Impact of covid-19 on administration of primary school in Nigeria

Ogunode Niyi Jacob
ogunodejacob@gmail.com
Federal University, Wukari, Nigeria
Deborah Jegede
Post-graduate Students
University of Abuja

ABSTRACT

This article discussed the impact of COVID-19 on primary school administration in Nigeria. Secondary data was used in the paper. The secondary data were sourced from both print and online sources. The paper identified the following: suspension of teaching programme, suspension of internal examination, suspension of extra-curriculum programme, disruption of academic programme and inability to enroll new students into primary school as of when due as the impact of COVID-19 on the administration of primary schools in Nigeria. The paper recommends that the government should increase the funding of primary school education and integrate the primary school education to online model.

Keywords: Administrators, COVID-19, Primary School, Impact

1.0 Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is tracking the impact of the pandemic on education. As of March 30, they estimate that 87 percent of the world’s students—that is 1.5 billion learners—have been affected by school closures. The bulk of these students are enrolled in primary and secondary schools, but there are also millions of students affected at the pre-primary and tertiary education levels. More than 180 countries have shut school doors nationwide, while others have implemented localized school closures (Wikipedia, 2020). The outbreak of the COVID-19 compelled the Nigerian government to join the rest of the world and shut down all her educational institutions. The primary school education is one of the most affected forms of education in Nigeria because it has the largest enrolment of students in Nigeria. This article aimed at discussing the impact of COVID-19 on the administration of primary school in Nigeria.

2.0 Concept of COVID-19

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). These viruses were originally transmitted from animals to people. SARS, for instance, was transmitted from civet cats to humans while MERS moved to humans from a type of camel. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans. The name coronavirus comes from the Latin word corona, meaning crown or halo. Under an electron microscope, the looks like it is surrounded by a solar corona. The novel coronavirus, identified by Chinese authorities on January 7 and since named SARS-CoV-2, is a new strain that had not been previously identified in humans.

Chinese health authorities are still trying to determine the origin of the virus, which they say likely came from a seafood market in Wuhan, China where wildlife was also traded illegally. On February 7, Chinese researchers said the virus could have spread from an infected animal species to humans through illegally-trafficked pangolins, which are prized in Asia for food and medicine. Scientists have pointed to either bats or snakes as possible sources of the virus.
According to the WHO, signs of infection include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, it can lead to pneumonia, multiple organ failure and even death. Current estimates of the incubation period - the time between infection and the onset of symptoms - range from one to 14 days. Most infected people show symptoms within five to six days. However, infected patients can also be asymptomatic, meaning they do not display any symptoms despite having the virus in their systems. (Wikipedia, 2020)

On 27 February, Nigeria confirmed its first case in Lagos State, an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria had returned on 25 February from Milan, Italy through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, fell ill on 26 February and was transferred to Lagos State Biosecurity Facilities for isolation and testing. Presently, Nigeria is having 199 covid-19 cases, two death and twenty recovered. In order to contain the spread of the virus in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has directed all educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allow students to go home as cases of reported COVID-19 increased to 13. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sonny Echono, told reporters on 19 March that the directive was part of the country’s overall strategy to contain the spread of the virus (Wikipedia, 2020).

The directive affected all the educational institutions in Nigeria including the primary schools. All aspects of the educational system was affected. Deborah Jegede (2020) observed the temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the World has negative effect on students learning. The Covid-19 pandemic, in no small measure, has adversely affected primary education, especially in the area of literacy ability (Osiesi, 2021, Bao, Qu, Zhang, Hogan & Tiffany, 2020) as well as effective learning among learners.

2.0 Concept of School Administration

The responsibility for administering the education sector in Nigeria is shared among the federal, state and local governments. Thus, in the country’s constitution, education is on the concurrent list, but the Federal Government is empowered to regulate all its sectors, engage in policy formation and ensure quality control. Also, the provisions of the constitution allow each tier of government to focus its responsibilities mainly on a sector of education. The Federal Government is involved directly in tertiary education. The states take care of secondary education, while the local governments handle primary education. The administration of primary school /universal basic education is under the local government council (NEEDS,2014). According to Ogunode (2020) administration is the process of arranging institutional resources to realize the objectives of the institution. Administration is very germane to the realization of the school’s objectives – indeed, the success of the school system depends largely on the administration of the school is handled. The teachers, students, non-teaching staff and resources must be efficiently arranged, monitored and controlled, so that they would work harmoniously according to (educational plan) (Noun 2008). The National Policy on Education (2013) emphasizes the success of the entire educational system on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate funding. School administration is the process by which principles, methods and practices of administration are applied in educational institutions to establish, maintain and develop such institutions in line with the goals of the institutions. School administration implies the arrangement of the human and material resources and programme available for education and carefully using them systematically for the achievement of educational objectives (Noun,2008).

