

MANAGING MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOMS FOR FOSTERING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The article examined the issues in the multi-grade classroom management for fostering school effectiveness in Nigeria. Since multi-grade classroom is regarded as a classroom that accommodates more than one classes in a class during the teaching-learning process. The persistence of such situation therefore called for management concern in the interest of ensuring school effectiveness. It is therefore inevitable for the educational managers to make investigation into the situation in Nigeria. The paper therefore examined the concepts and strategies for managing multi-grade classroom, the indicators of school effectiveness required by effective multi-grade classroom management, the problems militating against multi-grade classroom management and the ways forward. It was however, concluded that the integration of multi-grade classrooms with the school situations need to be discouraged in Nigeria in the interest of fostering effectiveness in the school system.

Keywords: Classroom management, Multi-grade classroom and school effectiveness.

Introduction

In the recent time, the universalization of education had improved access to equal opportunities to quality education in Nigeria. It should be noted that the universalization of education had increase in the perception and create awareness to quality education in Nigeria. (Adepoju (2009). However, the increase in the population of the students at the school system constituted problem to the overcrowded classroom, schools population explosion, the problems also lead to the storage of teachers inadequate classroom, for the school population in Nigeria. The problem also lead to poor school effectiveness and poor students academic performance.

According to Ogundele (2019), the Federal Government of Nigeria stated that the government alone cannot shoulder all the responsibilities of providing education for her citizens. Manga (2020) also noted that most of schools have set back due to the inadequacy in the education facilities like buildings, lawns and Landscaping furniture, instructional facilities and inadequate finance. The effectiveness in the school management also had been in problem.

However, according to Moore (2016), the Educational administrators adopted management strategies like improvisation instructional supervisors, the use of shifting system, employment of part time teachers, the use of senior students for teaching. However, the problems of school population and overcrowded classroom skill persisted. For instance, Ijaiya (2007) stated that, over the years the classroom in secondary education have population of 150-200 students in a classroom. The population according to the author affect the quality delivery service during the teaching-learning process. The National Teachers' institute (2021) stated that the federal Republic of Nigeria suggested multi-grade school system in order to cope with the over population of the various schools in Nigeria.

Wolff and Gracia (2000) described multi-grade classroom as a class where two or more different grade levels learn in one classroom with one teachers. The multi-grade classroom does occur where the students enrolment is low, different age group inadequate classroom. According to Cohen (2012) also described multi-grade class is a natural learning environment with a variety of age group where by the learn together in a single classroom. The rationale for the article is to examine the concepts, causes, problems, the management strategies for improving multi-grade classroom teaching learning process in Nigerian secondary education and secondary education administrators intervention in multi-grade classroom situation.

Concept of multi-grade classroom

According to Orlich (2010) multi-grade classroom is defined as a class in which pupils of two or more adjacent grade levels are taught in one classroom by one teacher for most of the day. The multi-grade classroom is a situation where many grades are taught by a teacher in a classroom. The multi-grade teacher therefore is a situation where by a teacher has to teach many grades in a classroom all at the same time (Birch & Mike (2014).

According to Vithana and Pathirana (2005). Multi-grade classroom is a teaching situation where a single teacher has to take responsibility of teaching pupils across more than one grade levels within a time table period. To the author, schools with multi-grade classroom refers to multi-grade schools. It should be noted multi-grade classroom take place in area of low population density and school are inaccessible to low enrolment and few teachers. Little (2001) noted that multi-grade take place when a parental patronage focus on the popular schools leading to a decline in the enrolment and high teacher turn over.

Song (2009) defined multi-grade classroom management as a process and skills which play vital role for effective teaching learning process of a classroom that poses more than one grade students. It is practice in a school where a teacher is absent for one reason and substitution is not available. It should be noted that this type of school system, the teaching effectiveness is difficult to achieved due to the following challenges.

Pollard (2001). Identified the following challenges affecting multi-grade schools like inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor time management skills. Non-availability of instructional packages for effective teaching-learning process, inadequate support from the stakeholders in school administration and time table is not flexible towards admitting school effectiveness. However, this paper is interested investigating the classroom management strategies that the multi-grade schools administrative an adopt towards enhancing school effectiveness of secondary schools

Indicators of school effectiveness of multi-grade classrooms.

It should be noted that for the multi-grade classrooms to be effective the following indices should be in the school. According to Kajang (2004) effective multi-grade classroom process the following indices like effective teaching students academic performance teachers' commitment to duties, record keeping, classroom discipline, effective sitting, arrangement and 'community services. For the multi-grade classroom to achieve the indices according to the author, there must be well organized classroom devoid of distraction, more flexible and creative activities need to be initiated and self-directed effective school-community relations and effective delegation of authority.

Multi-grade classroom management and school effectiveness of secondary schools

Multi-grade classroom system include the type of classroom situation where by there are two or more class being managed by teacher. Multi-grade classroom occur when there are few classrooms to accommodate the existing population or a situation where by there is low ration of the teachers to the students enrolment. When there is the available facilities are also inadequate for enhancing teaching effectiveness, multi-grade classroom can set in. However, the existence of multi-grade classroom can be managed towards enhancing teaching effectiveness in Nigeria secondary education in the following ways

Adaption of group method: Teachers in a multi-grade classroom can make use of group teaching method. The students can be groups and each of the group would be given different activities to be involved. The teacher will try to monitor and direct the students in what to do. Active involvement will aid teaching effectiveness in schools (Adeoye, 2011).

