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## ADMINISTRATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAYS FORWARD

**Abstract.** This paper examined the challenges facing the administration of basic education in Nigeria. The paper used secondary data sourced through online and print materials. Among other things, the paper look at the concept of educational administration and the objectives of school administration. The paper identified the following challenges; inadequate fund, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of professional teachers, poor supervision, high population of students, inadequate instructional materials, poor learning outcome, poor teachers motivation, and insecurity as the facing the administration of basic education in Nigeria. To address this administrative challenges, the paper suggests: government should ensure financing at the level of 26% of state budget expenses, instructional materials in paper form containing should be ensure in all primary schools, infrastructure facilities guaranteeing, employs teachers with pedagogical qualifications, effective supervision, improves the welfare packages of basic schools teachers and ensure basic schools are secured.

**Keywords:** administration, basic, challenges, education, learning, school

### CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Educational Administration is regarded as the process of integrating the appropriate human and material resources that are made available and made effective for achieving the purposes of a programme of an educational institution. The term “Administration” doesn’t refer to any single process or act. It is like a broad umbrella encompassing a number of processes such as: planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating the performance. The same situation occurs in the field of educational administration. The concept of educational administration is applicable in case of an

educational organisation which has certain purposes or goals to fulfill (Ogunode, 2020 cited Diksha, 2018). In order to achieve these purpose or goals, the head of the educational organisation plans carefully various programmes and activities. Here the educational organisation may be a school, college or university. The head of the school/college/university organizes these programmes and activities with co-operation from other teachers, parents and students. He/She motivates them and co-ordinates the efforts of teachers as well as directs and exercises control over them. He/ She evaluates their performance and progress in achieving the purposes of the programme. He provides feedback to them and

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brings modification, if required in the plans and programmes of the school or college or university. So the totality of these processes which are directed towards realizing or achieving the purposes or goals of the school/college/university is called educational administration (Ogunode, 2020 cited Diksha, 2018).

### OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

One of the major roles of administration is to integrate and co-ordinate all the physical and human resources and educational elements. School administration requires a great efficiency with it based on human sympathy, understanding, knowledge and skill. The physical resources mainly contribute building equipment's and instructional materials. The human resources that school administration deal with include: pupils, teachers, supervisors, administrators and parents. The additional elements comprise the various aspects of educational theory and practice including philosophy of education, objectives of education, curriculum, method of teaching, discipline, role of the teacher, rules and regulations etc. These elements are "parts, made into whole" and are components brought into harmonious relationship. So the purpose of school administration is to fulfill different purposes which are known as the objectives. The objectives of school administration include:

1. To provide proper education to students:  
This objective seeks to mention the fact that good education doesn't mean education at a very high cost as is practiced in modern public schools. Rather it means the right type of education from the right type of teachers within reasonable cost. This objective also implies quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of education.
2. To Ensure Adequate Utilization of All Resources:  
For adequate realization of the various purposes of educational programme there is the need of ensuring adequate utilization of all available resources-human, material and financial.
3. To Ensure Professional Ethics And Professional Development Among Teachers:  
As teachers are the senior and mature human elements to accelerate the programme in time their role is highly felt in this regard. They are to be encouraged and given the facility to devise and try out innovative ideas on instruction and to participate in service

education programmes. In this context, it can be visualized that educational administration should aim at developing a desire for hard work, dedication and commitment for their job among teachers.

4. To organize educational programmes for acquainting students with the art of democratic living and giving them excellent training in democratic citizenship.
5. To mobilize the community:  
Like general administration, educational administration seeks to maintain and improve the relations with the community. For this it should seek community support and co-operation for quantitative expansion, qualitative improvements, smooth and fair examination in the educational system.
6. To organize co-curricular activities effectively for developing talents of students and work efficiency of educational teachers.
7. To get the work done:  
The most important objective of administration is to get the work done effectively, efficiently and with satisfaction to the individuals and benefits to the society.
8. To prepare students for taking their places in various vocations and avenues of life.
9. To train the students in developing scientific attitude and objective outlook among them towards all aspects and activities of life.
10. To ensure qualitative improvement of education:
11. Good education can be provided to students by bringing qualitative improvement in instruction. Regular supervision of teaching and guidance of teachers help to ensure quality teaching in schools (Ogunode, 2020 cited Diksha, 2018).

### CHALLENGES FACING THE ADMINISTRATION OF BASIC EDUCATIONAL IN NIGERIA

Basic education is the first education given to children to prepare them secondary school education. It is a foundation education. Basic education is the pillar of education upon which every other educational system will depend on. It is unfortunate that this Basic education system in Nigeria is besets with administrative challenges and these challenges includes; inadequate fund, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of professional teachers, poor supervision, high population of students, inadequate instructional materials, poor teachers motivation, and insecurity.