According to Ogunode (2020) there are two dimension of educational administration. The external and the internal administration. The external administration is handle by the various
agencies and commissions established by the government to oversees the supervision and formulate policies for some specific educational institutions while the internal administration is handle by the school administrators appointed to administer and supervisors the school with the aims of achieving its objectives. The internal administration is also known as the school administration. According to Akinwumi & Jayeoba (2004) school administration is the scientific organisation of human and material resources and programmes available for education and using them systematically and meticulously to achieve educational goals. School administration is the arrangement of the human and human resources of the school in an effective and efficient ways to achieve the objectives of the school. School administration refers to systematic application of both human and material resources for deployment in the school business with the aims of actualizing the objectives of the school. School administration is involves the coordination, supervision and utilization of school resources for the implementation of school programme with the objectives of attaining the school goals. School administration deals with planning, organizing, staffing, supervising, coordinating, motivating and inspecting all school programme with the aims of realizing the objectives.

Primary school administration involves planning, organizing and providing human and materials resources (manpower) and ensure effective leadership with the aims of realizing the objectives of the primary school and to bring about the desired change in the children’s behaviour. The function of the school administration is summarized as follows:

(i) production and management of resources (human and materials) needed to support organizations and its programme
(ii) supervision of instructional activities in the school system
(iii) obtaining and training personnel
(iv) providing leadership for curriculum
(v) maintaining peaceful co-existence between the school, the community and the external agencies
(vi) influencing staff behaviour
(vii) discerning and influencing the development of goals and policies
(viii) evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency or otherwise of the school
(ix) initiating work activities
(x) grouping the tasks into activities
(xi) defining the task to be done
(xii) taking remedial action if the objectives are not being met
(xiii) supplying incentives to stimulate productivity (Noun, 2008).

The function of school administration also include: planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, staffing, supervision and quality assurance. Etuk (2007) outlined the following as functions of school administration: staff personnel administration, student personnel administration, finance and physical resources, and school community relationship management. School administration also include: curriculum development, instructional supervision, organization of staff development, provision and utilization of instructional materials, maintenance of school physical facilities and planning of institutional academic programme. The function of school administration specifically include: Coordination of teaching programme, planning of school calendar, allocation and distribution of financial resources, staffing, supervision, coordination of extra curriculum programme, community relation, staff development, promoting positive school culture, organization of academic programme and coordination of students programme, coordination of counselling programme, implementation of exam programme and quality assurance. For the purpose of this
paper, the following function of school administration will be used: implementation of teaching programme, implementation of school internal examinations, implementation of extra-curriculum programme, supervision of instruction and admission of new students.

4.0 Concept of Primary School

Primary education is the bedrock on which other levels of education are built. The National Policy on Education (2013) refers to primary school education as “education given in an institution for children” normally aged 6-11. This is the level that prepares pupils for Secondary Education. It is necessary that basic skills are inculcated into learners as specified in the objectives. The primary education, globally, is the basis of formal education. It is the thread that connects other higher levels of learning, developing in young minds the very skills, experiences and knowledge for a tougher and higher pursuit in academics (Osiesi 2020). Through primary education, the art and act of writing, reading, acquisition of necessary skills, attitudes and the basic information needed for appropriate adjustment into the society and the world in general is imbibed. This level of education is paramount to the core advancement of many economies, a reason for its inclusion into the Millennium Development Goals of the universal primary education. Various problems ranging from insecurity, illiteracy, religious violence, ignorance and political servitude in Nigeria for example, can be curbed or eradicated by the aid of primary education. This has caused most governments (Nigeria included) to make primary education free and declare it universal and compulsory (Osiesi 2020, Kubiat, 2018). The primary school or basic education is expected to be free and compulsory for Nigerian children. It begins at the age of six and consists of six years of primary schooling and three years of junior secondary schooling. Subjects taught at the primary level include mathematics, English, religious knowledge, basic science and technology, and one of the three major Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) (NEEDS, 2014). The goal of primary education is to inculcate functional literacy and numeracy, develop the ability to communicate effectively, and enhance positive attitudes towards cooperation, work, community, national development and continuing learning (NEEDS 2014, UNESCO, 2011). The National Policy on Education (2013) stated the objectives of primary education as follows:

a. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
b. The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
c. Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
d. Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
e. Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
f. Giving the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity and;
g. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality. According to Osiesi (2020), the functions/importance of primary education across Nigeria is: to help learners master the art of writing, reading and Arithmetic, to help learners develop and be of good conduct and behavior and to help learners in acquiring vital skills and appreciate the worth of manual labour. The curriculum for the first six years of basic education is discipline-based, and addresses the goals of primary education. Seven main subjects are specified in the curriculum. These are language arts, elementary science, mathematics, social studies, cultural arts, agriculture and home economics. Student evaluation at the primary education level is now carried out by a system of continuous assessment, as the
primary school leaving certificate examination has been abolished. Consequently, Nigerian children are expected to have a continuous, uninterrupted stretch of education for nine years from primary school to the third year of the junior secondary school (NEEDS, 2014, Labo-Popoola, Bello and Atanda, 2009). An indispensable purpose of primary education is to effectively communicate skills that will assist pupils to be pertinent to the social and economic development of their nations. Hence, primary educations aim at giving rise to a literate population and prepare the footing for the secondary and higher education (Osiesi, 2020).

5.0 Impact of COVID-19 on the Administration of Primary School in Nigeria

There are many impacts of COVID-19 on school administration but in this paper, the following impacts will be discuss: the impact of COVID-19 on implementation of teaching programme, implementation of school internal examinations, implementation of extra-curriculum programme, supervision of instruction and admission of new students.

5.1 Implementation of Teaching Programme

Ensuring effective implementation of teaching programme is one of the major function of school administration in the primary school. It is the duties of the school administrators to ensure teaching programme are carried out in the primary school every school days. Teaching is the act of imparting knowledge and skills on the learners. Teaching is the transfer of knowledge to the students. Teaching process consists of the teachers, students and the instructions. Teaching programme is a major activities primary schools carries out. The teaching programme in all Nigerian primary school was suspended because of the outbreak of COVID-19. The Nigerian government order the closure of all educational institutions in the Country which include the primary schools across the country. The order given by the government because of COVID-19 led to closure of all primary schools in Nigeria affecting the administration of primary school education. The COVID-19 affected the teaching programme of the primary schools across the country. The outbreak of COVID-19 have affected all educational institutions leading to the shutdown of teaching and learning, (Ogunode, 2020). The pandemic has negatively impacted the regular teaching and learning schedules of the educational systems of the most parts of the globe, causing a major setback in providing quality teaching and learning and necessitating digital learning (Lindzon, 2020; Karp & McGowan, 2020). Ogunode N J, Abigeal, I. ,Abashi L, A. (2020) observed that teaching and learning in all Nigerian higher institutions and across the world have been put to hold because of the COVID-19 virus. Teaching and learning have been put to hold in all the Universities, Poly-techniques and colleges of education in the country as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. The implication of this is that many Nigerian students will not be in the schools for a period of one month or even more implying that they will be idle.

5.2 Implementation of School Internal Examinations

School administration is saddle with the responsibilities of ensuring the exam programme of the schools are conducted at the end of every term. In Nigeria, the primary school writes three exams. The first term, second term and third term examination which is the promotion examination. Examination is one of the crucial programme of the school. It supersed all other programme because it evaluates the students’ progress academically (Psych-motor domain, affective domain and cognitive domain). Examination is a crucial programme in the life of a school. It is seen as a mechanism by which a learner’s achievement is determined in the three domains - psychomotor, affective and cognitive – through a set of instruments under the supervision of an examiner or examiners (Atanda and Lameed, 2006). The teaching-learning process aims at enhancing cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the students. The indicator that feeds the school system back
on whether the essence of teaching-learning process has been achieved is examination results. Though, there are other approaches to determine students’ level of achievement like homework or assignment, project and others, they are complementary. These are added to school-based examination to make hundred percent (Noun, 2009). Noun (2009) submitted that there are two types of examination. Internal and external examination. Internal examination is conducted within the school by the school management in conjunction with teachers handling different classes. The examination could be terminal (examination conducted on termly basis) or promotional examination which is done at the end of a session to decide who will transit to the next class among the pupils and those who are to repeat the same class. External Examination is conducted by the external body saddled with the responsibility to do so in conjunction with the school management. The outbreak of COVID-19 which led to the closure of educational institutions in Nigeria in order to curtain the spread of the virus led to the suspension of second term examination of all primary schools in Nigeria affecting the administration of the school. Many educational institutions were affected because the closed order came when majorities of the educational institutions in Nigeria are writing both external and internal exams across the country. Researchers like agreed that COVID-19 pandemic affected the internal examination of educational institutions,(Ogunode, 2020).

