

## Review

# Internal Efficiency and the Challenge of Educational Management in Nigeria: A Critical Overview

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**This paper examines the vital role educational managers play in ensuring that wastage in the school system is minimized by ensuring that human and material resources are efficiently managed to achieve educational goals and objectives. It defines Internal Efficiency, in a nutshell, as the ability of a teaching and learning institution to effectively graduate learners on completion of their academic programmes within a specified academic period. The paper attempts to identify the major factors responsible for the high rates of drop-out, repetition, expulsion and poor attitudes to education at all levels in Nigeria. The paper concludes that adequate human and material resources should be provided for the educational system in Nigeria to function effectively; and recommends, among others, that needs assessment exercises should be conducted routinely to evaluate policy formulation and implementation strategies in our school system. It also suggests that anti-corruption agencies should be fully engaged in the education sector to curb the high rate of corruption perpetrated, especially by political appointees.**

**Keywords:** Internal efficiency, educational management, performance rates, repetition, drop-out, progression.

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in advancing the development of individuals, communities, nations and humanity. It brings about the development of the individual to the fullest extent and also maximizes the development of the society. Education is also viewed as the development of an individual according to his needs and demands of society, of which he is an integral part; and no country has achieved constant economic development without considerable investment in human capital through education. The capacity of education managers to effectively organize, coordinate, control and supervise human and material resources enhances internal efficiency; and puts the institution, at whatever level, on the pedestal of success.

The education system consists of inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes, where input simply

refers to the elements such as teachers, administrators, students, educational materials, buildings, and various equipment that are necessary for the proper functioning of a teaching/learning process in a school. On the other hand, output refers to the expected outcomes of the education system achieved in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The provision of quality education is one of the most important responsibilities of all governments in the world because education contributes to improving the quality of lives of the people.

Over the years the Government of Nigeria has invested substantial resources in the education sector but in spite of these efforts, there have been notable wastage in the sector which has caused it to operate inefficiently. Internal efficiency is the flow of students from the point of entry to the point of completion with

minimum dropout and repetition. It is therefore measured with respect to its four dimensions namely; dropout, repetition, progression and completion rates. Psacharopoulos (1991), defines internal efficiency of an education system as the ability of an education system to turnout its graduates in the most efficient way, without wastage, stagnation or repetition. An education system is internally efficient if maximum outputs are obtained from a given minimum input.

Lumuli, (2009), asserts that internal efficiency of an education system is indicated by grade promotion, repetition and dropout rates. Therefore, indicators of internal efficiency include performance rates, dropout rates, promotion rates and repetition rates. Consequently, the student grade to grade promotion policies, teaching and learning resources, school time management policy, and school physical infrastructure can have great bearing on internal efficiency.

### CONSTRAINTS OF INTERNAL EFFICIENCY

An increasing internal efficiency in secondary education would mean higher number of graduates, access to quality education and higher earning capacity of graduates as a result of low drop-out, repetition and higher promotion rates (Lumuli,(2009)). This assertion has not been the case with our schools as high level drop-out and repetition rates are still being recorded. When dropout and repetition rates of cohorts are high before completing education cycle, the system is said to have serious **internal inefficiency**. Nigeria and many developing countries have continued to experience low internal efficiency as a result of high dropout and repetition rates due to limited educational opportunities, inadequate educational facilities, poor management of time and rigid school policy on students' promotion to the next level. The data from National Bureau of Statistics (2018), shows that the dropout rate has been high especially from schools.

### SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL EFFICIENCY

The various stakeholders in educational management, including policy makers, educationists, and school managers among others, have adequately influenced internal efficiency in education system. The school managers are of great help in ensuring that there are sufficient teaching and learning resources, physical facilities, and an insight of planning for time as the greatest resource for performance of the students in the school. Through their coordinating effort learners are able to appreciate the importance of the available

teaching and learning resources, time as a production factor, the school facilities, and even the services offered by their teachers. Their supervisory roles have bettered the learners' performance, by turning down low dropout rates, low repetition and high completion rates.

