

Maintenance of Educational Facilities in Edo State Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This paper focused on maintenance of educational facilities in public secondary schools. The purpose of the study was to find out the state of the facilities, the types of maintenance carried out on the facilities, depreciation, the roles of school administrators in the management and maintenance of school facilities, the state of facilities in Nigerian schools, factors affecting the maintenance of educational facilities in secondary schools and the need for effective facility management in secondary schools. Administrators and inspectors of schools are responsible for effective management of the facilities in order to prevent wastage and ensure achievement of educational objectives. The study recommended that school administrators, teachers and students should develop and inculcate a good maintenance culture for effective management and maintenance of school facilities.

Keywords; Maintenance, Education facilities, Secondary schools, Administrators

Introduction

Maintenance of facilities is an aspect of organisational behaviour with consequences for the effective discharge of duties associated with a particular organisation. According to Oni (2001), facilities constitute strategic factors in organisational functioning. This is so because they determine, to a very large extent, the smooth functioning of any social organisation or system including education constitute essentials inputs which could enhance a favourable learning environment, and facilitate interaction and achievement of educational objectives.

School curricula can only be meaningful and functional if required facilities are provided in adequate quantities and at the appropriate time. Ajayi and Ogunyemi (2000) opined that when facilities are provided to meet relative needs of a school system, students will not only have access to the reference materials mentioned by the teachers but individual students will also learn at their own pace. Facilities such as school buildings, classrooms, hostels, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment, laboratory apparatus and other instructional

materials are important to academic achievement of students in secondary schools.

Ajayi (2000) observed that public school education has had various challenges in school administration. Facilities in most schools are left in a state of disrepair. Many schools are littered with dilapidated structures, worn out equipment and overcrowded classrooms. Adebayo (2009) suggested that this might have accounted for parents' preference for private secondary schools.

Most students' future careers are determined by their exposure at the secondary school level and as such, provision, utilization and management of educational facilities become crucial. The focus on management of facilities is therefore, important to the broad aims and goal achievement of education. Public and private secondary schools in Nigeria differ significantly in terms of physical and human aspects of the environment. Most private schools make instructional materials more accessible to their students, set performance standards, show more commitment and generally, outperform public schools.

Adebayo (2009) revealed that teachers with better facilities, class size, good curriculum practice, stability of academic activities, disciplinary concerns, cost effectiveness and overall output are some factors that influence parents' preference for sending their children to private schools.

According to Abdulkareem (2012), an application of appropriate management techniques would assist in effective management of all school facilities. This implies that administrators and inspectors should be keen and pay attention to old facilities which might have suffered neglect due to carelessness, ignorance and lack of commitment. School facilities are not only durable but their availability enhances allocation of scarce resources to other educational pressing needs. Asiyal (2012) observed that school facilities serve as pillars of support for effective teaching and learning. The school is like a manufacturing organisation where plants and equipment must be in top operational shape to produce result. Efficiency in the production function depends on how well the plants have been maintained. According to Asiya (2012), maintenance of educational facilities is one of the most neglected tasks in many institutions and this has far reaching negative effects on productivity. Government, private individuals and organisations should invest massively in education so as to foster national development. Educational institutions require an environment where teachers, students and other personnel are comfortable enough to perform their duties effectively.

Demand for educational facilities is on the increase in secondary schools. There are indications that the population of students and teachers is on the increase. As a result, demand would be mounted on the available facilities.

Therefore, the problem of the study addresses the maintenance of educational facilities in private and public secondary schools under the following sub-headings:

- Concept of Educational Facilities.
- Facility Management.
- The Need for Effective Management of Facilities in Secondary Schools.
- The State of Facilities in Nigerian Schools.
- Factors Affecting the Maintenance of Educational Facilities in Secondary Schools.
- The Role of School Administrators in Maintaining School Facilities.
- The Need for Effective Facilities Management in Secondary Schools.
- Stages of School Facilities Management.
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

Concept of Educational Facilities

Educational facilities refer to non-human and non-financial resources which include movable and immovable materials which are used for teaching and learning activities Ologboye (2004) said that educational facilities consist of instructional tools such as audio and visual aids, graphics, and printed, displayed and consumable materials. Arubayi (2004) was of the view that school facilities are those types of physical materials which promote quality teaching and learning. Good quality and standard of schools depend largely on the provision of adequate facilities as well as proper management of educational curriculum. Akinsola(2004) asserted that educational curriculum cannot be sound and well operated with poor and badly managed school facilities. From all indications, school facilities facilitate effective teaching and learning.

The school facility is much more than a passive container of the educational process. It is rather an integral component of the conditions of learning depending on the quality of its design and management. The facilities can contribute to a sense of ownership, safety, security, personalization, control, privacy as well as sociality and spaciousness or crowdedness (Ajayi2002).

Facility Management

It has been asserted that while the planning, design and construction of school facilities may take two to three years, their management will last the entire life cycle of the facilities. The cost of managing facilities has historically received much less attention than facility planning. The percentage of the operating budget

for the maintenance of school facilities has steadily decreased. This has created a capital renewal crisis as a result of years of non-maintenance. Oni (2000) observed that facilities constitute a strategic factor in organisational functioning. This is so because they determine, to a very large extent, the smooth functioning of any social organisation or system, including education.