5.3 Implementation of Extra-Curriculum Programme

Implementation of extra curriculum programme is another function of primary school administration. Extra curriculum programme or activities are carried out outside the classrooms. It is aim to give the student practical experience. A school is an organization of many activities and programmes packed for the accomplishment of stated objectives. Thus, there are extra-curricular activities in which pupils engage outside the class work in primary schools to complement classroom exercise. Some examples of extra-curricular activities that take place in primary schools are: debate and quiz competitions, association/society day/week, field trip/excursion, end-of-year programme and inter-house sports. These are the activities that students are exposed to in the school which complement the activities in the written curriculum. The school administration coordinate the extra curriculum with the subject teachers to ensure effective implementation. The outbreak of the COVID-19 and the government directive on closure of all educational institutions led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum programe in the Nigerian primary schools. Jim (2019) submitted that the COVID-19 pandemic have led to suspension of all school programme which is affecting teaching and learning and other school programme. Ogunode (2020) did a study that looked at the effects of COVID-19 Schools Close Down on the Senior Secondary School Academic Programme. Result collected revealed that and 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools, 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down affected the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools; 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment on education; 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of teaching and learning in Schools; 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools.

5.4 Admission of New students

Admission of new students into the school is a major function of school administration. The school is mandated to enroll students for learning. It is the culture of school admission to ensure children are admitted into the school every new academic section. In 2020, many primary school in
Nigeria do of admit new students because of the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the closure of all educational institutions in Nigeria and the rest of the world. The function of the school administration in that respect was disrupted and all admission processes was suspended. Because, the pandemic affected not only teaching, but also administration and the eligibility of applicants, it is possible that universities will make changes to their admissions processes, and postpone application deadlines. According to the Institute of International Education, three-quarters of American colleges and universities have reported the negative impact of COVID-19 on recruitment this year. It is important to keep in mind that 370,000 students, or 33.7% of America’s total international students, are from China. Decreased enrolment of Chinese students has already impacted the economies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Source (World University Facebook News, 2020). COVID-19 have affected the school admission and denial many children educational opportunities.

5.5 Disruption of Academic Calendar

Another function of the school administration is to ensure that academic calendar of the school is planned and implemented as planned. The school administrators is saddle with the responsibilities of ensure academic calendar is planned, resources for implementation are organized and the calendar is implemented as planned. In Nigeria, every educational institutions through the school administrators plans their academic calendar following the National policy on education guideline. The Primary school academic calendar for 2019/2020 academic section was disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic and this affected the administration of the primary schools. Many teachers could not teach and students could not learning because the primary schools were closed down. Ogunode (2020) carried out a study with the objective of investigating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on higher institutions in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The result showed that 100% of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 pandemic have led to the suspension of academic calendar of higher institutions in FCT, Abuja, larger percentage of the respondents believes that COVID-19 pandemic have led to the suspension of research programme of higher institutions in FCT, Abuja. Ogunode, Abiyeal, Abashi (2020) submitted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic that led to the closure of educational institutions in the country, many universal basic schools in the country are in the process of starting their second term examination while other basic schools in some states have started their second term examination but the federal government directive on the closure of all education institutions made all the basic schools in the country to suspend their internal second term examination. The COVID-19 pandemic have directly disrupted the universal basic schools exams in Nigeria. (15) Submits that the global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students’ learning; disruptions in internal
assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

School administration deals with the arrangement of human and materials resources for the actualization of the school objectives. School administration is vital for the realization of the primary school objectives in Nigeria. Primary education is very important for the reduction of illiteracy and out of school children in Nigeria. Primary school is one of the key to the social, economic and political development of the country. The national lockdown of educational institutions as a result of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria especially the primary schools have affected the administration of primary school in Nigeria. The impact of the COVID-19 on the administration of primary school education include: suspension of teaching programme, suspension of internal examination, suspension of extra-curriculum programme, disruption of academic programme and inability to enroll new students into primary school as of when due as the impact of COVID-19 on the administration of primary schools in Nigeria. Based on this problems, to bridge this gap, this paper recommends that:

1. The government should provide special fund for Primary education to enable the schools manage all the damages caused by the COVID-19 school close down.
2. The government should immediately embark on the integration of all primary schools into e-learning. Administration of schools should be switch online to admit new students.
3. The Nigeria government should provide portable solar radios for poor family especially those living in rural areas. This will provide the opportunities for basic school children to continue learning and those who cannot access digital learning in this period of pandemic.
4. School administrators and teachers of primary schools should be trained on how to deliver e-learning and lesson through radio. Teachers should be trained through virtual platforms.

References