The school management factors highlighted that affect internal efficiency include rigid student grade to grade promotion policies by schools fighting for good school and subject means; lack of teaching and learning resources within schools as a result of inadequate government and public spending; and lack of school physical facilities like science laboratories, classrooms and latrines. There has also been a concern of poor time management by schools leading to absence of or late syllabus coverage. The implementation of the adopted government policy of standardized teaching timetable from eight in the morning to four in the evening has been greatly ignored by several school managers. Most of the schools have been defying the policy, adopting other schedules like teaching during dawns and evening preps to hasten syllabus coverage. Others due to inaccessibility have had time wastage during morning hours before the teaching staff arrive (Lawrence, 2016).

### THE EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL MANAGERS IN ATTAINING INTERNAL EFFICIENCY

Lumuli, (2009), identifies the followings as the minimum expectations expected from any school manager at every level:

1. The school administrator controls how physical facilities affect internal efficiency by ensuring that classrooms, library and laboratories are adequately provided and usage well monitored. He must also ensure that furniture, textbooks school bus/van, playing fields, teachers housing are adequately provided to enhance learning.
2. The school administrator coordinates school policy that affect internal efficiency by ensuring Promotion policy, Language policy, Disciplinary policy and boarding policy are adequately adhered to in order to enhance learning.
3. The school administrator should direct and carefully ensure that teachers have good attitude towards students, noting that` teachers can adequately supervise class activities, and are motivated and committed to work. He should ensure teachers have good personal relationship with colleagues and students

## MEASUREMENT OF INTERNAL EFFICIENCY IN EDUCATION

Achoka, (2007)), identifies promotion rate, repetition rate and dropout rate in the school system as measures of internal efficiency. He states that promotion rate is the rate at which pupils move from one class to another in a cohort in a given year while repetition rate is the rate at which students are retained in the same classes in cohorts of pupils in a school system.

Dropout in relation to efficiency refers to the practice of students leaving a school before completion of a given phase of education or non-terminal point in a level of education. This form of wastage is most influenced by the type of education system. In absolute terms; dropout rate is the number of students who exit the school system at a given time occasioned by withdrawals, transfers, or incapability. School level factors also play a role in increasing pressures to drop out such as teacher's absenteeism, poor time management, school location and poor quality educational provision, among others.

Repetition and dropout constitute to wastage while promotions constitute efficiency in the system. Automatic, administrative or collective promotions seem to be a major strategy for the reduction of repeating (UNICEF, 2001). The practice of repetition is based on the idea that a repeater can get remedial support that can improve the foundational skills that are needed before proceeding to the next level. Tools such as brooms and cleaning materials must again be budgeted for. Efficient utilization of these items is necessary for the school to be pleasant, safe and comfortable for learning to take place. These physical facilities affect the internal efficiency aiding one to progress to the next grade. In majority of the cases, repetition is considered as a mechanism to prevent schools from promoting students with inadequate basic skills necessary to be productive members of society.

## INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL BASED FACTORS ON INTERNAL EFFICIENCY IN LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Different scholars have identified different school based factors that contribute to efficiency or inefficiency in secondary schools. These factors can dictate the pass rates, dropout rates, repetition rates and completion rates in secondary schools (Robert 2005).

Efficiency is a multidimensional concept. No one factor can justify its attainability. The Education For All (EFA) Report (2001), observes that the primary level of education in Kenya is characterized by high wastage in terms of repetition and dropout. Multiple repetitions

result to frustration of the students who in turn feel embarrassed to remain in the same form and cause the students to drop out. In this study therefore, the researcher was limited to finding out a few school based factors and their influence on internal efficiency in mixed public secondary schools in the provision of secondary education. These factors are: students' grade to grade promotion policy, teaching and learning resources, time management policy and the school physical facilities.

## STUDENTS' GRADE TO GRADE PROMOTION POLICY AND INTERNAL EFFICIENCY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Many schools have formulated several operational policies that guide teaching/learning process as well as assessment of students learning. These school policies have their both positive and negative impacts on schools' internal efficiency performance. The school policies that affect educational wastage are the promotion policies that do not allow the student to proceed to the next grade level. Even though examinations are not fully efficient to measure student academic achievement, many schools use them to determine the chances of students to move to the next higher grade or level of education. As a result, examinations and promotions usually cause high or low rate of educational wastage (Psacharopoulos, 1991). Many schools across the globe with Kenya, in particular, have adopted automatic promotion policy to eliminate wastage by reducing high repetition rate and drop out in schools. Ethiopia allows some automatic promotion in the lower grade with the sole objective of reducing repetition rate, however, in these grades, repetition rates are still reported. The ultimate purpose of such automatic policy is mainly to increase educational quality and reduce wastage in the system. Academic performance of the low-achiever does not improve even if the student repeats the grade. Moreover, high repetition rate leads to crowding in classrooms as large number of students are held back in the same class (Psacharopoulos, 1991).

