



THE ROLE OF SOCIETAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Cite this article:

Nwisagbo E., & Ihua-Jonathan, N (2024), The Role of Societal and Institutional Contributions to School Management towards Promoting Sustainable Economic Development in Rivers State, Nigeria. International Journal of Education Leadership and Development Research, 2(1), 11-18

Manuscript History

Received: 10 May2024

Accepted: 17 Jun 2024

Published: 28 Jun 2024

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ABSTRACT

Societal and institutional involvement in educational administration is crucial for promoting enduring economic progress in Rivers State, Nigeria. The correlation between these contributions and their influence on the region's socio-economic environment is explored in this study. Analysis of research outcomes and academic sources highlights the significance of efficient school management, supported by society and institutions, in advancing sustainable economic development. Moreover, universities have emerged as pivotal entities in driving sustainable economic progress by means of research, creativity, and community interaction. Nevertheless, challenges like insufficient funding, infrastructural inadequacies, and socio-political turbulence present notable hindrances to the successful execution of these endeavors. Despite these obstacles, emphasizing the importance of societal and institutional contributions to educational administration remains crucial for attaining sustainable economic growth in Rivers State. This work emphasizes the vital role of societal and institutional backing in educational administration for sustainable economic development in Rivers State. Through tackling challenges and capitalizing on innovative approaches, stakeholders can collectively strive towards realizing the complete potential of education as a catalyst for economic advancement and societal welfare.

Keywords: Development, Institution, School Management, Society, Sustainable Economy



Introduction

Rivers State is endowed with a plethora of natural assets, notably extensive oil reserves that have positioned Nigeria as a prominent petroleum producer in Africa's global arena. The majestic Niger Delta, characterized by a complex network of water passages and lush mangrove forests, contributes to the state's charm, drawing in tourists and environmental enthusiasts alike. The socio-political milieu of the state is marked by a dynamic interplay of ethnic diversity and communal identities. Diverse ethnic groups like the Ijaw, Ikwerre, Ogoni, and Igbo enrich Rivers State's cultural fabric, each with its distinct language, traditions, and customs (Agi, 2013). Education stands as the cornerstone of societal advancement, and Rivers State is dedicated to fostering the intellectual growth of its populace. This dedication is mirrored in the state's educational framework, which encompasses a variety of educational institutions striving to impart knowledge and skills to forthcoming generations. Despite the economic and cultural vibrancy of Rivers State, the educational sector encounters numerous hurdles. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and disparities in educational access impede the fulfillment of the state's educational objectives. Nevertheless, within these challenges lie prospects for innovation, cooperation, and sustainable development. As Rivers State navigates its path forward, it envisions a dynamic educational environment that nurtures inclusivity, excellence, and continual learning. Through strategic investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum enhancement, the state aims to equip its populace with the requisite knowledge and skills to excel in the 21st century. Sustainable economic development holds pivotal importance for Rivers State, acting as a driver for comprehensive advancement and prosperity (Wilson, 2012). By fostering economic growth while safeguarding environmental sustainability and promoting social fairness, in view of Abad-Segura and Gonzalaz-Zamar (2021), sustainable development ensures the long-term welfare of the state's residents in the subsequent ways:

1. **Economic Prosperity:** Sustainable economic development stimulates job creation, boosts income levels, and attracts investments, thereby enhancing Rivers State's economic resilience and competitiveness both nationally and globally.
2. **Environmental Conservation:** Embracing sustainable practices safeguards Rivers State's abundant natural legacy, encompassing its rivers, forests, and biodiversity. This not only ensures ecosystem sustainability but also mitigates the negative impacts of climate change.
3. **Social Equity and Inclusivity:** Sustainable economic development advances social inclusiveness by offering fair access to opportunities and resources, alleviating poverty, and improving the quality of life for all inhabitants.

