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Abstract

Education has universally been the business of various entities and agencies. In Nigerian case, formal education was established for socialisation as well as education for living by religious organisations. Moreover, the colonial government and early nationalists caused formal education to expand in the country. This trend consequently made education to be universal and heterogeneous in scope and nature. A development which draws different stakeholders to involve in controlling the affairs of schools as function of managerial administration. This paper therefore, is limited to the area of Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) sub-Sector of the Nigeria Universal Basic Education (UBE), and it examines the connection and the collective responsibilities between the stakeholders involved in the care and education of the Nigerian children, as a mechanism for the effective and efficient implementation of the national policy on education. Recommendations from this paper showcased what should be done by stakeholders in the educational sector to be more proactive in their responsibilities in providing the desirable care and the quality education the Nigerian children deserves to thrive.

Keywords: Controlling, Managing, Stakeholders, Early Child Care and Education, Universal Basic Education.

Introduction

Education has continuously been the business of various concerns, public and private agencies since the existence of man in gregarious

communities. The prominence of each agency is a function of its ability to control and manage children care and education for developmental purpose. This is consonant with Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory which offer the idea that children' development takes place through the interrelationship between the various levels of environment they occupy and interactions with others who form part of their environment. Notably, the consolidation of Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) sub-Sector to the Nigeria Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme has without any doubt make the Nigerian education system more robust. This, however, is based on the reflective questions - by whom and how ECCE sub-Sector, being a dynamic and sensitive human organisation is controlled and managed? This could be better answered with brief historical antecedents.

According to Fafunwa (1991), formal or the western education was introduced to Nigeria in 1842 through Christian missionary endeavours. This was basically for the propagation of the Christian Religion, while in the Northern part of the country education was Islamic under Islamic scholars and missions. After years of missionary endeavours and the colonial endeavours that led to the scramble for and the partitioning of the African continent into nation states by European political powers, school education was expanded. The curriculum was enlarged to train clerks and would be colonial workers as indicated by Nwagu (1976) and Nduka (1982). Formal education however continued to expand with nationalist

awareness and the demand for self-determination. Nevertheless, education in the country never expanded or improved to a stage whereby the country could be ranked among the well-educated countries of the world. Based on the evidence that private individuals and religious bodies constitute the largest ownership of ECCE centres, while the government agencies provide a paltry of 10%, making the sector largely subjected to non-uniformity, a situation known to be retarding the desired progress of the sector (Adenipekun, 2004).

Consequent upon this antecedent and the attempts by succeeding Nigeria governments at regional and national levels, since 17th January, 1955 when Universal Primary Education (U.P.E) project became reality in Western region, the stage of education in the country has never been pragmatically impressive enough as noted by Adesina (1993). It is also observed that some stakeholders are shirking away from their responsibilities in this regard. This was due to problems enumerated by Afolabi (1998), which include funding, shortage of manpower, the number of children of school age and unreliable statistics, which led to the under estimated pupils enrolment and shortfall in the number of teachers. However, one of the most frustrating situations stakeholders can find themselves in is knowing that something is going wrong in their jurisdiction and not knowing exactly where the responsibility for the trouble lies. Also, it has been observed that duties and functions of different control and management agencies in education sector are overlapping, and there was wastage. Therefore, there was a lacuna constituting a cog in the wheel of efficient and effective process of controlling and managing ECCE sub-sector. Hence, this paper gives a brief definitions of the words “controlling” and “Managing” as related to ECCE sub-sector of Universal Basic Education scheme in Nigeria. It appraises the expected roles of key agencies involved in managerial control of ECCE sub-sector for rebranding and ensuring quality in line with global education demands.

Brief Historical Antecedents of Childhood Education

To improve on the state of Basic Education in the country and rebrand it to be more national in

nature and scope, the Federal Military Government took-over the management of primary education from erstwhile owners of the schools who are mostly faith based and individuals' established institutions, in September, 1976 and made it compulsory in 1979. This step towards controlling and managing basic education system signifies that every child has the right to free and compulsory education for a minimum of years before he can function fully well as a citizen of the country, basically. More so that the awareness about the fact that learning starts from infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life.

In line with Education for All (EFA) global initiative, the U.P.E was re-launched in 1999 as Universal Basic Education (U.B.E). The goals of the scheme are to universalise access to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time. More so, the scheme is expected to cover the first nine years of education, that is, the six years primary education and the three years junior secondary schools, which form parts of 6-3-3-4 school system. Interestingly, a further step was taken, in the recent time, the progressive change in the Nigeria formal school plan to 1-6-3-3-4 system to include the one year pre-primary education popularly known as kindergarten for improved ECCE sub-sector (Akolawole & Ajayi, 2018). This initiative is imperative because the learning experience of the children at this level, prior to their entering to primary school can prevent the psychological trauma a child may have at entering school system for the first time as a result of change from home environment. This assertion was corroborated by Arends (1994) as he stated that schools are also places, like other organisations, that need to be changed as things change in the larger society around them. Weikart (2000) viewed pre-primary education as an initiative in that children two to five years of age are received into a miniature community, where all have equal rights and opportunities. This, however calls for collective efforts of all stakeholders to be actively involved in the ECCE sub-sector, for its objectives to be achieved, and for effective and efficiency in service delivery for the Nigerian children.

