

RESOURCE MAINTENANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Resources maintenance on the provision of educational services in public and private secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design and stratified random sampling technique was used to sample seven hundred and thirty eight (738) principals and vice principals from the population of one thousand five hundred and fifteen (1,515) principals and vice principals of public and private secondary schools in Rivers States. Data were collected using researchers' constructed questionnaire titled "Resource Maintenance for the Provision of Educational Services Questionnaire (RMPESQ)". The major limitation is that, is the terrain did not give us easy access to some areas for data collection. The mean, mean set and rank order as well as standard deviation and t-test were used in analyzing the null hypotheses. Result obtained shows that maintenance culture in both public and private secondary school is poor; the school physical resources are regularly maintained. Physical resources in schools if properly maintained influence the provision of educational service and students academic performance in Rivers State; that funds is the major problem militating against the maintenance of school resources.

Keywords: Resources, maintenance, educational services, secondary schools, Public and Private schools, Nigeria,

Introduction

Education is an indispensable tool for personal and social development. Many countries in the world see education as a good investment for national development because it is expected to produce the required quantity and quality of human resources for the economic growth using the mix of inputs. Nigeria being fully aware of this, desired education as an instrument per excellence in the development of the national economy. This desire has been heightened by the fact that the development history of advanced countries such as Britain, America, Germany and France, to mention but a few, is strongly hinged on education (Majasan. 1997). The enviable giant industrial stride and technological development achieved by countries like Japan, Taiwan, Belgium and host of others could not have been possible without a sustained investment in technologically oriented education (Brown, 1994). These are pointers to the fact that third world countries investment in a functional education. This postulation remains the central bases of the human capital theory (Harbison, 1973).

It is not surprising then, that these countries have come to identify education as the magic wand that can transform their societies, and hence, committed a lot of human and material resources into the provision of education at all levels. Nigeria is not left out, unfortunately, the levels of socio-economic development in Nigeria, just like other third world countries is yet to prove the human capital theory true.

In recent times and in time past, secondary education have been facing several problems which among other things have regarded quality teaching, learning processes and this reduces the quality of educational system, especially, if we view it in a futuristic trend. In view of the present state of available resources for education, the researchers' prime interest is in knowing how total efficacy can be achieved in the management of the available resources. Resources in this context are; physical resources; the movable and immovable properties, physical structures and assets belonging or allocated to an educational institution to enhance teaching-learning process and educational services. To be specific, this research is bothered by the extent of physical resources maintenance in secondary schools as well as the inhibiting (problems) to effective resources management.

One of the fundamental ways of ensuring the optimum utility of available resources is through, maintenance culture. Maintenance culture of any school speaks much about such an institution. According to Akpan (2011) the general appearance of school facilities constitute the basis upon which members of the public pass their judgments about the academic performance going on in the school. The present economic recession being experienced world over has made it absolute imperative that the gospel of maintenance culture be preached very loudly in our education industry.

Having identified the economic rationale of modernization, a relevant programme of maintenance and physical plant renewal is imperative and priority for maintenance is essential because unattended deterioration and neglect of schools buildings could lead to higher out lays, in the form of replacement lost. Schools cannot afford this period of economic hardship; hence a maintenance culture should be adopted wherever school premises are occupied. Besides, maintenance enables us to pay less now, instead of waiting to pay more at a delayed point in time in the future (Enawhwo 1990.)

Hence, there is absolute need for the few available ones to be properly maintained for effective teaching and learning. According to Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992), maintenance of the plant is defined as those activities connected with keeping the buildings, equipment and surroundings at their original or best condition of completeness and efficiency, either through repairs or replacement. In this emphasis on the importance of facilities maintenance, Tawgaw (1987) shows that maintenance could be categorized into Emergency and Periodic. Emergency maintenance is called for by the situation of events, and areas such as: structural problem, equipment amendable to periodic inspections, plumbing facilities including sanitary accessories. Including here also, are: doors, windows, louvers, cracked walls, leaking roof, etc.