Conversely, effective school administration plays a crucial role in attaining sustainable economic development. Initially, it ensures the efficient operation of educational institutions, utilizing resources effectively to provide quality education to students. By fostering a conducive environment for learning and creativity, schools equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to make meaningful contributions to the economy. Furthermore, effective school management promotes inclusive education, guaranteeing equal access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. This inclusivity nurtures social cohesion and diminishes inequalities, establishing the groundwork for a more equitable society.



Additionally, educational institutions serve not only as places of academic instruction but also as vital nodes for community involvement (Salako, 2017). The effective administration of schools necessitates collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including parents, local government bodies, and corporations, to address the needs and priorities of the community. Through the establishment of partnerships and active engagement with the community, schools can play a crucial role in supporting local economic advancement, fostering entrepreneurial endeavors, and nurturing a skilled workforce that aligns with regional demands. Moreover, schools have the potential to act as catalysts for sustainable development by incorporating environmental education into their curricula, thereby fostering a sense of environmental stewardship and accountability among students (Edward, 1987).

This study seeks to delve into the pivotal importance of proficient school administration in realizing sustainable economic growth. It aims to investigate the intricate relationship between effective school management and economic development, with a specific focus on the ways in which well-governed educational establishments contribute to the development of human capital, the promotion of innovation, and the enhancement of social harmony within societies. The research will scrutinize the significance of education in attaining sustainable development objectives, underscoring the imperative for educational institutions to align their methodologies with the principles of environmental sustainability and social justice.

Sustainable economic development entails a comprehensive strategy aimed at facilitating prolonged economic advancement while upholding environmental conservation, social fairness, and cultural safeguarding (Mensa, 2019). As indicated by Abad-Segura and Ganzaloz-zamar (2021), sustainable economic development holds significance in tackling the obstacles encountered by developing nations, such as impoverishment, income inequality, and environmental deterioration. The assertion by Hariram, Mekha, Vipinray, and Sudhakar (2023) underscores the integration of sustainability principles into economic policies and operations as a means for nations to attain inclusive, environmentally conscious, and shock-resistant growth. Additionally, sustainable economic development accentuates the significance of education and human capital enhancement in nurturing innovation, entrepreneurship, and fair access to economic prospects, thereby underscoring the criticality of comprehending and advocating for sustainable economic development to address the intricate socio-economic and environmental challenges confronting contemporary society.

School management assumes a pivotal role in propelling sustainable economic development through ensuring the efficient governance and functioning of educational establishments. Its duties extend beyond mere administrative duties to encompass strategic delineation, resource allotment, curriculum formulation, and community involvement, all of which contribute to fostering a labor force equipped with the requisite knowledge, competencies, and values essential for sustainable economic progress (Agi 2013). Fundamentally, school management entails the effective utilization of human, financial, and material resources to establish an environment conducive to instruction, learning, and ingenuity. Through optimizing resource distribution, school management can curtail wastage, augment productivity, and advocate sustainability within the institution. Moreover, strategic planning endeavors embarked upon by school management teams play a pivotal role in aligning institutional objectives with broader socio-economic development aims, thereby cultivating a culture of sustainability and ingenuity (UNESCO, 2018).



An integral facet of school management's contribution to fostering sustainable economic development lies in curriculum development. By incorporating sustainability principles, environmental stewardship, and social accountability into the curriculum, school management guarantees that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and competencies to tackle contemporary challenges and contribute positively to economic advancement. Furthermore, school management assumes a crucial role in championing experiential learning avenues, such as internships, community service schemes, and entrepreneurship ventures, enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios and cultivate the proficiencies essential for excelling in a rapidly evolving economic milieu.

Additionally, school management facilitates partnerships and collaborations with external stakeholders, including enterprises, governmental bodies, and community entities, to enrich educational outcomes and advocate for sustainable economic development (Oyinlola, 2012). Through strategic collaborations, educational institutions can access supplementary resources, expertise, and funding prospects to bolster innovative programs and ventures aimed at nurturing entrepreneurship, environmental preservation, and social impartiality. School management acts as a catalyst for sustainable economic development by championing excellence in education, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and nurturing a culture of sustainability within educational establishments and the broader community. Through strategic delineation, resource allotment, curriculum formulation, and community involvement, school management assumes a crucial role in sculpting the future workforce and steering positive socio-economic transformations.