This renaissance of the Nigerian government to the commitment of improved ECCE sub-sector was made, by entrenching this sub-sector into the National Policy on Education (NPE), as a statement of intentions, expectations, goals, prescriptions, standards, and requirements for quality education delivery in Nigeria. However, the inadequacies inherent in the National Policy on Education (1981, 1998, 2004, 2007, and 2013 editions) which proposed certain cardinal philosophy, and despite its subsequent reviews remained unfulfilled decades later. The cardinal philosophy of education proposed are as follows:

1. a free and egalitarian society;
2. a just and egalitarian society;
3. a united, strong and self-reliant country;
4. a great and dynamic economy, and
5. a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

These cardinal objectives of National Policy on Education as stated above appears to be a pragmatic solution to all the socio-cultural, political and economic malaise inherent in the Nigerian society. Despite this, the country has degenerated to a state of devilish political deprivations, social galloping economic depression coupled with insecurity. This is a call for all educational stakeholders to be alive to their responsibility, in terms of ensuring quality control and good management for efficient education service delivery. However, the NPE as a national guideline for effective administration, management and implementation of the desired education at all tiers of government and branches of the society, serves as a tool for administrative mechanism for the national education system based on the following cardinal principles:

- a. Shared responsibility for the funding and management of basic education as provided for in the constitution;
- b. Close participation and involvement of the communities in the administration and management of their schools;
- c. Effective communication shall be maintained between local communities and the State on the other hand and national machinery for policy formulation and implementation on the other;
- d. Appropriate devolution of educational functions and responsibilities to State, the

Federal Capital Territory and Local Governments;

No doubt, these four aforementioned principles among others clearly shows the provisions made to spur, and to control and manage the activities of the stakeholders who are expected to carry out the above stated implementation approaches and strategies. Based on this effort as well, a curriculum has come up to match-up with the formulated policy. It is worth mentioning that as aspects of management in an organisation, controlling and managing could be described as words of two sides of the same coin. In juxtaposing the relationship of these two aspects of organisation management, Hanson & Lynch (2009) avowed that the final function of a manager is controlling. In other words, control is used as management tool to accomplish specific goals. Suffice to say that, those whose responsibility is to provide ECCE are to exercise control over the sector for desirable objectives. Hence, this paper gives some definitions of the words “controlling” and “Managing” as related to ECCE sub-sector of Universal Basic Education scheme in Nigeria. Thereafter, it appraises the expected roles of some of the agencies involved in managerial control of the sub-sector for rebranding ECCE programmes in line with global education demands.

Controlling ECCE

According to Koontz; O'Donnell, and Weihrich (1986) the managerial function of controlling of activities in an organisation is to make sure that all stated objectives and the plans devised to attain them are being accomplished. Fayol (1999) summarised it as a means that everything is done in accordance with established rules and regulations. While Ekong (2002) defined controlling as process of measuring and monitoring actual performance in comparison with predetermined objectives, plans, standards, and budgets and taking any corrective action required. In other words, this aspect of management includes anticipating and detecting problems and implementing solutions. Actually, it is the measurement and correction of the performance of activities of workforce in any organisation. Olujobi and Ojenike (2003) revealed that controlling the performance of the

people in an organisation is essential to achieve the objective in conformity with the plans. It is on this view that Goetz (2008) stated that controls are reverse side of the coin of planning. Thus ECCE curriculum as a plan of teaching, learning, caring and mentoring activities is subject to constant evaluation for desired achievement.

Controlling within an early childhood setting means (a) stating standards expected, (b) measuring performance against standards, and (c) correcting deviations from established standards and plans (Hildebrand & Hearron, 1997). In Nigerian context, the head teacher as chief controller or manager of his or her school or centre, is saddled with allocating resources and coordinating schoolwork as planned in collaboration with other stakeholders. According to Oyetunji (2006), educational managers find ways to develop teacher's loyalty, trust and commitment and motivate teachers' efforts. In other words, control presupposes the establishment of standards (Adeleke, 2006). Thus control is a device used to ascertain the extent to which the allocated resources are being efficiently used to achieve the educational goals. Parsons (2007) added that school heads also mediate between teachers and other stakeholders, in particular, the parents, pupils, private organisations, governmental agencies and the community for effective and efficient service delivery.

