



EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: AN IMPERATIVE TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

*¹Musah, E.

*¹Government Model Secondary School, Ekeremor, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author's E-mail: mshebikabowei@gmail.com Phone: +2347066601745

ABSTRACT

This library-based paper discussed how the invaluable psychology of education influences the effective management of educational institutions with respect to the achievement of the goals stated in the nation's policy document on education. The rationale for this is that the lack of knowledge of educational psychology by school managers is a principal reason for the incessant crises experienced in educational institutions. This does not augur well for the education system of the country. Sadly, this problem has not caught the attention of major stakeholders in the education sector. The paper highlighted vital areas of management as well as the challenges bedeviling education management in the country. It also examined the importance of utilizing educational psychology as a veritable tool for overcoming these problems. The belief is that this will enhance better service delivery for the attainment of the goals and objectives for which educational institutions are established.

Keywords: *Education, Psychology, Tool, Management*

LICENSE: This work by Open Journals Nigeria is licensed and published under the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided this article is duly cited.

COPYRIGHT: The Author(s) completely retain the copyright of this published article.

OPEN ACCESS: The Author(s) approves that this article remains permanently online in the open access (OA) model.

QA: This Article is published in line with "COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) and PIE (Publication Integrity & Ethics)".

INTRODUCTION

Education generally is a process through which the individual or a social group is developed by way of instruction in either a formal or non-formal environment. It is for the purpose of bringing about desirable change in the individual or group for the betterment of the entire society. It is the most potent instrument that man has yet devised for desirable change and societal development. That is why Adegbesan (2011) describes education as the bedrock of every society and a tool for nation building. Similarly, Aziza (2016) opined that any meaningful change in the social and intellectual disposition of a society is preceded by a revolution in its educational system. Moreover, education remains the only weapon through which a country's national goals can be achieved. Therefore, for education sector to achieve success, the management of education in the country needs to be properly structured for optimal functionality.

Establishing an educational facility is one thing that is very distinct from achieving the goals of education. Accomplishing the goals of education require the services of skilled professionals to manage the facilities in order to achieve both the short and long-term goals and objectives (Woodfolk, 2007). This assertion underscores the fact that without the services of a good education manager, the establishment of an educational facility might just turn out to be a waste of resources since the goals of the venture may never be realized.

For effective management of educational institutions, the persons saddled with managerial responsibilities need to have adequate knowledge of educational psychology. Educational psychology is the branch of psychology that utilizes scientific methods for the solution of educational problems. It deals with human growth and development, and how they influence individuals in the learning process. Megbo and Hassan (2015) see educational psychology as the scientific study of human learning; learning processes from both cognitive and behavioural perspectives. It provides understanding of individual differences in intelligence, cognitive development, motivation plus other human attributes and how they influence learning. According to Megbo and Hassan (2015), educational psychology relies heavily on quantitative methods which include testing and measurement to enhance educational activities that concern instructional design, learning assessment and management of other school activities. It is important in guiding human learning throughout the lifespan as well as at various levels of education. More importantly, it provides a supervisory role for many significant aspects of education such as curriculum development, measurement and evaluation, special education, adult education, educational technology and education management among others.

Educational psychology is of great essence to the education manager because if not all, almost every activity of education of education management depends on educational psychology for direction and/or guidance. A critical look at some education management activities will reveal that without knowledge of educational psychology, it would be difficult to effectively carry them out. It is this basis that Baita (2019) asserted that, to the education manager, knowledge of educational psychology should not just be one by the side, but should be a necessary acquisition to aid them in meaningful service delivery. The lack of knowledge of educational psychology by education managers has negative effect on the system. Most school managers do not possess the psychological methods and skills to work with other human beings and materials in an educational organization such as motivation, reinforcement, discipline, evaluation and so on, to deal with diverse behavioural presentations of different members of the school community to record appreciable success.

