

Challenges of Material Resource Management among Social Studies Lecturers in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

The study is focused on the challenges of material resource management among social studies lecturers in Nigerian Universities. The study population is one thousand eight hundred and fifty five (1855). The sample size comprises one hundred staff, one hundred and twenty students, and forty internal material resource managers were randomly selected from secondary schools in Delta and Bayelsa States. A 20 item questionnaire was drawn for the study. This was validated by experts and a test for reliability was conducted using the test- retest method. With the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, the reliability test was established at 0.89. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher with some research assistants. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated for the study. The mean (\bar{x}) and z-test were used in analyzing the data. The findings show that the appointment of an internal material resource manager is appropriate and that material resource management in schools should not be the sole responsibility of the school administrator. The role of the school administrator differs considerably from the material resource manager. Plausible recommendations were made.

Introduction

Education is a useful instrument in the hands of the society to help meet her need and aspiration. The school remains the vehicle upon which learning experiences that are relevant to the challenges of life in the environment are driven. The school therefore must be a flexible, adaptable and functional institution of the society. To achieve the lofty aims and objectives of educating the entire citizenry, in order to attain these objectives, there is the need to harness and maximally utilize the material and human resources needed.

Okolo (2005) noted that the material resource management has remained a much neglected area in virtually all the public schools in Nigeria as much emphasis is placed on human resource management. Material resources remain a formidable factor to be reckoned with in the planning of a functional education programme. No school can operate in a vacuum, the buildings, furniture, teaching aids, and several other materials are needed before a school can be said to be operational. However, the term school plant management is often adopted by most school administrators without adequate knowledge of the complexities involved Knezevich (2006) explained that school plant does not necessarily mean the school buildings alone, it is the provision of safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, adequate shelter, balanced visual environment, appropriate thermal environment, room for work and play, the various types of equipment and materials on hand in school, the size of the learning classroom within the school building, as well as the nature of the classroom environment. All of these constitute the focus the material resource management in a school.

Material resource management is therefore the process of ensuring that building and other technical systems support the operations of the organization. In most Nigeria public schools especially the primary and secondary, it is a common sight to see chairs and tables littered everywhere in the school premises, broken windows and doors, dilapidated buildings with cracked walls and leaking roofs, exposed electrical fittings, unkept bushes and lawn as well as a picture of total neglect of the school facilities. This is as a result of insensitivity of staff and students to school facilities as this duty is not assigned to any member of staff.

The material resources in schools are very essential. They are needed for the positive realization of the objective of the organization. Okolo (2005) advised that the role of a material auditor is needed in the management of the material resources in schools. The role of the material auditor includes:

- Safeguarding the assets of the school
- Checking the accuracy and reliability of data of material resources supplied or bought.
- Promoting operational effectiveness
- Encourage support to lay down policies.

Material resource management in schools is aimed at evaluating the physical conditions of existing facilities in schools. It is a tactical planning tool for modernization of the existing facilities; developing the helpful measures for continuous maintenance, reconstruction and rejuvenation. Auditing these material resources is aimed at providing numerical rating for capital planning, with a view to identifying functional deficiencies in building; the nature, expenditure or cost and timing of corrective actions that may be needed to tackle such physical shortage or insufficiency.

Material resource management in schools starts from the planning for such resources. At the inception of a school, certain basic materials stipulated by government must be available at the school. These facilities

must be adequately planned for. The facilities include the impermanent properties and physical infrastructure. The infrastructures are assets rooted in and located on the land belonging to an educational institution and used for educational purposes. According to Adesina (2006) planning for material resources in the school are as follows.

- Production and provision of an ideal physical layout or site plan for the educational institution.
- Choice of location where the educational institution is located.
- Appropriate structural specification for an ideal educational institution
- Deciding the right facilities and equipment necessary for an educational institution.
- Rational location/relocation, arrangements and logistics of educational institution in such a way as to enhance optimal utility.

Planning for material resources in the school is very necessary as Adeotun (2004) advised that before equipment are purchased in the school, they must be planned for and the need for such equipment must be ascertained. The budget, must address the problems at stake during planning for material resources. However, Bernstein (2003) advised that when planning for material resources in a school, the factors listed below should be taken into consideration.

- Triple explosion of the human and society
- Feasibility of the implementation of projects and plans having in mind the cost, the state of the nation's economy, the realities and exigencies politically.
- Existing guidelines and policy on the project or materials.
- Geographical conditions which include the weather, terrain, etc and its consequence on the kind of materials to be procured.
- The need and cost effectiveness of the material.
- The learner-centred principle of giving special consideration to the students who are the users of most of the materials.
- Accountability.

Procurement or purchasing the needed materials in the school is an essential aspect of material resource management. Tiodern (2009) noted that purchasing is a crucial aspect of material resource management and that this can only be done in line with the budget provision. In most schools as observed by Alcintola (2003) the school administrator or the school bursar often act as the purchasing officer for the school and this he noted has brought a lot of disaffection among members of staff as prices are in most cases unwholesomely inflated. This to some extent impinges on the veracity or integrity of the school administrator and bursar.