The maintenance programme often includes preventive, repair/upkeep, and emergency care. Responsibility for facility management is divided between the local offices and the school site, with the principal being the primary administrator responsible for the day – to – day operation of the school.

In ideal situations, many communities recognize that in addition to school facilities being cost effective, they should be more learner-centred, comfortable, accessible, flexible, diverse, and equitable. By locating new facilities in residential neighbourhoods and partnering with other community-based organisations, schools are becoming true community centres. In addition, schools are taking advantage of educational resources in the community as well as partnering with museums, zoos, libraries, other public institutions and local businesses.

Types of School Facilities

There are many types of school facilities. They include:

Instructional Facilities

These are facilities that are specifically meant for direct teaching and learning. Among them are classrooms, class seats, laboratories, libraries, experimental equipment, chalk, whiteboards, audio-visual and learning equipment. These facilities bear directly on the teaching and learning processes and are therefore, considered very important among other school facilities. Popoola (1989) opined that all these facilities are an indication of academic achievement and those schools with well-equipped facilities normally maintain a high academic performance.

Recreation Facilities

These are spaces, lawns, fields, pitches and equipment for sports, games and general recreation. Apart from skill development, games also provide a good learning socio-psychological atmosphere. The importance and level of resources committed to the development and provision of recreational facilities must not exceed the value of facilities committed to the overall goals of educational institutions.

The State of Facilities in Nigerian Secondary Schools

In Nigerian secondary schools, enrolment has continued to increase without a corresponding increase in facilities for effective teaching and learning (Ayeni, 2010). Private individuals and organisations are getting committed to school running in Nigeria and it appears as if some schools owned by private individuals have more facilities than government schools. Many scholars, researchers, administrators and educational planners have confirmed that with the increase in the number of secondary schools in Nigeria, school facilities have become grossly inadequate. Ikoya and Onayase (2008) reported that only 26% of secondary schools across the country have school infrastructures in adequate quantity. Owuamanami (2006) noted that the inadequacy and lack of maintenance of infrastructural facilities jeopardize effective teaching especially, taking into consideration the high student population.

Many private schools always renovate their school buildings unlike what goes on in public schools. It has been asserted that if school facilities are not properly maintained, the health of students can be in constant peril. For example, if school toilets are not maintained, students' lives may be put in great danger.

The government of the day should endeavour to maintain facilities to ensure adequate school productivity. It has been rightly observed that a good number of private secondary schools have a culture of school facility maintenance (Akpan, 2010). It is usually to attract more students to the school. This appears not to be the case in many public schools where less effort is put on facility maintenance probably because they belong to the government. The teachers have the notion that at the end of the month and in spite of the school population, their salaries will be paid. This might have accounted for the lackadaisical attitude to facility maintenance in public secondary schools. It has been observed that in Nigeria, government property is handled carelessly (Akpan, 2011).

Factors affecting the Maintenance of Educational Facilities in Secondary Schools

The following factors affect maintenance of facilities in secondary schools.

Finance

One of the biggest challenges to secondary schools is how to generate funds to maintain their facilities. For example, facilities that are supposed to be provided for 35 students may be used by more than 50 students in some instances. Furthermore, it has been discovered that many facilities do not last because of the cheap materials used by the contractors. In most cases, funds meant for renovation of schools by government are grossly misused. And then, lack of sufficient funding puts pressure on school principals. Anderson (2005) said that there is a

high degree of pressure on principals of government schools to raise funds so that their schools can be fully functional like private ones.

Supervision

Lack of supervision and monitoring of facilities in schools are regarded as another major draw-back in the educational sector. Owoeye (1999) asserted that among the factors to enhance the maintenance of facilities in secondary schools is that teachers should monitor students in schools especially students who offer science subjects.

Over Population

Over population of students in secondary schools has been one of the factors affecting facilities in the Nigerian educational system. Some secondary schools in some states have about 90 students in a class. Many political groups dangle the carrot of free education during political campaigns. The truth is that the federal and state governments have failed to consider the impact of an increase in enrolment on the school system (Asiya, 2010).

School and Community Relationship

As an administrator, the school principal is in a very unique position. He controls school facilities for the purpose of attaining the school goal. Ayeni (2010) said that in pursuit of quality teaching and learning, schools must be seen as open systems deriving their energy from a network of relationships especially from the host community. The school and community share common values and aspirations. Furthermore, Ayeni (2012) emphasized that good community relations enable schools to acquire learning resources. It is important for communities to develop appropriate values in their youths so they can appreciate and not destroy school facilities. Existence of a good relationship between the students and the host community adds a lot of value to maintenance of facilities.

