

## COST, TIME AND QUALITY IMPLICATIONS IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Every economic activity has its own cost, time and quality requirement. Efficient and effective goal realization occurs through appropriate cost, time and quality management process. Therefore, cost, time and quality are indispensable elements in determining success in any organization especially the social (formal) organization like the school. This paper focuses on cost, time and quality implications in school administration by examining the concepts, compatibility, applications and relevance in achieving school goals. Finally, summary and recommendations were proffered for further improving effective school administrative mechanism through efficient cost, time and quality optimization.*

**Keywords:** Cost, time, quality, school administration, goal achievement

### INTRODUCTION

The school as a formal organization is a learning organization where formal knowledge is transferred to the learner by the teacher. It is a formal or social organization setting because it comprised of people, structure, role differentiations, authority, open communication (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Obasi & Oluowo, 2005). This implies that formal (social) organization is differentiated from other system (physical) because of these fundamental parameters amongst others.

Cost, time and quality play undaunting roles in school administration. There must be adequate mobilization of available resources in educational institution to accomplish the set out goals of education. The need for school administration becomes imperative as to achieve educational goal for societal development without which the society cannot function effectively. The quality of any nation depends on educational resource produced to propel the economy like the Teachers, Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Social and Political Thinkers, Artisans, Draughts Men, Journalists, Bankers, Agriculturists and other tradesmen that passed through the formal processes of teaching and learning. Evidently, no nation can grow with uneducated large number of the population. The greater population must be enlightened to legitimize cultural, social, religious, political and economic transformation necessitating growth.

Even though, the resources in school organization are meager as it were, it must be administered since their efficiency and effectiveness rely on prudent cost, time and quality management. The imperativeness of these resources use is obvious for good school climate to exist. Good school climate boost result (Okorie, 1999; Obasi & Oluwo, 2005; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). A good school climate promotes school safety which is achieved by availability of fund, good infrastructural and instructional facilities, trained teaching and non-teaching staff, improved salary and welfare conditions, good time management, good administrators and managers and professional development programmes for all. These economic and psycho-sociological parameters are in combination facilitators of quality education.

Deliverable school quality is assured through appropriate cost and time control. Cost is realistically understood through proper budget process. Budget involves a plan showing how resources are to be acquired and used over time (Nwafor, 2005). Cost and time elements are crucial for every organization to embark on budgeting of scarce resources appropriately for effective utilization and avoiding waste. The just-in-time approach becomes necessary as to ensure timely flow of resources in the system in meeting the quality demand all things being equal.

The quality processes in the school are enormous to include good administrators, prepared teachers and auxiliary staff, school facilities, proper funding, good government policies good school community relationship (Ugwulashi, 2011, Ebong, 2004; Nwaokolo & Nwaokolo, 2004). A good school administrator ensures that educational goal is achieved at optimal level of resource use achievable through just – in –time funding. Educational goals are stated in ‘SMART’ form (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) to ensure that appropriate cost, time and quality are optimally maintained in course of pursuing these goals through efficient and effective process.

The administration of school cannot be for quantitative results (performance) only, but be determined by the overall qualitative nature of the entire system from primary to tertiary levels respectively. All this depends on the level of financial commitment by the government and private sectors towards improvement of this important sub sector of the economy. Education is the generator of wealth in any nation but the sector has been attached less importance in every financial budget year that needs further improvement.

In maintaining level of administrative efficiency and effectiveness, school resources must meet cost (needs) and timely (just-in-time) to assure quality in coping with the challenges of present demands in the global community. A significant relationship exists amongst cost, time and quality in delivery of goods and services. In other words, they play an interwoven and interdependent roles in improving administrative capacity of the school and community in pursuit of educational goals, otherwise results are not only achieved but lack quality if cost is tiny and time not initiated for efficient individual and effective group performance. Based on this hypothesis, time management in school administration is a necessary criterion to achieving quality in carrying out entire school activities (Ugwulashi, 2011), and proper utilization of scarce resources for the internal school administration.

Without efficient use of time and cost in pursuit of school activities, quality cannot be maintained. Hence, time seems to be the measuring instrument for effective cost and quality management in any organization. In other words, cost and quality go together, when appropriate cost is allocated and funded, the school can provide the quality teaching and learning services in promoting performance. School administration in Nigeria and other developed and developing societies is challenged by lack of fund, because of this; education funding is carried out by individuals, community, school, corporate organizations, governments and agencies.