Theoretical Review

Three theories were briefly examined according to their application to both society and institutions; these theories are:

Functionalism Theory

Functionalists perceive society as a system comprising interconnected components working in harmony to uphold stability and order. From this viewpoint, school management is regarded as an institution that carries out crucial societal functions by imparting knowledge, socializing students, and preparing them for their future societal roles. Schools promote social unity by instilling shared values and norms, ensuring generational continuity. Functionalism underscores the segmentation of tasks and the hierarchy of power within schools. School management facilitates smooth functioning by coordinating diverse departments and roles, allocating resources effectively, and upholding discipline. According to a functionalist stance, proficient management enhances the overall stability and efficiency of the educational system (Ogona, 2020).

Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists posit that society is marked by inequality and struggles over resources and authority. In the realm of education, they perceive schools as establishments that perpetuate and replicate existing social disparities. From this standpoint, school management might reinforce societal divisions by favoring specific groups, perpetuating class-based gaps, and sustaining the status quo (Douglas, 1995). Within schools, conflict theorists illuminate power dynamics among various factions, including administrators, educators, students, and parents. School management could be interpreted as prioritizing the interests of dominant factions, maintaining supremacy and control over subordinate groups. Conflict theory underscores the role of management in shaping



policies, resource allocation, and disciplinary measures that mirror and fortify prevailing power dynamics.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory underscores how societal norms and values influence organizational conduct. Educational institutions, as establishments, are shaped by broader societal pressures and anticipations. Consequently, societal inputs to school management involve establishing norms, regulations, and benchmarks that direct managerial strategies and decision-making processes (Curic, Lazarevic, & Brzakovic, 2018). From an institutional outlook, school management assumes a pivotal role in conforming to and legitimizing societal norms and anticipations. Managers guarantee schools adhere to legal mandates, accreditation criteria, and community anticipations, thereby contributing to the institution's credibility and societal endorsement.

Here are some of the Societal Contributions to School Management:

Community involvement and engagement in school governance and decision-making processes are pivotal factors in the management of educational institutions, fostering collaboration between schools and the local community. Participation in governance and decision-making enables community members to offer valuable insights, perspectives, and resources to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of schools. Through dialogues, meeting attendance, and advisory board roles, stakeholders from the community play a significant part in shaping policies, programs, and initiatives that resonate with the broader societal needs and aspirations.

The involvement of parents, alumni, and local businesses in providing financial and resource support to schools is crucial. Their contributions, whether through monetary means, volunteer work, or in-kind assistance, greatly influence the quality of education and the overall school environment. Parent-teacher associations, alumni networks, and corporate partnerships aid in fundraising, infrastructure development, and expanding educational opportunities for students. These collaborations also nurture a sense of community ownership and pride in the school, ultimately boosting its reputation and sustainability.

Societal values, beliefs, and cultural practices have a profound impact on school management procedures, influencing institutional norms, policies, and priorities. Educational leaders must adeptly handle these cultural dynamics to establish inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. By embracing diverse perspectives with understanding and respect, schools can advocate for equity, diversity, and social cohesion. Moreover, aligning school management practices with societal values cultivates trust and credibility within the community, fostering collaboration and support for educational endeavors.

Institutional contributions to school management encompass the combined endeavors and resources provided by educational institutions to ensure efficient operation and administration. As outlined by Ashida (2022), these contributions consist of:

- A. **Government Policies and Regulations:** Government policies and regulations significantly shape school management practices by establishing frameworks for curriculum standards, student evaluations, teacher qualifications, and administrative protocols. They offer guidance on governance, financial management, and accountability, ensuring schools operate effectively, fairly, and in adherence to legal standards.
- B. **Capacity Building Initiatives:** Initiatives focused on capacity building aim to boost the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of school administrators and educators through professional development programs, workshops, seminars, and training sessions. By investing in the ongoing professional growth of educators, institutions promote a culture



of learning, innovation, and excellence, ultimately enhancing teaching quality, student outcomes, and overall school performance.