## **INADEQUATE FUND**

Inadequate funding is a major challenge facing the administration of primary school education in Nigeria. A major challenge facing the primary school education and implementation of the curriculum at this level is funding in the mist of rising demands and cost of education. Adedeji, Okemakinde and Ssempebwa (2008) observed that finance is one of the problem confronting the education sector owing to a drastic reduction in both the actual and proportion of government fund allocated to the education sector, despite the UNESCO's recommendations of allocation of 26% of a nation's national income to the sector. Contrary to this recommendation, Nigeria in the past five years allotted just 6.4%, 7.5%, 8.4% , 8.7% and 10.69% of her annual budgets to education in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 in that order. Ladan (2012) reported that the low level of fiscal allocation to the sector which is below the UNESCO's threshold of 26% of the total budget certainly affects the implementation of government policy on education in the country and in particular the Universal Basic Education since its inception.

## **INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES**

Another problem facing the administration of primary school education in Nigeria is the challenge of inadequate infrastructural facilities. Many primary schools in Nigeria do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. According to Gometi (2011) school facilities include the school buildings, classrooms, accommodation, libraries, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment, apparatus and other instructional materials, their availability, adequacy and relevance to academic achievement. Ajayi and Yusuf (2009) maintain that high levels of students' academic performance may not be guaranteed where instructional space such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops, and laboratories are structurally defective or not available and adequate. Christine and Hayatu (2014) discovered in their study that there are insufficient and qualified basic science teachers. The outcome of the research also indicated that one of the major problems in the teaching and learning of basic science is lack of facilities such as well equipped workshops, laboratories and laboratory equipment. Most of the schools are without laboratories and workshops for the teaching of basic science and Technology. The research also indicated

that teachers' morale is low because of lack of incentives. World Bank (2017) submitted that lack of proper infrastructure was observed, with only 19 percent of schools having the minimum. Significantly, given the well28 documented adverse effects on female enrolment, in particular, only 27 percent of toilets in schools were clean, 44 percent private, and 38 percent accessible.

## **POOR LEARNING OUTCOME**

The learning outcome of most primary school students is poor. School administrators in Nigeria are disturbed by the falling quality of education at the level of the basic schools. World Bank (2017) observed that the quality of basic education, measured in terms of student learning outcomes, is low in Nigeria. According to international standards, children who have completed grade 3 are expected to be fully literate. Yet in Nigeria only 66 percent of public school students can read at least one of three words and 78 percent can add single digits after completing grade 4 (NEDS, 2015). In terms of variation across the States, a test administered to grade 4 pupils as part of the 2013 Service Delivery Indicator (SDI) Survey produced an overall low score of 32 percent, with the two southern states leading the ranking (59 and 54 percent) and the two northern states with significantly lower scores (23 and 20 percent). In addition, pupils in private schools significantly outperformed those in public schools.

## **SHORTAGE OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS**

Shortage of professional teachers is also a problem facing the administration of basic education in Nigeria. Many primary school in Nigeria do not have adequate professional teachers. International Organization for Migration (2014) submitted that a number of challenges have been identified as clogs in the realization of good access, equity and quality of education in Nigeria. One of these is the critical issue of teacher shortage at all levels of education. For instance, at the basic education level, the UBEC's 2012 National Personnel Audit Report revealed gross inadequacy in the quality and quantity of teaching personnel in the nation's primary and secondary schools. According to the report, there were 564,569 teachers in 59,007 primary schools in the country in 2012, of whom 297,960 were males and 266,609 were females. Also, there were a total of 133,338

teachers, comprising 68,085 males and 65,253 females, in 11,295 junior secondary schools in Nigeria. Considering that there were 20,291,709 and 4,313,164 enrollees in primary and junior secondary schools, respectively, during the personnel audit period, the teacher-to-pupil ratios of 1:60 and 1:37 were obtained for the nation's primary and secondary schools, respectively (UBEC, 2012). There is no doubt that the inadequacy of qualified teachers has negative impacts on the general quality of basic education in the country. But the basic education level in Nigeria according to Ejere (2011) is plagued by acute shortage of professionally qualified teachers. World Bank (2017) opined that most basic education teachers lack the formal qualifications as well as required content knowledge and skills for effective teaching. In 2010, on average, 32 percent of teaching staff in pre-primary education, 40 percent in primary education, and 15 percent in junior secondary education lacked formal qualifications. In addition to being concentrated in the South, qualified teachers tend to be in urban areas and private schools. As part of the 2013 SDI Survey in two northern and two southern states, actual teacher skills were assessed. The average score on the English and mathematics assessments, among English and mathematics teachers, was 32.9 percent, with only 3.7 percent of the teachers managing to obtain a score of at least 80 percent on these assessments. These findings indicate

that teachers in Nigeria do not have the knowledge and technical competencies to teach their subject matter. In addition, there is some evidence of overcrowded classrooms in urban areas and poorly staffed schools in rural areas, so that recruitment and deployment of teachers is a concern.