On the other hand, management and administrative cost are outrageous in maintaining infrastructural and instructional facilities, staff and other school requirement by the ministry officials. There are many nonexistent schools where teachers are vouched consuming school resources because of conspiracy with government officials. The educational sector has not been responsibly managed given room for embezzlement of school funds. No accountability for government funds meant for developing education system. The big question becomes how will education prosper in meeting the millennium challenges under this situation of abject corruption? Education fund diverted for other purposes depriving the sector vibrant existence.

**Cost:** The running of an organization depends squarely on its financial capacity. Maintaining good overhead cost is an important route to success in any organization that wants to survive. Cost ordinarily involves monetary value in conception. Planners and managers carry out the appropriation of cost whereas administrators propel the achievement of results with the allocated cost not seen. School administrators are left with no option than ensuring appropriate result management. The ministry or boards of education are responsible for initiating cost of running schools- provision of infrastructures and instructional facilities, payment of salary, training and other allowances required. Most school administrators (heads) are not given purported opportunity of set aside monthly expenditure packages for internal administration.

The allocation of cost is strictly line management issue done through annual budgeting. Budget involves quantitative plan on how resources may be acquired or expended within a given period or financial year (Nwafor, 2005). There is capital and recurrent expenditure in a budget plan. Organizational effectiveness is determined by financial capacity of the system to maintain its personnel and facilities in order to achieve the best for the common good. Huge amount appears on

recurrent expenditure for personnel services being the heart of every organization but the obvious cannot be explained for its appropriate utilization.

Personnel in organization is cost implicative and consumes considerable amount in every budget. People are the organization and need to be maintained as the quality of the personnel to a great extent determines its success or failure. Hence, budget is used for planning and control (Wehrich & Koontz, 2001) as to achieve meaningful result with the tiny resources. The educational system involves huge money to meet the societal demand for both quantitative and qualitative manpower. In similar way, other sectors of the economy depend on manpower resources (output) from the school vice versa.

Categorization of cost is never definitive given way for miscellaneous in the budget. The tertiary education institutions management and administration involves more cost than secondary and primary institutions. The understandable facts are the university system requires specialized manpower, high level personnel services and infrastructural and instructional facilities. Cost has direct implication on the well-being of staff and on their level of work performance (Mullins, 2005), it differs among school type and is a major consideration in any selection process (Mullins, 1999). Cost determines level and time for planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, budgeting and implementing school activities and programmes. The problem in school administration has been cash call reserve which is not readily available for daily upkeep of the school. The realization of any projected goal depends on the cost implications effectiveness and subsequent cost involved.

Population and location contribute to high cost. Invariably, urban schools with large population have high cost implications than urban schools with small population. Similarly, rural schools with large population have higher cost implication than less populated schools because huge salaries are involved for maintaining teaching and non-teaching staff, provision of more classrooms, procurement of teaching and other learning facilities, school plant maintenance, decision making and extension of community relationship. Therefore, cost in education is determined by size, type and location of school.

Cost also determines quality. The educational standard of any nation is affected by the prevailing economic situation of that nation. Relieves in education cost apart from those earlier mentioned is also bore by international merger like UNESCO who takes care of education development of most nations today. Despite this effort by UNESCO and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), education cost in Nigeria public school is highly individualized and partially subsidized by federal, state and local governments because of the need to encourage people go to school especially the case of Almajiri model school in Northern Nigeria and migrant fishermen school in the Riverine southern Nigeria. Federal government policy of classifying educational advantaged and disadvantaged areas is also cause of government involvement. Even with these effort, many people still find it difficult to go to school, buy school uniform or books and many remote communities are not been reached. Geographical, political, historical, cultural and religious considerations also contribute greatly to this ugly situation.

In spite of individual, state, and the federal government effort successive regimes made significant remarks in education by subsidizing both the individual and social costs. The introduction of scholarship and bursary schemes after the civil war in 1970s helped in developing education in Nigeria. Subsequent introduction of universal free primary education (UPE) in 1976, state / federal scholarships and bursary schemes contributed in making education more of social cost as the government bears the burden squarely. These periods of educational development in Nigeria marked the era of economic oil boom. Government sympathy to education was indications to encouraging the teeming population become literate society because no nation can develop with majority of its citizenry's illiterates. Ukeje & Okorie (1990) in sustaining these assertions emphasized, that "whenever an organization or a nation fails, it is invariably due to failure in leadership which in turn is an outgrowth of the misuse or abuse of power". In other words, government subsidization of education decreased due to increase in population of school attending ages and corruption endemic in governmental circles. There are introduction of school fees that most parents could not afford. It further lowered the rate of entering into school and in fact occasioned by large numbers of drop outs in school. Most children are seen hawking goods on the streets due to poor parental economic status.