Although, at macro level of educational organogram, communication flows from and to the hierarchy (Edem, 1998), in which the headteacher consults through relevant channels, with subordinate staff. They in turn consult with him or her on matters they would like to bring to his or her attention for the smooth running of the school (Brownwell, 1985). It is therefore appropriate to say, as part of managerial functions, controlling is a way of maintaining the set standard, and to influence the activities of stakeholders for goal achievement. However, this is done in terms of appraisal, evaluation and supervision (Ukeje, 1992).

Managing Early Childhood Care and Education

The word, 'manage' comes from the Latin word

“manus,” meaning a hand, and is related to doing things by hand. However, it is expected that all hands should be on deck, each person contributing to the effective and efficient running of ECCE centres desirably. From this perspective, managing refers to the broad range of administrative activities and tasks that the manager establishes in character and tone of the organisation (Oyetunji, 2006). According to Khaleelee & Woolf (1996) managing is predictable and involves careful planning, analysis and logic. Managing change is perhaps the ultimate leadership challenge (Amanchukwu, Stanley & Ololube, 2015). When we talk about managing ECCE sector, we quite often look at the effectiveness. This means that there are parameters laid down within which the objectives of the schools can be achieved. Such parameters offer the child a secure and active environment in which to explore, learn and thrive. In the words of Curtis and O'Hagan (2004), it is no difficult for adults, who, like children, want to know the boundaries within which they can operate. In managing ECCE, these boundaries are defined by a mission statement and a number of policies and procedures within which staff have to execute.

Invariably, controlling and managing ECCE is therefore meant to saddle responsibilities for each ECCE stakeholders, purposely for the interest of the child. According to Idowu (2003), the term “stakeholders” refers to persons, individuals, groups or authorities connected or concerned with the preparation, formulation, and implementation of all approaches, and strategies designed for workability and success of a goal. However, in controlling and managing ECCE, the impact of all stakeholders should be felt in the same proportion. As komolafe (2000) stated:

It is imperative to note that any education of this magnitude must as a matter of fact be carefully planned, and the need for functional strategic execution demand effective qualitative control and adequate financing. Indicating the needs and revenue for adequate finding and control, it appears that the programme can only be effectively managed, financed and control by an electric

approach which can only be achieved by the various tiers of government, non-governmental organisations (N.G.O) and well-meaning philanthropic individuals, such includes the government as 'primus interperes' in the area of quantity control and financing. The homes or families also need to socialise their siblings into the society as normal social beings, while religious bodies whose roles are beyond the intellectual development of the learners since their tenets of teaching persuade moral and spiritual development.

This study therefore summarily highlighted roles of some of stakeholders. These are provided below:

The Home or the Family

When viewed from the historical perspective, it is seen that educational activities were carried out mostly within the family and religious institutions framework. In connection with the education and care of the child from early stages, the home not only has indirectly influence on ECCE, but a key stakeholder as well. Nupponen (2005) avowed that the home is the most essential among the other stakeholders of education. In concurrence, Taiwo (1996) stated that, it is generally accepted that home is the first agency of education for the young child. On the questions, why and how the home of the family is saddled with the responsibility of controlling and managing ECCE. Ishola (2014) declared that as parents expect value for the efforts on their children, they cannot but collaborate with other stakeholders. Corroborating this view Nwagbara (2003), added that the primary location for childhood development is the home. In other words, it provides a critical part of the foundation for learning. This is one of the reasons scholars have advocated for and initiated parental education in early childhood development programme (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999; DfES, 2002; Adeyemi & Okewole, 2009; Iroegbu, 2013). In this regard, the home comprises the siblings, the parents, either biological or foster. Parents include guardians as well as interested adults of

the community. The parent serves as the first teacher to the child. Besides the parental care, the function of the home in education is clear, it lays the foundation on moral, spiritual, economic and intellectual development on which the child is to build later. The education acquired by a child is expected to server him, his family and the society at large. The home still continues its duty even when the child reaches the school age. At this stage the home monitors the smooth transition of the child from home to school, where the child is exposed to activities that will make him thrive. It is on this assertion that researchers stated that in order for the children to learn and succeed in school, the home and the school needs to work together as partners. It means sharing the responsibility with the school, for children's learning and school success (Adeyemi & Okewole, 2009).