Although, in Nigeria some of them have degrees in educational administration /management (or public administration with post graduate diplomas in education so as to be useful in the educational sector), there are others

who are not even trained teachers but somehow got employed in the educational sector and rose through the ranks to the management cadre and functioning as education managers. Ironically, many of these education managers do not possess the least knowledge of educational psychology to guide them in their managerial duties. It is presumed that one important reason for management crises being a recurrent decimal in Nigerian educational institutions is the lack of knowledge of educational psychology by the education managers. Unfortunately, the inability of government and education policy makers to identify and provide solution to this vital aspect is a great set back to the entire national education system. It is on this premise that this paper seeks to direct the attention of education managers and other significant stakeholders in the education sector to the importance of acquiring requisite knowledge of educational psychology by persons involved in the management of educational institutions, to aid them in their duties. This will help education managers to establish, set limits as well as provide beneficial educational processes, assistance programmes and purposeful ways of organization and management.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Educational psychology, like many other concepts, is very elusive for a consensus definition. Cherry (2021) defines educational psychology as the study of how people learn, including teaching methods, instructional processes and individual differences in learning. It incorporates a number of other disciplines including developmental psychology, behavioural psychology and cognitive psychology. In Cherry's (2021) opinion, the goal of educational psychology is to understand how people learn and retain new information. Cherry also explains that educational psychology is taught on the implicit assumption that knowledge of it gives insight into the problems inherent in education and develops necessary professional skills and competencies in educators to face educational problems confidently and intelligently. It can also give the educator what they need to achieve their goals by enabling them to comprehend, direct and predict other people's behaviour.

Boundless Psychology (2021) defines educational psychology as the study of how people learn in educational settings. It is also involved in the effectiveness of educational interventions, the psychology of teaching and the social psychology of schools as organizations. Baita (2019) describes educational psychology as that science which helps to provide a better background for understanding the total job of teaching in all its intricacies. From his perspective, Dinna (2018) sees educational psychology as that branch of psychology concerned with the nature, conditions, outcomes and evaluation of learning outcomes. Green (2020) explains that Baita's definition of educational psychology, among other things indicates that:

- i. It attempts to study and clarify important conditions and factors affecting education.
- ii. It is the product of the educational process such as competent achievement, interest, attitude, aspiration, creativity, motivation, skills and abilities to cope with specific and non-specific forces of life within a particular culture.
- iii. It is about the utilization of methods, principles of psychology as well as other psychological resources in order to provide solution to factors that are problems of education.

Percy (2003) explains that there is a relationship between psychology of education and the study of man in society as embodied in sociology and anthropology. According to him, educational psychology derives its data from:

- i. Social psychology: Studies how customs and institutions of group or society which forms a part influence human behaviour.
- ii. Clinical psychology: Studies individual's health and diseases, focusing basically on behaviours considered to be abnormal, seek ways to comprehend, provide diagnosis and modify them.
- iii. Developmental psychology which studies normal behavioural development of individuals throughout the life span, social behaviour as well as motivation.
- iv. Counselling psychology that offers expert advice for the solution of personal, social, educational and vocational problems, especially in the school system.
- v. Industrial/organizational/personnel psychology that applies knowledge of psychology to the work environment and such other fields like engineering psychology, community psychology, psychometrics and so on.
- vi. Biological psychology (also called biopsychology) that is concerned with the biological basis of behaviour (Wallinga, 2020).

From the foregoing definitions, educational psychology may be understood as the study that employs psychological findings, theories, techniques, principles and other resources of psychology to the improvement of education and as well solve educational problems. It borrows from other areas of psychology in order to improve the quality of educational practices.

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

The term 'management' from which the concept of education management evolved, has many inferences and meanings, hence it also does not have a consensus definition. It is used in different contexts, situations and circumstances. Donnell et al (1984) as cited by Adiotomre (2009) see management as the process undertaken by one or more individuals to coordinate the activities of others to achieve results not achievable by one individual. In this sense, management is understood as a process designed by individuals to ensure effective accomplishment of set objectives. Ogundele and Okonji (2004) defines management as a functional process of accomplishing the goals the organization through the help of others. Draft (2003) views management as the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning (defining/selecting goals and means to attain them), organizing (assigning responsibility for tasks accomplishment), commanding (use of influence to motivate employees to achieve organizational goals), controlling (monitoring employees' activities, keeping organization on track toward achieving its goals, and making corrections as needed/necessary).