However, in the true case of Nigeria, one cannot really pinpoint exact cost implications on education because of the over politicization in the polity by successive regimes. There are policies upon policies to suit the political gladiators. Even at that, actual figures differ from the dispensed figures as allocated in yearly budgets. These figures don't go through because of the twin sins of corruption and nepotism evident in the entire system. Money is chanted away by few hands subsumed to be managing it. There are poor accounting processes as Nwafor (2005:9) notes that "cost is the most reliable and verifiable value at which an item should be initially recognized and subsequently carried in the books". There are no proper receipts or invoices on education cost making accountability a difficult task. It has become political tool like other sectors. Educational backwardness can be adduced simply to both factors of poor funding and mismanagement of allocated funds.

The inflation of cost in public sector of education has caused instability that the system has been suffering today. The sky rocketed needs and poor management system have led to poor maintenance of schools that most schools look like artifacts. The quality of public schools in Nigeria is a big question mark, however, few State governors now have aggressively embarked on rebuilding the public schools in Nigeria especially south - south states in present governments under Hon. Rotimi Amaechi (Rivers State) and Comrade Adams Oshiomhole (Edo state) making the public primary and secondary schools a typology of the advanced societies. Upon the ugly nature of schools in Nigeria, education funds are left in various banks without access while the system is starved of fund for development. How would quality be assured?

### **Time**

An indispensable element in successful accomplishment of any activity is time. It has universal application and is one of the scarcest resources. It enables meanings to activity. Time in this context refers to a "particular period". Thus, the realization of educational goal despite the amount of resources involved remains ineffective without good time management. Time management helps to prioritize activities avoiding waste (Ugwulashi, 2011).

Taking appropriate decisions concerning set out goals and objectives in any organization require good time management despite cost. Stoner, Free man and Gilbert, JR (1995:239) on the relevance of time pointed out that time and human relationships are crucial elements in the process of making decisions. School administration must consider proper time management in regulating their decision making apparatus.

School administration involves a lot of decision making to manage the scarce resources available to the advantage of common good. No matter the quantum of human, material and financial resources available anytime, time management is important to harness these potentialities. Good time management enables the right things to be done than doing things right. For instance, the time table process is significant administrative tool facilitating internal administrative process. It allows various activities to be performed simultaneously by different people just as different school tasks like teaching, reading, sports, debating, dining, prep, and labour are assigned different time to take place.

It saves resources, space and conflict resolutions in use of scarce resources, thereby compelling the administrator in solving pressing needs. Time management revitalizes organization strength as efforts are towards common goal through a coordinating point. Time also determines the amount of resources required in fruitful execution of project. For instance, planning for an academic session takes more resources than for a semester (term) period. Similarly the school system requires average of six years intensive teaching and learning in the classroom for preparing students to take their final senior secondary certificate examination.

This involves payment of all personnel and expenditures for six years from Junior Secondary (JSI, II, III) to Senior Secondary (SSI, II & III) respectively. But in preparing candidates for General Certificate Examination (GCE) alone takes approximate twelve months for the examination. The longer the time, higher the cost implications, also cost varies all things being equal. In other words, sufficient cost is involved in long term programme than short term because total amount of time must be cost accountable which in essence is unquantifiable comparatively to better academic performance.

Time depicts quality of product especially the school system. It shows the maturing state of any activity which highlights the degree of perfection of a student in the school. A regular four years teaching and learning activity for the award of degree differs in qualitative terms from crashed programme of six months for award of degree. In ordinary reasoning, an academic year interrupted with demonstrations and strike actions may not be the same with a normal uninterrupted session. This has been the case of school system where demonstrations and strikes take larger portion of the years meant for maturation. Obviously, enough time is required to achieving quality, which involves cost to appropriately administer the system.

Similarly, in the industrial circle, goods produced timely are of better quality than mass produced goods. In this case quality is often lost because the concern is on quantity. Education requires step by step approach for appropriate teaching and learning to take place because knowledge damaged is irreparable in meeting the right input – transformation – out put processes. Students and teachers require time to be trained, because it determines quality.