The Ministry of Education has also found out that repetition gains are short-term. Students' grade to grade promotion policy therefore affects internal efficiency in that where schools have put mechanisms of automatic promotion, there is little wastage through drop outs and repetition but where schools have got regulations on promotions as is the case in most of the schools, a good number of students drop out due to frustration and degraded self-esteem.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES AND INTERNAL EFFICIENCY IN LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Teaching and learning materials are those things which are accessed in the school environment, collected, or bought. In secondary schools, resources include teaching resources such as chalkboards, white boards, dusters, lesson notebooks, textbooks, etc.(Rono, 1990). It is very unfortunate that many developing countries like Nigeria still find it a challenge to provide the necessary material resources for teaching and learning mainly due to the limited national resources and the competing options. Availability and condition of the facilities affect the performance of teachers and in turn, the performance of the students in the school

Schultz, (1971), points out that the high number of pupils enrolled after the government made education to be free has brought about problems of low textbook ratios and overcrowded classrooms which affect participation in primary schools. This can lead to non-completion of education programmes or poor performance leading to repetition of classes.

## TIME MANAGEMENT POLICY AND INTERNAL EFFICIENCY IN LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Time management means those behaviours “that aim at achieving an effective use of time while performing certain goal-directed activities. The job of most school heads entail responsibility for the time intensive tasks of managing school operations, overseeing instructional programmes, building relations among staff members, and so forth. To be more productive means finding ways to accomplish more given limited time resources. Managing one’s time more ably is one way to fulfil this goal. Time management can also be considered as the process by which an individual more effectively accomplishes tasks and goals; and in order to utilize time effectively, individuals must first be able to predict how much time is needed for the activity within the school (Psacharopoulos, 1991).

## INTERNAL EFFICIENCY AND WASTAGE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Internal efficiency is a phenomenon that describes the relationship between inputs and outputs of education system in order to curb wastage. Wastage occurs in one of the following ways: students dropping out of school system before the completion of the course; grades repeaters leading to overcrowding in class which affect the quality of teaching, teacher-

student ratio. Some studies have also shown that lack of learning materials, laboratory, library, text books, students-teacher ratio are major reasons for students’ repetition and eventual drop-out. School based factors play a large part in education wastage. For instance, unattractive school facilities, defiance of government policies on education, irregular policies push students out of school. Similarly, the factors contributing to dropout, repetition, progression and completion rates are outlined as follows:

## FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS DROP OUTS IN NIGERIA

1. **School fees:** Failure of parents to pay school fees. This failure to pay fees may be largely attributed to poverty. Many households in the country depend on agriculture which does not fetch much to cater for school fees and other household necessities Psacharopoulos, (1991), agrees that the effects of poverty are direct because poor families certainly find it difficult to pay fees. Evven free education imposes substantial financial expenses through earnings foregone and out of pocket expenses for clothes, travel and books. Moreover, poor families on average tend to have more school age children than the higher income families
2. **Cost of education:** This is the situation where the costs of education are unaffordable by many parents. The cost of education influences dropout from school in Nigeria. In most schools particularly private schools, the charges are far much beyond the ability of most parents.
3. **Indiscipline:** One of the major factors contributing to dropout from school is indiscipline of learners. Indiscipline can result into pregnancies, drug abuse, absenteeism, suspension and expulsion of students from schools. Retelsdorf & Günther (2011), opine that indiscipline contributes to dropout. Note that more boys become undisciplined when they realize that they cannot make it academically. In essence such undisciplined students use this option to drop out of school so that they join fellow peers as touts in bus parks, motor bike transporters, hawking and hotel businesses as attendants
4. **Pregnancy:** Another factor contributing to dropout from schools is pregnancy of girls. This could be attributed to poverty at the household level as the poor girls can easily be preyed upon by people who can give them little money. The causes of teenage pregnancies are also attributed to peer-pressure as these teens sometimes let their friends influence their decision to have sex even when they do not fully understand the

consequences associated with the act. According to Achoka, (2007) teen girls are more likely to get pregnant if they have limited or no guidance from their parents