From the above Table 1, Mauritius, Cuba and Thailand had 100% of trained teachers in their primary schools, Botswana, Malaysia, Mexico, Hong Kong and Singapore all have above 90% of trained teachers in their primary schools while Egypt have above 70% of trained teachers in her primary schools only Nigeria have below 70% of trained teachers in its primary schools. Osunyanmi (2018) observes that the statistics obtained from the Human Development Index of 2016 revealed that Nigeria did not have sufficient qualified teachers in primary schools. Only 66 percent of teachers in Nigerian primary schools were trained to teach. That is, about two out of every five teachers in Nigeria were not qualified to teach pupils. Education is in disarray as people without requisite skills are being employed to transfer knowledge to hapless children.

## POOR SUPERVISION

The problem of poor school supervision by the respective school administrators have also contributed to the challenge facing the administration of basic schools. Many school administrators do not effectively supervised the basic schools under their watch. The Nigerian government recognized the need to monitor not only the financial management of the school, but also the teaching of students. Educationists at the Ministries of Education both at the federal and the state levels have set up quality control divisions in their respective ministries to ensure that quality education is maintained. It has been established that quality and standard could be maintained in the educational institutions through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instruction in the schools. Supervision and inspection have been identified as very germane to the day-to-day activities of educational institutions (National Open University of Nigeria, 2009). The supervisor assesses and records the performance of teachers, their ability and consistency in carrying out the classroom activities and keeping of high quality records. The activities of supervisors include the following: inspecting, monitoring, rating, assisting, recommending etc. All these activities if carried out by

**Table 1.** Percentage of Trained Primary School Teachers in chosen Countries

No.	Country	Percentage of Trained Teachers in Primary Schools
1	Nigeria	66%
2	Botswana	99%
3	Egypt	73%
4	Mauritius	100%
5	Cuba	100%
6	Thailand	100%
7	Malaysia	99%
8	Mexico	96%
9	Hong Kong	96%
10	Singapore	94%

Source: Osunyanmi (2018) cited Transparency International (2016).

professional supervisors are aimed at improving instructional delivery and quality of teaching in the educational institutions. The supervision of the Basic education is weak.

## HIGH POPULATION OF STUDENTS

Administrators of basic schools across the country are worried by the high enrolment of pupils into the basic schools causing inadequate infrastructural facilities and teaching of large classes due to inadequate space. The National policy on education reported from their major finding that 100% of the teachers agreed that there is high enrolment with inadequate infrastructure. According to the school records the teacher student ratio is 1:100, this shows that there is high population with inadequate classrooms. The student-teacher ratio of 10:1 is out of context in the school setting, indicating that this is unachievable. The table below shows the pupils-teachers ratio of different countries compare to Nigeria situation.

The pupils-teachers ratio in the Nigerian primary schools is high and does not support delivery of quality education. Let us see (Table 2) where Sweden 10, Austria 11, Germany 12, Finland 13, USA 15 and UK 17 have better pupil-to-teacher ratio comparing with Nigeria 38. Osunyikanmi (2018) submitted that Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of pupils per teacher in the world. In the country, a teacher is attached to 38 pupils in primary school. The high ratio indicates that school

**Table 2.** Percentage of Pupil-Teacher Ratio

No.	Country	Pupil-teacher Ratio
1	Nigeria	38
2	South Africa	32
3	Egypt	23
4	Brazil	21
5	UK	17
6	USA	15
7	Finland	13
8	Germany	12
9	Austria	11
10	Sweden	10

Source: Osunyikanmi (2018) cited Transparency International (2016).

infrastructure is inadequate and teaching personnel are overstretched. This scenario is unhelpful as it reduces the quality of education in Nigeria. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) members like Sweden, USA, UK have better pupil-to-teacher ratio of 10, 15 and 17 respectively.

## INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE TO NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Instructional materials are educational resources that aid delivering of teaching. Instructional materials helps teaching to be effective. World Bank (2017) reported that there are inadequate instructional materials in the 2013 SDI Survey that tracks the availability of minimum teaching and learning materials and equipment in schools (pens, pencils, notebooks, textbooks, black boards, chalk, and so forth) and minimum infrastructure, including clean, private, and accessible toilets. In terms of teaching equipment, only 55 percent of schools surveyed in the four States had the required minimum. In terms of availability of textbooks, only 38 percent of pupils had a mathematics and English textbook. This figure is roughly comparable to the figure reported in the 2015 NEDS on availability of free textbooks in primary schools.

## POOR TEACHERS MOTIVATION

Another problem preventing effective administration of basic school in Nigeria is problem of poor motivation. Teachers teaching in the Nigerian basics schools are poorly motivate. Motivation is defined as a driving force that compels an individual to take some actions in order to achieve certain goals. Motivational level of everyone is different like perception, attitude of everyone is different. For example a person feels hungry, and as a response that particular person eats so the feelings of hunger get diminished. Adelabu (2005) found in Nigeria that teacher's motivation is very poor and teachers are also dissatisfied with their working environment and salary conditions. The reason behind the poor motivation of teachers is that they having low salaries as compared to other professionals, poor work environment, no decision making authority, and also not giving them opportunity of develop their career. Motivation plays an important role in the organization because it increases the productivity of employees and the goals can be achieved

in an efficient way. The behavior of employees can be change through motivation in any organization. Teachers are expected to play pivotal role in the implementation of the UBE programme, yet sufficient attention is not being paid to their motivation to the utter neglect of policy essence. Several studies Ajayi (2007) and Omokhodion (2008) have shown that teachers in Nigeria are poorly motivated. In fact, teachers had in recent times embarked on chain of industrial actions before government accepted 27.5% pay raise for professional teachers across the states. Even now, this pay rise is yet to be fully implemented in some states. According to Nadeem et al. (2011) social and economic conditions of teachers have an effect on their performance i.e. low salary, lack of facilities, status of teachers in society, teachers mental health and morale, stress of work, relation with staff and head teachers, working environment are all those factors that have a strong impact on female teachers performance. The level of motivation of teachers reduced, when there is a poor social and economic condition in the place where the school is located. It was concluded that there is a significant relationship between these factors of motivation and the efficiency of female teachers.

## INSECURITY

Insecurity is one of the major problem facing the administration of primary schools in Nigeria. Effective administration of basic education in Nigeria is frustrated by the insecurity challenges facing the country especially the Northern part of the country. Many Basic schools have been closed down. Educational officers cannot travel to areas where they are supposed to travel to for administrative functions because of insecurity challenges. One of the most insecurity challenge facing the country is the Boko Haram group. The militant group, Boko Haram, has carried out violent attacks in the north-eastern parts of Nigeria. Thousands of Nigerians have been killed, and many more have been forced to flee their homes. Schools have been the primary target of the attacks. Since 2011, Boko Haram, whose name means ‘Western Education is Forbidden, has expanded its attacks to the direct target of schools. It has resulted in the killing and abduction of hundreds of teachers and students and the destruction of school buildings and teaching materials. As a result of increased attacks on education, all schools in Borno State were closed from the 14th March 2014, and roughly 253,000 children were out of school in the 2013–2014

school year (Borno SUBEB). By the end of 2014, Adamawa, Yobe and Borno State Universal Basic Education authorities have reported a total of 338 schools destroyed. Also, at least 196 teachers and over 314 learners killed and more than 276 learners abducted. The situation has further fuelled the perception of schools as ‘danger zones’ and threatens the gains achieved by targeted school enrolment drives in northern Nigeria (Thisday, 2018). World Bank (2017) reported that today, Nigeria continues to face several security challenges. Though an army offensive in late 2015 drove Boko Haram from much of the territory it held in the North East zone, the militants periodically strike back with suicide bombings and attacks on civilians. In parallel, as the Sahel and farms encroach on pastures and grazing areas, conflicts between herdsman and farmers have intensified across Nigeria’s “middle belt”. All this activities is preventing effective planning of secondary schools in the country.