Time helps in prioritizing administrative task and resources, without which accomplishment of organizational goals and objective become impossible. Drucker assertion that time is a “unique resource” must draw the attention of school administrators to be good time managers in order to efficiently and effectively and effectively carry out their statutory duties for national development and continued survival of the school system.

### Quality

Every activity has its own implication on cost, time and quality requirement. But the achievement of good result for any activity varies among people based on their approaches in handling given task. Thus, quality varies with people such that cost and time become worthy of consideration. Quality is a special characteristic of something acceptable. In this circumstance, the definition by Juran would be accepted as any goods or services fit for use.

In school administration, academic performance is the primary responsibility. No matter the type of educational level (primary, secondary and tertiary) and the quantum of good personnel and decision making, cost and time cannot be separated from its successful quality achievement. Cost and time devoted to the school activity enables the realization of a quality system. Since quality of school standard has been major concern would over, sufficient cost and time is also needed, which implies adequate planning, implementation and evaluation of all resources. In this view, Ugwulashi (2012) maintained that effective integration of administrative process in school administration helps in timely accomplishment of school result. Hence, integration of administrative processes saves cost, time and other resources as duplication of efforts is minimized.

Quality is a factor of cost and time. For quality educational goal to be attained, every effort by the government must be towards rebuilding the lost confidence in the public sector of the enterprise. Even though, it is widely accepted in many quarters that private enterprise provides quality education, there is also complete abuse in the establishment of private schools that society patronizes.

But with double effort to resuscitate the near moribund public education system, society patronage of these kitchen – type private schools operated by one man and his wife will minimize because they lack necessary quality criteria. Ukeje in Nwaokolo & Nwaokolo, (2004) in his paradox stated concisely that a mistake by a teacher in educating process has a multiplier effect in the entire system unlike mistake made by medical doctor, lawyer, engineer or social worker. The explanation is that, the mistake of the teacher is passed from one generation to another, while that of the medical doctor affects the particular patient. A lawyer mistake affects the particular client whereas that of the engineer affects the architectural design without affecting generations.

Quality is necessary in school administration to avoid damage in knowledge building of a society that has its educational philosophy on literal studies trying to meet scientific and technological challenges. This implies that dislocations already exist in the system as science and technology is a major challenge which no nation can do without today.

In developing appropriate educational quality enough money (cost) is needed for the several demands in meeting the two dimensions of literal and scientific technological growth supposedly for societal



development. Mullins (1999:865) postulated that the successful organization should as a matter of policy is constantly seeking opportunities to improve the quality of its products and or services and processes. The only option to improve educational quality is to start on time and couple quality with a required level of productivity (Mullins, 1999) that is time and cost be adequately devoted on the system.

Quality approach is a motivational tool to work. Wehrich & Koontz (2001) see job design and job enrichment as improving quality of working life like other motivational factors. Quality of working (QWL) is more concerned with the overall work climate and culture (Luthans, 2005:490). Therefore, quality in school administration breeds good climate and culture that motivate students and staff effective performance. Teachers and school administrators need to be trained and retrained because the expected quality can only be achieved through this process. Moreso, trained teachers and administrators are highly motivated as it encourages professional development and growth in the system.

### SUMMARY

The education system has suffered lot of changes. Nigeria is still struggling in search of the right educational model having experimented among others 6.2.3.4; 6.3.3.4; now Basic 1-9. 3.4. Palliative measures like Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Basic Education (UBE) are employed by the government in giving educational opportunities to the all citizenries of school ages.

Unfortunately, many are clamouring for more funding in education despite the amount earmarked yearly because of the growing education needs. Coupled with stress in infrastructural and instructional facilities due to population increase, corruption and nepotism in the system are major contributing factors for the backwardness given cost and time constant value. Cost, time and quality are necessary for educational development and only significant when there is quality in the system.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper presumed that education management requires discipline in dealing with ever changing population. School administration should be made vibrant in nature as to meet these needs of the educational system. School administrators, teachers, infrastructures and instructional facilities all involved cost and time. Public school administration fund should not be left in banks while the system suffers. If we seek for quality in the school system, cost and time should be adequately utilized in putting the quality processes right to avoid drift of qualified personnel into other sectors of the economy.

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