- C. **Infrastructure Development and Maintenance:** The development and upkeep of infrastructure are vital for establishing conducive learning environments, encompassing the construction of school facilities and amenities, as well as ensuring access to essential services like clean water and electricity. Regular maintenance is essential to sustain safe and functional infrastructure that supports teaching and learning activities, enhances student engagement, and contributes to overall school quality and reputation.
- D. **Strategic Planning:** Educational institutions engage in strategic planning to establish objectives, allocate resources, and formulate programs that are in alignment with their core values and long-term goals. This process entails evaluating current strategies, pinpointing areas for enhancement, and executing measures to boost the overall efficiency of the organization.
- E. **Community Engagement:** Educational institutions interact with parents, alumni, local enterprises, and community groups to nurture collaborations, seek backing, and enrich learning opportunities for students (Salako, 2017).
- F. **Leadership and Guidance:** Proficient leadership and governance frameworks guarantee the smooth operation of educational institutions, enabling well-informed decision-making and cultivating a favorable organizational atmosphere. Leaders offer guidance, facilitate professional growth, and encourage cooperation among various stakeholders.

Initiatives Advancing Sustainable Economic Development through Educational Management in Rivers State. Overview of Ongoing Programs and Initiatives.

1. **Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET):** In Rivers State, educational institutions have introduced TVET schemes to equip students with hands-on skills and ready them for the job market.
2. **Entrepreneurship Education:** Educational institutions in Rivers State incorporate entrepreneurship education to nurture creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset among students, fostering self-employment and sustainable economic progress.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** Collaborative efforts between educational institutions and private enterprises have resulted in the establishment of vocational training facilities and skill development schemes, offering students practical experience and employment prospects.

Success Stories and Challenges

1. **Success Stories:** Institutions implementing TVET and entrepreneurship education have observed heightened student engagement, enhanced employability, and entrepreneurial initiatives launched by alumni. The PPP model has facilitated the successful creation of vocational training centers, leading to job opportunities and economic advancement.
2. **Challenges:** Issues such as limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and the scarcity of qualified educators present obstacles to the efficient execution of these initiatives. Furthermore, resistance to new teaching approaches and a lack of awareness among stakeholders regarding the significance of vocational education may impede progress.



Suggestions

1. **Increased Allocation of Funds:** Government should Augment investments in vocational education and entrepreneurship initiatives to enhance infrastructure, curriculum design, and teacher capacity development.
2. **Engagement of Key Stakeholders:** Government should encourage cooperation among various governmental bodies, academic establishments, and the business sector to capitalize on resources and specialized knowledge for the enduring execution of programs. Engaging local communities in the planning and execution of projects, guaranteeing pertinence, durability, and backing from crucial stakeholders.
3. **Alignment of Educational Programs:** Ministries of Education and policy makers should Verify that vocational education schemes are in harmony with the demands of various industries and furnish students with pertinent competencies for employability or entrepreneurial pursuits.
4. **Reinforced Collaborative Efforts:** Educational Administrators and managers should encourage and intensify partnerships among academic institutions, governmental organizations, and private enterprises to ensure lasting financial backing, resource distribution, and compliance with industry requisites.
5. **Development of Capacities:** Government should allocate and release resources towards teacher training and continuous professional growth schemes to furnish educators with the proficiencies and expertise essential for the proficient provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and entrepreneurship instruction.

Conclusion

The contributions of society and institutions to educational administration play a crucial role in the sustainability of economic progress. Through the prioritization of education, fostering synergies between institutions and societies, and harmonizing strategies with sustainable development objectives, communities can guarantee comprehensive progress and enduring prosperity. By tackling these obstacles and putting these suggestions into practice, Rivers State can further enrich its endeavors in advancing sustainable economic growth through educational administration ventures.

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