Another type of maintenance is the method. This concerns facilities which follow repairs and renovating cycle. It could be in days, weeks, monthly or yearly. This type of maintenance is often accomplished by substitution of new parts or materials for old and worn – out ones. It does not entail the substitution of completely new facilities. This is sometimes called “preventive maintenance”. Preventive maintenance includes miscellaneous jobs that are required to keep mechanical and electrical equipment operative, the painting of exterior and interior surfaces, repair of doors and windows, reflowing, repair of damage roofs and ceilings. The maintenance of these facilities is gravely necessary in order to avert colossal wastage or their total loss.

Tawgaw (1987) clearly puts it that the key to protecting the investment of billions of Dollars committed to educational facilities each is proper planning today and the commitment to maintenance and operations thereafter. The necessity of this maintenance culture is succinctly put by UNESCO (1984:11) maintenance programmes must satisfy two objectives: The first and most expensive is that of the prevention and deterioration of school buildings furniture executed at predetermined intervals in the life of every school and deals at each stage, and with specific components of the building. The second, less costly, but in many ways more difficult programmes, is that to deal with contingencies, such broken windows, the roof, which leaks, and the drains that block and suddenly overflow.

From the foregoing, it has been made clear that proper maintenance culture is an economic alternative when compared with the financial implications when the few available resources are culpably allowed to decay. When a school imbibes and assimilates the culture of maintenance of the scarce resources, the institution becomes attractive and is better equipped to deliver the goals .Uchendu (2011) mentioned that proper management of human and material resources enhances teaching and learning in secondary schools.

School plant maintenance procedures

The operation and maintenance of the school plant are functions that are associated with keeping the physical plant and equipment in good conditions Akpan (2011). The procedures are as follows:

- Identification and equipment that needed repairs:

The personal concerned with the repair and maintenance of school plants should periodically check on these structures and equipments to ascertain which of them needed attention. These routine checks should culminate in writing annual reports about the school plant.

- Selective attention

Sometimes more than eight different school plants may require either replacement or repair at a time which may be more than the financial stand of the school. In this circumstance, the school administrator should become selective in his attention. All complex repairs that need very urgent attention should be referred to the professionals while the cleaners should handle the minor repairs.

Institution of Maintenance Workshop

To save cost and to ensure urgent attention, it is necessary that the school administrator should open a maintenance workshop where some of the skilled labourers in the employment of the school should be posted and cases of damaged furniture should referred for urgent repairs.

Establishment of Inventory Book:

This record is very important because it helps to assess the level of damage that is going on in the school and also the amount money that has been wasted on repairs and to determine how careless the groups of individuals in the school are and how efficient the maintenance workshop is. It can serve as reference material to the supervisor or the Parents Teachers Association. Nnabuo (1996: 168) agreed no less with the above when he stated that that investment in school plant involves a great deal of capital outlay and therefore, the adequate maintenance of these buildings is a very important administrative task. According to him, there should also be schedules of work showing what is to be done, by whom, at what time and under whose supervision. Maintenance should include the regular repairs of the plant, equipment and other infrastructures.

Maintenance Strategies

There are a number of maintenance strategies or policies which can be specified either separately, or in combination for each item of plant.

Routine Maintenance; This form of maintenance helps to provide a safe working environment and covers such area as general clean ups inspection and minor serving instrument and tools, normal lubrication, adjustment of belts, chains, etc inspection and cleaning of fixture and stocking of frequently needed parts; **Preventive Maintenance:** This is a scheduled inspection and service procedure which is designed to prevent equipment breakdowns and malfunctions through early detection and remedy of the causes. It includes; periodic inspection and, replacing parts periodically and recording inspection reports. **Fixed – Time Maintenance:** Which is dependent on time is only effective in the following circumstances; When failure is clearly time dependent; When the component is expected to wear out within the time of the unit. Example of this type of maintenance are changing brakepads, changing weak engine oil, draining burnt coolants.