Going by the above definitions, it can be inferred that education management is the application of all management principles, techniques and strategies in solving educational problems. Arubayi and Ikoya (2015) define educational management as a conscious process of organizing, planning, controlling, coordinating and evaluation of resources, both human and material. They explained that this is necessary to achieve stated educational goals and objectives. The major concern of education management, according to them, is the formulation of policies and programmes, and

planning to facilitate the accomplishment of educational goals. To Nwokeocha (2014), education management primarily is about people in positions of authority and strategies or processes they adopt to coordinate the activities of others, allocate physical and human resources, and make decisions on all other matters concerning education. Perhaps, it is on this basis that Adiotomre (2009) defined education management as the effective utilization and organization of resources (both human and material) to achieve educational objectives with maximum efficiency. The implication of this definition is that, education managers do not work alone; they must necessarily influence other people to enthusiastically achieve educational goals.

Effective management of education is very instrumental to an institution's success, and indeed, the entire educational system. It ensures that for the educational system to achieve its set goals, every necessary must be available at the appropriate place, time and reason (Athanasius, 2018). According to Athanasius, there has to be proper and viable measures in place, which will ensure unhindered running school activities for the accomplishment of its goals. All resources, whether human or material, need to be well harnessed, as well as motivated to achieve the general objectives set by the institution since the degree to which a school accomplishes results is dependent to a large extent, on the effective management of available resources. For Arubayi and Ikoya (2015), management of schools in this present century demands high level of competence on the part of the manager. That is why, even at the lowest strata or the highest level of education, a well-educated manager with competence should be in place. They should also possess a patriotic zeal and a mindset to adopt current global standards of management. It is such a manager that can influence their school community towards achievement of institutional objectives for competitiveness with global educational institutions (Arubayi and Ikoya, 2015).

For the purpose of achieving educational goals and objectives, managers of education may have to follow the principles suggested by Fayol (1944) in his management theory. According to him, management is a universal process consisting of planning, organizing, commanding and controlling. He further explained the principles thus:

Planning: This is a rational process of preparing a set of decisions for future actions directed at achieving goals and objectives by optional means.

Organizing: This is about the establishment of a formal structure of authority through which job specifications and subdivisions are arranged and coordinated for defined objectives.

Commanding: This entails urging employees to work in the manner that the set objectives can be achieved. It is about seeing to it that employees receive necessary assistance to be efficient on duty.

Controlling: Verifying and ensuring that everything happens according to the plans, instructions, established rules, and so on, and detect potential or present derailment from the set goals. Controlling is necessary for good quality work and appreciable achievement of goals.

In addition to Fayol's (1944) principles of management, Adiotomre (2009) opines that successful education management equally involves staffing, evaluation and development. She explains them thus:

Staffing: Here the manager makes effort to employ the right person for every job. It is referred to as manpower planning. In determining the staff needs of the school, the manager is guided by various factors that are currently affecting the personnel functions in the school. They include:

- a. Increasing size of the school system.

- b. The extension of educational plans and services, posing the question of specialization and the types of personnel for special programmes.
- c. Appreciate the financial security of personnel.
- d. Frequent changes in the compensation system.
- e. Competition with other sectors of the economy.
- f. Increasing influence of professional organizations and unions.
- g. The entry of younger people into the teaching profession.
- h. The increasing influence of the school management board and the teaching service commission with regard to recruitment, selection and promotion.
- i. The society's image of teachers.

According to her, management should consider qualification and experience as major criteria for staffing, and that staffing should not be a once and for all affair but a continuous process, since people continually enter or leave the job, by retirement, dismissal or death. So, when any of these happens, the position has to be filled in order to sustain the system.