Traditionally, parental involvement in ECCE did not go beyond making the children available in school and providing for them some basic learning materials, especially as the government cannot make education absolutely free. Though, provision of school materials is one way in which parents may be involved in the education of their children, several researchers have identified other components of involvement, such as supervision of school activities and decision-making (Hess & Croft 2007; Adewole, 2012). As non-government actor, the home assists in monitoring the educational activities; this they achieve by checking against unwanted and excesses on the part of schools staff and administrators. Examples are some Parents Teachers Association (PTA) forums. As part of the administration processes, parents are also expected to be involved in financial and decision-making. Equally, experience has shown that parents assist in the areas of school evaluation in order for the school to have positive learning outcomes, thereby serves as independent quality assurance providers. According to UNESCO (2011) parents are also the universal source of information during the child's early years of life. Such piece of information are vital for education policies, control and management. In some cases, the parents also provide the child with all amenities needed in school, especially as the government can never make education absolutely free.

Religious Bodies

This is also known as faith-based organisations. In which both Islam and Christianity have struggled to control education in the area where each of the religious sects show prominence. On the questions, why and how the religious bodies is expected to be involved in controlling and managing ECCE sub-sector of UBE. As highlighted above, it is not far-fetched to reiterate that the religious bodies initiated formal education in Nigeria, and for this reason, their involvement cannot be ignored. Freirer (2009) noted that each religion seeks to control education so as to maintain its firm control on the people and possibly spread the tenets of its doctrine. Boyd and King (2007) wrote inter alia,

“... it must be kept in mind that the church undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself, but because it found that it could not do its own proper work without giving its adherents and especially its clergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writings and for the performance of their religious duties”.

For instance, many churches sponsor a half-day preschool, a kindergarten, or an all-day centre. These are set up as an extension of the church educational programme or service to its members. Experience has shown that enrolment might be limited to church member families or be open to the community. General policies for the school are determined by the church council or a committee appointed by the council.

However, despite the take-over of faith-based schools by the Nigerian government in 1976, it is worthwhile to mention that new ones are being established and licensed by the government. This could be as a result of increase in population and high demand for quality and uninterrupted education. Although, these privately faith-based schools are subject to rules and regulations on national and state basis. On national level, the different religious bodies existing in the country make decisions regarding education. This serves as rights and part of education control measure.

They at times specify the inclusion of religious teaching along with other schools' activities. According to Komolafe (2000) the attitude of many religious denominations is changing at a great speed towards secular matters, yet the aim of religious education which is to make the children morally progressive citizens still remain unchanged. Probably due to government dominant influence on education policy and curriculum. However it must be noted that the religious bodies in a multi-religious setting like Nigeria cannot solely control education, since all Nigerians do not belong to the same religion, but can serve as resource bodies and partners in decision making. Moreover, the National Policy on Education was designed to build an egalitarian society where discrimination is expected to be absent either on the bases of tribe or religion.

Government Control

As part of managerial functions, after the independence in 1960, government had put-in more effort in the control of education, with emphasis on the financing and management of schools for uniformity and universality. The government thought of having a National Policy on Education that will make education a vehicle for national unity, peace and harmony, as well as instrument for political, economic and social philosophies to enable them control education on a larger scale than any other stakeholder or agencies of education. To make this a success the federal government has established different agencies such as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC); Universal Basic Education Board (UBEC); National Mathematical Centre (NMC); National Board for Technical Education (NABTEB); National Examination Council (NECO); Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN); National Council on Education (NCE) among others. More so, since the government is the employer of the largest number of school graduates, it is therefore expected that education should be a matter of “He who pays the piper dictates the tune”. In support of this assertion, Edem (1998) stated that the government that will employ the people should be allowed to control education so that it will be possible for it to train people (personnel) in ways suitable for its functions. This is believed to be the fulfilment of

its obligations to the people towards the achievement of the goals of education. In addition, this has led to different stages of education reforms and innovations in the country. In which the latest is the entrenchment of one year pre-primary education. A step that has further helped to create a model to be followed by the private owners of pre-primary schools most especially with the minimum standard established.

Private Control

Apart from the above mentioned agencies of education, there are still some philanthropists who either by way of commercialising or helping people establish schools. These sets of people are the individuals who may be well informed in the field of education, or who had known the need for education and these people considering the need for education in their environment set up schools or support schools in different ways. These type of schools set up by these people may be either to help the society or to enrich their pockets. This is a situation which has paved the way for quackery in the sector on a large scale. However, the private schools are expected to be licenced and duly comply with all other laid-down rules and regulations, as part of government authority to regulate and control private establishment and operation of ECCE in the country. In addition, despite national and state policies, some operators of ECCE in this category still violate rules and regulations meant to guide the operators. In other words, as these schools aid the spreading of education, still some of them are not well manned (Ishola, 2014). This is a situation undermining the desired learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The ECCE sub-sector of UBE as described as an institutional organisation is set up purposely to achieve certain identified objectives. The realisation of these objectives is the collective responsibility of individual stakeholders in the Nigerian educational system. As a tree does not make a forest, stakeholders identified with childhood care and education are expected to play their roles in the system effectively and efficiently.

Recommendations

On the basis of this indication the following

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