Problems of Maintenance of Resources

Resources are the vital organs of effective and efficient functional education. Hence, the role of resources in ensuring the importance of these educational materials goes beyond their mere provision. They can only be optimally and efficient when they are adequately utilized and maintained. Studies have shown that the principal obstacle to the maintenance of resources in the school system is finance.

Most of third world countries depend on the government for the financing of education just like the other sector of economy. Consequently, national budget which is based on the lean government coffers is shares among them. This to a great extent does not ensure adequate funding of the education industry. Beside financial constraints in the maintenance of education resources is the lack of skill and qualified personnel for the use and maintenance of these educational facilities. With the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 educational system and its high technological and scientific implications, sophisticated technological equipment were massively imported for the implementation of the new programme. Even though this is a step in right direction, personnel were not trained to operate and maintained then equipment.

Onyeyemezi (1996) in Onwuka (1996:45) succinctly puts in this way: every where, teachers need the basic knowledge and skills necessary to make the fullest use of resource materials. One of the reasons why available materials are not used by many teachers in schools and colleges is that they lack the necessary skills to operate them. It is in the light of the background that the researchers interested in finding out how available resources in secondary schools are maintained to enhance equitable provision of educational services and factors inhibiting the maintenance of these resources.

To guide the study two hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- H0¹:** There is no significant difference between the opinion of school principals and teachers on resources maintenance and the provision of educational services in public and private secondary schools.
- H0²:** There is no significant difference between the opinion of principals and teachers on problems of maintenance of resources in public and private secondary schools.

Methodology

The research design used for this study was descriptive survey. This design is considered appropriate as it enable the researcher collect necessary information from principals and teachers of both public and private schools, through the use of questionnaire which addresses the research questions and the testing of hypothesis to compare the maintenance and its problems of public and private schools managers.

Population and sample of study

The population for this research study was made up of all the principals and vice principals of both public and private secondary schools in River State, totaling, seven thousand one hundred and fifty (1515) principals of public and private secondary schools in the state. The sample size was seven hundred and thirty eight (738), principals and vice principals of both public and private secondary schools. The sample was selected using the stratified random sampling techniques.

Instrumentation

Data for the study was generated using a 30 items questionnaire relevant to the research questions and hypotheses. 30 items questionnaire for principals and vice principals titled Resource Maintenance For the Provision of Educational Services Questionnaire (RMPESQ) and 20 items questionnaire assessing the Problems militating against the maintenance of resources in secondary schools. Items 1 – 8 were demographic variables and others addressing the resources maintenance and its problems respectively.

Validity of the instrument

To establish the validity of the major instrument used in collecting the data, items on principals and vice principals assessing Resource Maintenance and Provision for Educational Services Questionnaire (RMPESQ) and assessment of Problems Militating against Resource Maintenance for Educational Services Questionnaire (PMARMQ) were validated by experts in educational management for moderation and approval. The comments, suggestions and advice from the experts consulted were used in restructuring and evolving the final version.

Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained by carrying out a test-retest method to ensure that the instruments measured consistently what were expected to measure. The reliability co-efficient was computed using Pearson's Product Correlation (r) which was 0.80 level.

Method for data analysis

Each hypothesis of the study were re-stated and constituent variables identified. Deductions from the tables were used to find solution to the research questions. The standard deviation of the mean scores from the responses and the t-test were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and appropriate degrees of freedom.

Result of the findings

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the opinion of principals of public and private secondary schools on resource maintenance for the provision of educational services.

Table 1: T-test of difference between the opinion of public and private secondary school principals on resource maintenance for educational services.

Subjects	N	X	SD	DF	Cal-t	Table t	Lev. of sig.	Results
Public school principals	517	8.61						
				736	19.81	1.96	0.05	Not sign.
Private school principals	221	10.20	3.99					

(*df* = degree of freedom).