Evaluation: This refers to determining the level of accomplishment of set goals through various procedures and methods in order to plan wisely for the future. The system and individuals deserve regular evaluation. The system is evaluated to ascertain the level of progress made concerning the system's objectives, whereas individuals are evaluated to understand their performance levels as well as to improve the effectiveness of individuals within the system so as to engender maximal achievement of set goals.

Development: This is the core of management. In order to be progressive and dynamic, the system must strive to develop by making use of evaluation results. It involves finding solutions to problems and eliminating all forms of hindrances and constraints to the fulfillment of proposed goals. For instance, if the problem is financial inadequacy, modalities should be put in place to raise more funds, or if it is about the qualifications of staff, measures like in-service programmes can be mounted to improve staff qualifications for better service delivery. In other words, development refers to the process that brings about overall improvement in the organization. Its main purpose is the visible elevation of the living standards among the generality of members of the whole school community. This also applies to other things that join to make the school community what it is.

ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

There are three basic aspects of education management (Athanasius, 2018), namely:

Human beings: These constitute a vital resource in the management of education. Staff, whether academic or non-academic as well as the student population are all involved. It is for this reason that managing this type of resources efficiently is of utmost importance, beginning from who to employ, their level of competence; if they are capable of performing the job, and who deserves to be retrained? Moreover, every person engaged to recruit new staff must be mindful of the information available and working tools on ground to accomplish the aims very well. No educational institution ever achieves success where there is dearth of competent hands to provide meaningful job performance. It

is persons that possess the required competencies that can proffer innovations in the educational settings for maximum benefits.

Working tools and equipment: These are also important in the management of education, as there is practically nothing anyone can do effectively where there are no tools, facilities or equipment to do a job. In a school without a library, laboratory, dilapidated buildings and other physical structures, no furniture, stationeries, among others, how much can be achieved? All of these resources are useful for academic and non-academic activities. Facilities and resources that are in consonance with this present technological age should be made available so that they will fit into their functions of meeting both the present and future needs of the system.

Ideal resources: Ideal resources are of great importance in education management. These resources involve the processes of instruction and learning in the school, which brings about the issue of course components in institutions of learning. They are basically ideas that need to be harnessed in order to foster innovations for better education management that will in turn lead to the achievement of broad institutional goals and objectives. These resources cannot be undermined if education management desires to accomplish its objectives.

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA

Management of education in Nigeria is faced with a lot of problems. Some of these challenges include:

1. Poor funding: Inadequate funding of education is an enormous challenge of education managers in Nigeria. It is a major setback that prevents effective implementation of educational goals (Adiotomre, 2009). This has also made it impossible for economically disadvantaged parents to meet the financial needs of their children's education (Athanasius, 2018).

2. Poor education management structure: There is no proper structure of education management in Nigeria. The existing structure is faulty and therefore hampers development in the system (Athanasius, 2018).

3. Ineffective leadership: Shortage of qualified professionals in the field of education management is equally a great challenge. There is no doubt that the short fall in certain categories of teachers is the cause of improper implementation of educational programmes and plans. This adversely affects effective education management. Besides, there is a serious lack of adherence to policy objectives which end result is conflict in policy execution that is detrimental to education management (Adiotomre, 2009; Athanasius, 2018). Others are shortage of educational facilities, poor educational environments with dilapidated conditions of physical structures and collapsing buildings, non-availability of staff accommodations, overcrowded classrooms, politicizing of education in the country, poor regard for the teaching profession by the Nigerian public and unattractive working conditions in the education sector such as lower remuneration of teachers in comparison to other professions (Adiotomre, 2009).

4. Political consideration in the choice of managers: The greatest problem undermining education management in Nigeria is the political consideration in the choice of managers. The use of a host of ephemeral considerations in the appointment of school heads completely relegates merit to the background. The best brains and by implication, the best managers are left out because of some ephemeral factors. The implication of this is that persons without the

required capacity are appointed as managers while those with the required capacity are thrown out. This negatively influences educational service delivery and educational development (Ifelunni, 2015).

RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY TO EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Psychology of education plays a vital role in effective education management. Its major focus is dealing with people presenting diverse behavioural traits in the educational facility and ensuring that everything goes well to achieve education goals. Since scholars already know that educational psychology as a discipline is a conglomeration of different aspects of psychology with the aim of solving educational problems, knowledge of it by education managers is very essential for effective management of our educational institutions. It plays a vital role in all areas of the management task: planning, organizing, commanding, controlling, staffing, evaluation and development. Staff recruitment, training, motivation, welfare, discipline of errant staff and students as well as resolving disputes between members of the school community may never be properly done without some knowledge of educational psychology.

The management tasks of planning, organizing, commanding and controlling involve the production of a plan and seeing to it that the plan is strictly followed to achieve desired results. These are all psychological activities that require conceptual skills. They are fundamental properties of intelligent behaviour. To say it differently, educational psychology provides the education manager with the impetus to function optimally in these areas. In the areas of staffing, evaluation and development, educational psychology borrows from personnel psychology and uses principles such as motivation, intelligence, individual differences, cognition and psychometrics to deal with selection, recruitment and evaluation of personnel and other job aspects like morale, job satisfaction, discipline as well as relationship between managers and other staff in the school setting. It focuses on job analysis, defines and measures teachers' performance, performance appraisal, aptitude testing, recruitment and selection interviews, employee training, other human factors and ergonomics (Ajayi and Ayodele, 2004). Suffice to say, therefore, that knowledge of educational psychology is an invaluable work tool to enable education managers achieve not only their set goals but also the overall development of the institutions they oversee.

Also, Mgbekem (2004) suggests that educational psychology will assist the education manager in the following ways:

1. It will help them to develop positive attitudes towards others, especially their staff and students.
2. Provide them with evaluation techniques to enable them assess the level of accomplishment of set goals in a given school year or programme.
3. Help them to adjust their leadership styles. With knowledge of educational psychology, they will imbibe the tenets of democratic leadership and jettison autocracy that has the potential to mar the entire education system.
4. With knowledge of educational psychology, many innovations, ideas and techniques can be introduced by education managers to aid them in their professional assignments.
5. It will also enable them to instill in their teachers the spirit of inquiry for their professional growth.

Similarly, Woodfolk (2007) equally provides his own version of the importance of educational psychology to the management of education. He believes that the overall purpose of psychology of education is the provision of coordinated realities as well as general assumptions to assist education managers to increasingly understand

educational objectives, both culturally and professionally. Woodfolk (2007) added that, if the overall aim is critically studied, it may unveil a number of specific objectives. Furthermore, he opined that from the overall aim, the following more essential aims may be realized from having knowledge of educational psychology:

1. To imbibe the belief and understanding about the degree of growth that can be realized, learning achieved improvement of social behaviour and effect proper adjustment of personality. The accomplishment of this aim will produce a growing understanding of the contributions of psychology of education to assist the job of the education manager.
2. It helps to fine-tune and establishes objectives of education and regulations for acceptable behaviours (attitudes, conducts, values, etc) that deserve to be the aims of every educational venture. When an education manager is aware of what the anticipated results are, he will provide the necessary situation for achieving them.
3. Education managers will be helped to acquire a compassionate leadership attitude for staff and students by adopting an objective consideration of their behaviours.
4. Help s them to have an appreciative knowledge of the beauty and relevance of relationships in social circles and equally influence members within the educational setting to develop such skills for functioning in a social milieu.
5. Provision of principles and facts for the solution of educational problems: the manner to purchase educational resources could be the same manner used to intelligently attain desirable results; the way educational procedures can be handled so that equipment and material resources may not hinder the anticipated outcomes; the manner that the whole system is coordinated in order to make achievements to remain permanent.
6. Help the education manager to acquire a reasonable means of ascertaining their personal task performance and those of others in the educational process. This knowledge will help the education manager with the basis to appreciate the importance of results and working framework for an understanding of useful resources and methods (handy or easy), the best means to utilize such resources, reliable and logical methods to assess performance. It also helps them to develop logical, solution-oriented attitudes towards educational difficulties as well as assist them with necessary for educating staff to be cognitively active over their behavioural obstacles to education.
7. Help to furnish the education managers with requisite knowledge and methods to consider behaviour (theirs plus those of others) that would result in acceptable adjustment may be enhanced while personality development is realized.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Management of education at all levels in Nigeria has been of great concern to all stakeholders in the education sector. As a matter of fact, the management crises often experienced in our educational institutions may never be overcome without their managers acquiring some basic knowledge of educational psychology and putting into practice its ideas, techniques and tenets to guide their official duties. Education policy makers also need to take cognizance of this lack of working knowledge of educational psychology by educational institution managers, consider it as a loophole in the system and seek ways to make necessary amendments. They should ensure that individuals to be saddled with the responsibility of managing educational institutions must be able to demonstrate practical knowledge of educational psychology before being assigned such an important task. This will go a long way in making the education system vibrant, more progressive and result-oriented.

REFERENCES

- Adegbesan, S.O. (2011). Establishing quality assurance in Nigerian education system: Implications for educational managers. *Education Research and Reviews*, 6 (2), 147-150.
- Adiotomre, J. E. (2009). *Introduction to educational administration and management*. Warri: COEWA.
- Ajayi, I.A. & Ayodele, J.B. (2004). *Fundamentals of educational management*. Ado-Ekiti: Green Line Publishers.
- Arubayi, E. A. & Ikoya, P. O. (2016). Education and Best Practices in the Twenty-first century. In P. Oghuvbu (ed). *Global best practices in higher education for national development*. Abraka: Delsu Press.
- Athanasius, J. (2018). Prospects and Problems of Educational Management in Nigeria. Retrieved on 30th October, 2021 from www.infoguidenigeria
- Aziza, R. O. (2016). Development of Local Languages in Higher Education for National Development. In E. P. Oghuvbu (ed). *Global best practices in higher education for national development (pp.30-41)*. Abraka: Delsu Press.
- Baita, H.T. (2019). *Educational Psychology*. Portharcourt: Esteem Press.
- Boundless Psychology. (2021). Psychology in education. Retrieved on 30th October, 2021 from www.lumenlearning.com
- Cherry, K. (2021). What is educational psychology? Retrieved on 30th October, 2021 from www.verywellmind.com
- Draft, R.L. (2003). *Management (6th ed)*. New York: Thomson South-Western Learning Press.
- Dinna, S.P. (2018). *Essentials of educational psychology (2nd ed)*. Lagos: Distinct Books Ltd.
- Fayol, H. (1944). *General and industrial management*. London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons.
- Green, W.A. (2020). *Educational psychology: An analytic approach*. Portharcourt: New Dimension Publishers.
- Ifelunni, I.C.S. (2015). Emergent issues and educational development in Nigeria in the 21st century. *Delsu Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 2 (2), 1-12.
- Megbo, B.C. & Hassan, T. (2015). Impact of educational psychology in the development of Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2 (9), 146-148.
- Mgbekem, S.J.A. (2004). *Management of university education in Nigeria*. Calabar: Unical Press.
- Nwokeocha, S. (2014). *Organization and human resource management applied to tertiary institutions in Nigeria*. Centurion, South Africa: Africa Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities.
- Ogundele, O.J. & Okonji, P.S. (2004). Comparative management and administration: An overview. In O. J. Ogundele (ed). *Comparative management and administration: A book of reading*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Wallinga, J. (2020). Biological Psychology. In C. Stangor & J. Wallinga (eds). *Introduction to psychology (1st Canadian edition, pp.18-26)*. British Columbia: Open Textbooks Collection.