The Role of School Administrators in Maintaining School Facilities

Administrators serve as links between the school and stakeholders. They have an important role to play in the provision of adequate facilities. They should therefore, ensure quality procurement of goods and equipment. It is part of the administrator's professional ethics to be honest and accountable. Money allocated should be spent appropriately and reasonably. Furthermore, they are to advise the government on the types of facilities needed. At all times, accurate information on the needs of the school should be provided. The curriculum of the school could provide guidance on such needs. Also, administrators and inspectors are

responsible for keeping safe the facilities. As much as possible, the facilities should be protected from fire, theft and other disasters. So also, administrators are expected to keep adequate records of all facilities in their custody. Reference should be made regularly to the records for updating and confirmation of their availability. They should also guide against falsification of records. Administrators must ensure that the facilities are handled by experts especially during usage and maintenance. Training of these experts in relevant fields is also essential. The availability of information on facilities helps the administrators to determine the needs of the school in terms of upgrading, renovation, maintenance or outright purchase of new facilities.

Administrators should also ensure an accurate provision of educational facilities. Execution of educational programmes demands that facilities are provided if success is to be achieved. Governments at all levels, schools' proprietors and other stakeholders are expected to provide facilities for their schools. In the blue print on education, government has clearly stated that all stakeholders will be involved in every aspect of school management including provision of facilities. However, it has been found out that this aspect is one of the most neglected areas in school management (Olagboye, 2004). As a result, there is a disparity in the provision of facilities from one school to the other. This is particularly the case in terms of provision of facilities in urban and rural areas.

Utilization of educational facilities should also be appropriate. Adegboyeje (2000) stated that utilization is the degree or extent to which an item has been put into effective use. According to him, various degrees of utilization include non-utilization, under-utilization and over-utilization. Non-utilization occurs when facilities are not put into use at all. When facilities are not used in their full capacity, under-utilization occurs. There is over utilization when facilities are put to more their capacity use. These degrees of utilization constitute a waste of resources and this may be counter-productive. On the other hand, maximum utilization occurs when facilities are put into effective usage in line with organisational primary objectives. Optimum utilization occurs when facilities are used for many purposes by schools and members of the host community. Resources put into maximum and optimum use are not wasted. They are likely to enhance the achievement of educational objectives.

It has also been observed that maintenance of educational facilities tends to depreciate as soon as they are provided and put into use. Therefore, there is the need for facility maintenance either through repairs and servicing in order to enhance their physical condition and sustain their working capacity. Maintenance enhances performance and durability. It also prevents wastage. Adebayo (2002) explained preventive, corrective, breakdown, and shutdown maintenance services.

Preventive facility maintenance should occur regularly since it has to do with rechecking the available facilities. Preventive is not only better, it is also cheaper and proactive than any other measure. Corrective maintenance involves reactivation or replacement of facilities in order to normalize their performance.

When a facility or an equipment breaks down completely, a major repair or replacement may be needed. There may be a time when the institution would need to close down in order to allow major repairs or replacement to be carried out. A flood, fire, or wind disaster may warrant closure of an institution for a major repair to be effected. Educational facilities should also be constantly worked on. Apart from depreciation, facilities will have to be improved periodically. Improvement of facilities implies alteration or modification to suit a new demand, situation or programme. Whenever there are changes in any part of the educational system, the existing facilities will require modification or replacement.

The Need for Effective Facilities Management in Secondary Schools

Asiabaka (2008) maintained that school facility management plays a pivotal role in the actualization of educational goals and objectives by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of the staff and students. According to her, physical needs are met through the provision of save structure, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual and thermal environment and sufficient shelter space for work and play. On the other hand, emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surroundings, a friendly atmosphere and an inspiring environment that support the need for effective management of facilities in schools. Fenker (2004) stated that facility management should involve a planned process to ensure that the building and other technical systems support the proper discharge of operational services within the school organisation. Mbipom (2002) also noted that a school plan is a major component of school facilities.

She further explained that since teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum, school facilities give meaning to the planned curriculum and extra curriculum activities. Asiabaka (2008) explained that the provision and management of school facilities must take into cognizance modern views of the teaching and learning processes which have to move beyond memorizing to involvement of teachers and students in applying, analysing, synthesizing and evaluating to stress the need for flexibility in time and space. The American Association of School Administrators (2000) reported that students are more likely to perform better when their environment is conducive to learning. Therefore, in educational institutions, facilities constitute essential inputs which create a favourable learning environment.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to discuss the maintenance of educational facilities in secondary schools, its relevance and the problems associated with maintaining them. As a leader in the school system, it is the responsibility of the school authorities to ensure adequate and proper provision and maintenance of school facilities.

Recommendations

Maintenance of educational facilities is vital to the achievement of educational objectives. Therefore, the following recommendations are worthy of note.

- The government and other stakeholders should set aside substantial amounts of money for provision of such facilities.
- Nigerian government should ensure that enough facilities are provided for schools to match the number of enrolled pupils.
- Teachers, students and members of the school community should develop positive attitudes towards the use of facilities. Enlightenment programmes could be organized for the stakeholders on proper management of school facilities. Regular maintenance and improvement services could be conducted in order to enhance quality performance and provision of durable facilities. In this regard, staff members who are experts in particular fields could be assigned to take charge of maintenance and improvement services.
- School administrators, teachers and students should develop and inculcate a good facility maintenance culture.
- More money should be disbursed to schools in oil producing areas of the state for the maintenance of school facilities.

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