis board. The importance of recreational facilities cannot be over emphasized. Their provision is also meant for relaxation. Agabi in Nuabuo, Okorie, Agabi and Igwe (2004), stated that the importance and level of resources committed to the development and provision of recreational facilities must not exceed their values in facilitating the overall goals of the educational institution.

Residential Facilities

As the name implies, residential facilities are those facilities that could be used for living or human settlement. These facilities include hostel accommodation, staff quarters, Canteen or cafeteria, convenience for staff and students. The residential facilities are very important, therefore they must be properly managed so as to prolong the life span of the facilities. More so, because of its usefulness in providing

comfort to staff and students of the school, these facilities need to be handled with care so that their daily use and the benefits from such usage can be fully realized. It is necessary to manage residential facilities so as to satisfy the relevant needs of the students. It should be noted that the proper management of these facilities will facilitate quality education and desired educational result. In other words, the provision of residential facilities and consequent on the proper management of these facilities, the students are likely to comfortable in the school. The result of this is a desired learning outcome.

General Purpose Facilities

As the name implies, general purpose facilities are those facilities that can also be converted to other useful uses rather than being tied to a particular use. In most cases, these types of facilities are made of space facilities. According to Agabi in Nnabuoetal (2004), there are basically two types of open facilities: namely: the developed and the undeveloped space. In this regard, developed open space are those spaces that are provided by the school for activities such as sports, car park, school garden, football field and many others. It could be seen that their uses can also be modified depending on the use of such facility. Undeveloped facilities on the other hand are those vast area of land that have not been fully developed for certain uses by the school. In fact, such land is secured by the school and they are well kept for future use. The school principal must properly manager a general purpose facility so as to ensure the proper utilization of such facility when the used arises.

Steps in Facility Management

The following steps may be adopted by the school principal for the management of school facilities:

1. Identify the learning needs

The first step to be taken by the school administrator in the management of school facilities is to identify the learning need of the students in the school. At this stage, the questions that need to be addressed is the type of facilities, the quality and quantity of facilities that should be provided. It should be noted that the peculiar learning need of the students will provide the answer to the question. In fact, it is such need that determines the type of facilities to be provided. To this end, the educational administrator must be very objective in the identification of the need of the students.

2. Inventory Survey

At this stage, the educational manager should take a comprehensive survey of the educational facilities that are stocked. This goes further to suggest that the school administrator should be able to look inward to identify the existing facilities, and the tendency to provide information on the state of the existing facilities. Such information may include the condition of the facilities, age, quantity and as well as the location of the facility.

3. Facility utilization

It is essentially necessary to assess the extent to which the existing facilities have been utilized. Such assessment will provide useful information on the areas of stress and weakness.

4. Establish A master Plan

At this stage, facility master plan is established; master plan is a framework or a blue-print that defines of states and the areas where educational facilities are to be provided, and how and when the existing facilities are to be relocated to the area of need.

5. Site Selection

As soon as a master plan has been established, the school administrator should do everything possible to carefully choose a site and quickly acquire the site. In other words, the school administrators should purchase the land and other facilities, making sure that he has documents for all the facilities acquired.

6. Educational Specification

At this stage, the educational manager is required to write the curriculum and as well as the learning experiences that are necessary for implementing the various educational projects, more importantly, the procurement and installation of educational facilities.

Conclusion

This paper is focused on managing educational facilities for effective learning outcome in secondary schools in Rivers state. The paper identifies the rationale for managing educational facilities. Educational facilities are physical structure such as buildings, land and other items such as furniture's, Machines and equipment that are used in school. These facilities are provided in school to support teaching and learning process. It is pertinent to state that the management of educational facilities will enhance effective learning outcome. The theory that propels the searchlight for this work is the general system theory; this is true because of the fact that educational facilities are veritable tools for the attainment of educational goals. Therefore, because educational facilities are

portent tools for effective teaching and learning process, its management becomes a growing concern of every school manager.

Recommendation

1. Principals of secondary schools should be trained on the management of educational facilities.
2. Government at all levels should take the funding of secondary schools because the funding of schools is hoped to make provision for the maintenance of school facilities from time to time.

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