Stakeholders involvement in Nigerian education: The secondary school management can make use of educational stakeholders to intervene on the areas of funding, infrastructural development, maintenance of school plants, donations volunteers as teachers. The stakeholder involvement will go in a long way in reducing the over stressing the facility usage and the problem of multi-grade classroom will be adequately reduce (Ogundele (2016).

Monitoring of Nearest neighbour analysis:The nearest neighbour analysis of the schools should be adequately monitored so as to manage the strategic location of the schools. The distance from the one school to the others. That the school need to be equally spread according to the needs and interest. The strategic distribution of the schools will aid equity, access and quality, the situation will reduce the problems emanated from the multi-grade schools.

Adoption of Activity oriented methods:The multi-grade teacher can always adopt activity oriented teaching that will encourage cooperative learning and team work in the classroom (Oparande, 2013).

The teacher need to adopt effective classroom management strategies:The teachers used to encourage student discipline making the classroom to be flexible and the classroom should be well organized, for effective teaching-learning process in the multi-grade classroom situation. Hess (2009), also suggested that the teachers can make use of the space outside the classroom. The author noted that such approach will complement the crowded multi-grade classroom environment. The space outside can aid accessibility to the local resources which can be benefited for effective teaching learning process in the school system.

Integration of Information and communication Technology to Teaching-learning process of multigrade classroom:For effective management of the multi-grade classrooms, the teacher can integrate information and communication Technology and other forms of internet connectivity to multi-grade classrooms. The integration will aid effectiveness efficiency and high commitment towards administration of the multi-grade classroom. (Akinnubi (2012). Finally; the school system can adopt shifting school methods for morning and in the afternoon in order to reduce the stress of multi-grade schools in Nigeria.

Teachers' Qualities for managing multi-grade classrooms in secondary schools

For effective management of multi-grade classrooms in Nigeria, the teachers to be able to manage multi-grade classroom effectively in secondary,

Resourcefulness:the teachers need to be resourceful. The teacher should be able to provide and improvise the necessary instructional facilities such as teaching materials, building managing the available sitting arrangement in order to provide conclusive environment for teaching-learning process in multi-grade classroom. Mothofela (2019) noted that when education resources are effectively the class teachers will be able to present the teaching-learning process in a more understood manner Jordan (2006) stated that in order to manage multi-grade classrooms, the teachers should have good classroom management skills and strategies for arranging and organizing instructional resources and physical setting.

Pedagogical efficiency: The teachers in the multi-grade classroom must be able to adopt learner-centeredness participatory, collaborative and interactive learning and be able to adopt constructive and reflective approach. The teachers in the multi-grade classroom need to be methodical capable of varying the methodologies that will aid quality delivery services. The teachers should be able to use dramatization, distraction, simulation game role, play and other activity oriented method. According to Beukes (2006). The multi-grade classroom teachers should possess basic skills of questioning, organizing and managing the time for effectiveness of the multi-grade classroom situations.

Qualification: Multi-grade classroom teachers should possess management qualifications such as B.Ed, M.Ed, OR Ph.D. In Educational management, the possession of management qualification will aid effective administration of any multi grade classrooms (Mathot 2011).

Improved personality traits :Personality traits of teachers are essential for the effective management of multi grade classroom, Butter Piji and Bijstra (2015). Stated that for effective and efficiency in the administration of the teachers should possess the personality trait of extraversion, Agreeableness consciousness, neuroticism openness to experience. The authors noted that teachers' ability to teach effectively in a multi grade classroom. The personality traits like humbleness, perseverance, hardworking, commitment, knowledgeable and ability to cater for individual differences in the multi grade classroom situations. (Bwoi, 2019).

Teachers Responsibilities or Readiness: Teachers in a multi grade classrooms must be ready to take additional responsibilities in the classrooms. The additional responsibilities like giving and marking of assignment, tests, having cordial friendly relationship with the students and parents seeking effective welfare for the students and provision of adequate training capable of achieving quality education for the students at the multi-grade classrooms. (Napan & Alirisug, 2021).

Principals managerial skills required: Possession of managerial skills that is capable of managing the multi grade classrooms in Nigeria. According to Ogundele, Osaigwe and Azi (2020). The following principles management skills are essential for enhancing trust and productivity of the teachers in the school system. According to the authors, the require skills include motivational skills, time management skills, supervisory skills, change and motivation skills.

The possession of the skills will enable the teachers to achieve the basic educational goals. Aksoy, (2008).

Collaborative learning: The multi grade classroom teachers should always encourage students working together to solve specific problems. The teachers therefore should encourage peer tutoring, tutoring participants grouping according to the interest abilities and capabilities. This effort will aid effectiveness and efficiency in the school administration of the multi-grade classes. (Moore, 2016).

Suggestions

The following strategies can be adopted towards effective management of multi grade classroom in Nigeria. The following suggestion are made.

Multi-grade teachers should always relate their teaching-learning processes to a real life situation. The real life situation should be connected with the teaching learning processes in the school system. This can be done through integrative strategy.

Also, technology can be integrated into the teaching-learning process in multi-grade classroom. The teacher should always adjust digital tools in the classroom. The tools will encourage enquiry task learning easy connectivity convey the lesson items to the students.

Teachers should be flexible during provide appropriate teaching materials capable of effective goals achievement of the multi-grade classrooms in Nigerian school. Multi-grade classroom teachers need to encourage effective reading culture so as to faster students' emotional wellbeing.

The teachers in the multi-grade classrooms should always encourage child-centeredness approach during the teaching learning process. This can be done by connecting the teaching-learning processed to a real life situation, teaching from known to unknown, adopting activity oriented pedagogical approach. The method will aid effective teaching-learning process in a multi-grade classroom in Nigeria.

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