Inventory or record keeping of the material resources in school is an important area of material resource management. Three categories of records of material resource are needed. Amirizie (2004) identified the school plant and equipment record as vital. This record should contain names and types of physical structure, number of rooms and their dimensions, drawings plans, approved number, year of completion, name of contractor and the state of the structure. The second record is the annual routine inventory. This includes checks on structures and facilities indicating names, and type of structure, state of the rooms, walls, floors, stairs, drainage, access roads, equipment and facilities, their quality, state of utility, date of checks and remarks. The third form of record is the maintenance, repairs of equipment and facilities record. This record indicates the name of the structure, equipment or facility, nature, cost and date of repair, maintenance or renovation done, mode of execution of the maintenance, name of contractor (if necessary) and general remark.

Storage and distribution of materials are essential aspects of material resource management. When materials are supplied or purchased for use in the school, there is the need for proper storage. Bernstein (2003) noted that most school facilities and equipments are centrally stored. Akindele (2004) observed that the school administrator's office in most cases is often converted to the college store house, this has led to a lot of losses. In a centralized storage system, there is usually a comprehensive inventory of the materials supplied or purchased and the store keeper must update his records from time to time. Materials are not to be given out without the requisition form. This will enable the store keeper to know the movement of such equipment and number left. In a school, there are consumables such as most laboratory reagents, the material resource auditor is often in a better position to know the level at which most of these reagents are been consumed and make adequate arrangement for replacement. There are moveable materials such as the furniture, office equipments, laboratory materials and game equipments. The immovable resources are primarily the buildings and other assets for educational purposes in the school. The school administrator may have the records of these but the maintenance and monitoring could be done by the internal material resource auditor.

Ejiogu (2009) noted that one of the problems in the Nigeria school system with regards to material resource management is not quite the non-availability or inadequate provision of good quality facilities but the inability to take good care of what is already available. Amirizie (2004) suggested that there is the need for a special appointment of an internal material resource auditor who will be in charge of school facilities but will carries out routine or preventive maintenance, oversee the facilities in the various units, departments, classrooms,

laboratories, offices, workshops and so on. The auditor organizes orientation programme for staff and students on campus sanitation and facilities maintenance. The school internal auditor for material resources will mark out the school premises into zones and assigned to specific individuals or groups. He carries out periodic check to ascertain minor and petty repairs. As an adviser to the management, the material resource auditor prepares schedule for maintenance and suggest ways to source for fund.

School materials are often neglected, most of them are left all around the school premises without anybody charged with the responsibility of maintain them. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the material resources in the school system, there is the need to design a more appropriate method for the management of the material resources.

Research Questions

1. Will the appointment of an internal material resource manager in schools be appropriate?
2. Should the management of material resources in schools be left solely in the hands in the school administrator?

The following under listed hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of the roles of the internal material resource manager between the school administrator and the teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of roles of the internal material resource manager between school administrator and students.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of roles of the internal material resource manager between teachers and students.

The population of the study comprises of both Delta State University, Abraka and Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State which is 1,855. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 school administrators and 40 material resource managers in schools, 100 staff and 120 students.

The research instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled Material Resource Management in Schools (MEMS) designed by the researcher. It is consisted of two parts. A and B. Section A sought information on respondents personal data while section B contained twenty (20) items. A 4- point likert scale of strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was used.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts in school administration in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island. The observation of the experts formed the basis for the modification of items on the questionnaire. For the test of reliability, the instrument was administered to twenty school administrators and five and internal material resource managers (self appointed or delegated). A test-retest approach was adopted and the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient of 0.89 was obtained for the reliability of the instrument.

Discussion

Material resource management is a deserted sector in school administration. The school administrator is often charged with the responsibility of maintenance and replacement of most school facilities depending on the availability of fund.

Okafor (2006) noted that material resource management is as important as the human resource management. The study indicated that the appointment of an internal material resource manager is very vital. In most schools, certain dedicated teachers just take up the duty of caring for the school facilities and directing students to take care of them. They are not appointed by the ministry for this purpose and in most cases, they may not receive the adequate support of the school administrator. The staff and students believe that if an internal material resource manager is appointed and he is saddled with the responsibility of auditing, planning and maintenance of school facilities, it will go a long way in safeguarding the material resources in the school.

Staff and students also believe that material resource management should not be the sole responsibility of the school administrator as he is already too occupied with other administrative jobs in the school. Menyit (2003) stated that some school administrators do not want to surrender the duty of material resource management to any other staff most probably because of the gains or benefits attach to material resource management.

There is a significant difference in the roles of the school administrator and the internal resource manager in material resource management. Material resource management is very important in school administration. The appointment of a school internal material resource manager is very necessary. If facilities in the school are left in the hands of someone who is not properly designated for the job, accountability will be difficult. The responsibility of catering for the school facilities must not be left solely in the hands of the school administrator. There should be someone to plan, and oversee the school facilities and report to the school administrator from time to time. The school administrator must support the material resource manager to enable proper auditing and planning of school facilities.

However, it must be noted that the role of the school administrator and that of the material resource manager are not likely to be same. The school administrator may be saddled with the responsibilities of

managing the human resources while the IRM focuses on the material resources.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made based on the results of the study.

- A material recourse manager should be appointed for schools.
- There should be periodic orientation on material resource management for staff and students.
- School administrators should recommend to the Ministry of Education the appointment of a school internal material resource manager.
- Proper planning, purchasing, storage and distribution of school materials must be carefully handled by the school material resource manager.
- Emphasis should be placed on maintenance rather than replacement of facilities
- The yearly budget must capture areas of urgent need in facility procurement and maintenance.

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