5. **Marriage:** Early marriages do contribute greatly to school dropouts. Achoka (2007) observes that many girls perform well in Primary Education but fail to access secondary school education either because they are pregnant or are married immediately. He found that early marriages and pregnancies were causes of girls' failure to be in school.

6. **Parental concern/Attitude:** Other factors contributing to dropouts from schools are negative attitude towards education generally; and some parents prefer to educate only boys as opposed to girls (Rashidi, 2000).

## FACTORS INFLUENCING REPETITION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. **Absenteeism due to lack of school fees:** The major reason for repetition is absenteeism occasioned by failure to pay school fees. Failure to pay school fees increases absenteeism and as students stay out of school for long period of time, their performance is adversely affected; there is poor coverage of syllabus.

2. **Academic performance:** Learners who perform poorly in examinations may be advised to repeat a class. Student repetition can be due to poor performance in examination arising from teachers' attitude or students' entry behaviour in their previous class and absenteeism.

3. **Parent/student decision:** Some parents and students themselves make decisions to repeat grades on the basis of academic performance. This is due to the belief that repetition would improve student academic performance.

4. **Health:** Other factors contributing to repetition in school include ill-health. Educational wastage has adverse effects on human social and physical levels, and contributes to reducing the internal efficiency of the educational system; and upset the balance of system inputs and outputs. In other words, upset among new students, and graduates or repeaters balance increase the cost of education. Hence it can be said that the educational wastage problem, no matter how small or large, deserves attention and requires treatment and rapid solution (Rono, 1990).

## CONCLUSION

Internal efficiency of an education system is the ability of an education system to turnout its graduates in the most efficient way, without wastage, stagnation or repetition. An education system is internally efficient if maximum outputs are obtained from a given minimum input.

Educational administrators globally, believe that the ability to manage human and material resources efficiently in learning institutions determines the success of the organization. This is why much premium is placed on managerial functions of planning, organizing, directing, staffing, coordinating and budgeting during and after the training of educational managers.

For a long time now the Nigerian educational space has suffered tremendous wastage because of internal inefficiency. Learners at all levels have had to endure one form of wastage or the other, ranging from repetition, stagnation, expulsion, dropout and sometimes, total closure of institutions at some points of their academic careers. Internal efficiency is achieved only when the institution is able to achieve its goals of effectively teaching and successfully graduating its students within a specified academic period. The failure to achieve this objective leads to wastage on the part of investors and learners.

The perennial lack of infrastructure, industrial disharmony as a result of neglect by government, policy instability, poor economy, corruption, etc, have led Nigerian students to believe that they only know the date of their admission but not that of graduation. Nigerian Universities particularly experience a lot of wastage as a result of constant imbroglio between government and academic and non-academic unions. A programme of four years takes students seven to eight years to graduate because of ASUU strikes. The primary and secondary schools are not in any way different as teachers are owed salaries for months and in some cases years. The situation has sadly eroded the confidence of students, parents and other major stakeholders in the Nigerian educational system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the educational system to achieve internal efficiency, the following recommendations may be considered relevant:

i. Needs assessment should be carried out in all Nigerian schools to determine the extent of decay in the educational system

- ii. Only qualified educational managers should be employed to manage schools. Square pegs should not be put in round holes.
- iii. Supervisory departments should be reactivated in all schools to enhance quality of teaching and learning
- iv. Proper records, especially demographic records, should be kept in all schools for proper planning
- v. Programme Evaluation Department should be created in schools to monitor policy implementation
- vi. The federal, state and local governments should work in synergy to ensure that teachers at all levels of education are well remunerated and paid as when due
- vii. Teacher training programmes should be reviewed to make teachers more effective pedagogically.
- viii. Anti-corruption agencies should be empowered to check excesses of political appointees in the education sector.

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