The results in table 1 shows that the calculated t-value of 19.81 is greater than the t-table value 1.96 at 0.5 level of significance with 736 degree of freedom. Thus the result is statistically significant. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and reaffirm the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the opinion of principals of public and private secondary schools on resource maintenance for the provision of educational services.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the opinion of principals of public and private secondary schools on problems of maintenance of resources for the provision of educational services.

Table 2: T-test of difference between the opinion of principals on problems of maintenance in secondary schools.

Subjects	N	X	SD	DF	Cal-t	Table t	Lev. of sig.	Results
Public school principals	517	30.17	5.26					
				736	.32	1.96	0.05	Not sign.
Private school principals	221	30.39	6.36					

(*df* = degree of freedom)

The results in table 2 indicates that the calculated t-value .32 is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.5 level of significance with 736 degree of freedom. Thus, the result is statistically significant. We therefore accept the null hypothesis and reaffirm the statement that there is no significant difference between the opinion of principals of Public and Private secondary schools on the problems of maintenance of resources.

Discussion of findings

Findings arising from the hypotheses testing indicates that the respondents' to items raised for the study were found with low mean. None of the means for both schools was up to 2.50 for which the item should be accepted, implying that the items in question were negative. This is an indication that facilities are not regularly maintained, but rather maintained occasionally. The study also revealed that maintenance is done in private schools than in public schools. This finding is in line with the findings of Awokoya (1981) in Adesina (1981:14), & Akpan (2011) when they asserted that; the worst of our woes is the maintenance of school building or facilities. Millions of naira can waste away if the schools are not properly maintained. The health of pupils can be in constant peril when the toilets are not hygiene and life itself is in danger when the walls are likely to fall. Ministers and local governments that fail to maintain their school buildings may unwittingly be sowing the seeds of sorrow among the pupils at large. It is on this note that, Tawgaw (1987) says that the key of protecting the investment of billions of Dollars commuted to educational facilities each year is proper planning today and the commitment to maintenance and operations thereafter.

The implications of this finding on the quality and life-span of those facilities are very glaring, the life-span of these facilities are not only short, as they are not maintained their less in non-existence. It is not surprising that in many schools, children are learning without the basic facilities when they are not properly managed and maintained, they dilapidate and wear out faster than their normal life span.

Private schools are private enterprises where all attention is channeled towards the maximization of profit. It therefore follows that private secondary schools principals do everything possible to see that their resource maintenance is in order so as to attract more customers (students). Their ability to do this therefore determines the extent to which they will remain in business. On the part of those in public secondary schools, less effort is expended on the resource maintenance because schools belong to government. The notion that, at the end of the month their salaries will be paid is responsible for this lackadaisical behavior for the fact that salaries are not tied to performance maintain of resources for the provision is carried out for the sake of it. Atimes, government properties are handled like nobody's properties.

Hypothesis 2

This result confirms the statement in Agabi (1991) that one of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational system in most less developed countries is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demand and hence rising cost of education. Inadequate funding which has adversely affected the adequate provision of resources. This is the reason this study reveals that none of the already existing resources both in public and private secondary schools in the state are regularly maintained.

Vandalization by students and unknown persons is another factor inhibiting against the proper maintenance of resources. This is not a surprise, that public property is no body's property. In the private schools, the trend of vandilization is minimal because discipline is ensure among students and staff so as to achieve their set objectives.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the data analysis, it was concluded that the maintenance culture in secondary schools are poor and not regularly done. Also, fund is a major problem inhibiting against proper maintenance of school facilities.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this research study, the following recommendations are made:

- That the educational managers in public and private secondary schools should organize seminars for the principals, teachers and students on the strategies of resource maintenance at different levels for the provision of educational services. The school managers should allocate funds for resource maintenance for the provision of educational services which enhances teaching and learning.

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