## EXCLUDED FROM EDUCATION

The administrators of basic education in Nigeria are also facing the challenges of how to provide quality education for the excluded children from education in Nigeria. UNICEF report (2017) observes that despite the fact that primary education is officially free and compulsory, 10.2 million children aged 5–14 years are not in school, of whom 8.7 million (4.98 million girls) are primary school-age (6–11 years). There are differences in the primary Gross Attendance Rate for males (90 percent) and females (83 percent) with the national average of 87 percent. Within Nigeria, a clear educational divide exists between southern and northern states, with the average net attendance ratio in southern states more than 20 percentage points higher than in the northern ones (75 percent in the south and 53 percent in the north). The gross attendance ratio is also 30 percentage points higher in the southern states than in the north (109 percent in the north and 79 percent in the south) (UNICEF, 2017). The inequalities largely mirror the north-south geographic divide where the differences in socioeconomic status and social norms seem to impact access to education. Examining the out-of-school population shows that children who are expected never to enter school is a bigger issue than children who drop out of school at the primary and junior secondary levels. These children form the largest portion of out-of-school children and are permanently excluded from school at all levels of

the education system. Of primary-aged out-of-school children, 74 percent are expected never to enter school while only 5 percent are classified as dropouts. At the junior secondary level, the situation is much the same, with 76.9 percent or 2.2 million expected never to enter school, while 22.1 percent or 625,000 drop out of school (UNICEF, 2017).

### **WAYS FORWARD**

To address this administrative challenges, the paper suggests: government should ensure financing at the level of 26% of state budget expenses, instructional materials in paper form containing should be ensure in all primary schools, infrastructure facilities guaranteeing, employs teachers with pedagogical qualifications, effective supervision, improves the welfare packages of basic schools teachers and ensure basic schools are secured.

### **ADEQUATE FUNDING**

The government should consider an upward review of the educational budget to meet up with the 26% allocation recommended by UNESCO and above.

### **ADEQUATE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Instructional materials are very important for teaching and learning at the Basic schools. Government should provide adequate instructional materials for all the basic schools in the country.

### **PROVISION OF ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES**

Infrastructure facilities guaranteeing quality education. So, the government of the day should take this into consideration in the provision of school buildings for effective teaching and learning which will subsequently lead to the achievement of the goals of the National Policy on Education.

### **EMPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS**

The government should employ teachers with pedagogical qualifications and deploy to the basic schools across the country.

### **EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION**

For the government to achieve the objectives of the Basic education in Nigeria there is need for effective supervision, the various agencies of government established for supervisory functions and inspection has to been reformed and restructure to execute their functions well.

### **ADEQUATE SECURITY FOR BASIC SCHOOLS**

Adequate security should be provided for all the basic schools in the country especially those in the north east part of Nigeria.

### **TEACHERS MOTIVATION**

The Government should motivate all the primary school teachers by increasing their salaries.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Primary school education is the first education a child received. Primary education is an early education given to a child from age five to twelve. It is an education that is designed to provide the child a basic education. It is unfortunate that this basic education system in Nigeria is besets with administrative challenges and these challenges includes; inadequate fund, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of professional teachers, poor supervision, high population of students, inadequate instructional materials, poor teachers motivation, and insecurity. To address this administrative challenges, the paper suggests adequate funding of basic education, adequate instructional materials, adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more professional teachers, effective supervision, improve the welfare packages of basic schools teachers and ensure basic schools are secured.

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## ZARZĄDZANIE EDUKACJĄ W SZKOŁACH PODSTAWOWYCH W NIGERII: WYZWANIA I DROGI ROZWOJU

**Abstrakt.** W artykule przeanalizowano wyzwania stojące przed administrowaniem szkolnictwem podstawowym w Nigerii. Wykorzystano dane wtórne pozyskane z materiałów internetowych i drukowanych. W artykule analizowano się między innymi koncepcję administracji oświatowej oraz celom jej działania. Zidentyfikowano następujące wyzwania stojące przed administracją w badanym sektorze: niewystarczające fundusze, nieodpowiednie zaplecze infrastrukturalne, brak profesjonalnych nauczycieli, słaby nadzór, duża liczba uczniów, nieodpowiednie materiały dydaktyczne, słabe wyniki nauczania, słaba motywacja nauczycieli i brak bezpieczeństwa. Aby sprostać tym wyzwaniom administracyjnym, autorzy sugerują: podjęcie działań na poziomie rządowym, w tym zapewnienie finansowania (na poziomie 26% wydatków budżetu państwa), materiałów instruktażowych w formie papierowej dla wszystkich szkół podstawowych, zagwarantowanie infrastruktury, zatrudnienie nauczycieli z kwalifikacjami pedagogicznymi, skuteczny nadzór, poprawę pakietów socjalnych nauczycieli szkół podstawowych oraz zapewnienie bezpieczeństwa.

**Słowa kluczowe:** administracja, szkolnictwo podstawowe, wyzwania dla administracji, edukacja, uczenie się, szkoły podstawowe