

Management of Volunteerism for an Effective Tool in Basic Education

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Abstract: Volunteerism is a universal human phenomenon that contributes important social and economic benefits to society. In Nigeria like in most parts of Africa, it is as old as the people because volunteering tasks has always existed and predates modern civilization. In traditional society, there is a level of volunteerism that is expected in the home or community at a certain age often based on experience, gender, ability, location and availability. Volunteerism in education emerged as a portent management tool bringing forth a plethora of benefits and transformative impacts. This paper explored the multifaceted dimensions of volunteerism as a management tool in education, delved into its practical applications, advantages and the potential applications, advantages and the potential it holds for shaping educational experience for good governance. This paper also discussed management strategies essential for effective volunteerism in education. This exploratory paper sought to elucidate the multifaceted impact of volunteerism in education and the strategic management approaches necessary for its successful integration for good governance.

Keywords: Management, volunteerism, strategies, integration, impact, multifaceted dimensions, transformation, plethora

Introduction

According to Attah and Anam (2019), a social ethical phenomenon in contemporary times is the noble idea to render or offer any form of assistance, when necessary, by an individual or group of individuals, social and corporate organisations, religious groups and professional bodies, among others, either to private individuals, communities, organisations, schools or institutions, and nation states. It is lucidly transparent and natural in volunteerism when one gives one's talents without expecting rewards. Volunteerism is not the same as charity deeds or philanthropy, but it is using individual or corporate talents or time to help, grow and empower especially vulnerable individuals, groups or nations. This much recognized phenomenon of volunteer service either to an individual or group of individuals, nation-states, institutions and comity of nations, is generally accepted by national governments as it compliments policies, and efforts to sustain national peace, security and development. Uzoagu (2019) opined that volunteering is likely to reduce social exclusion that is often the result of poverty, marginalization and other forms of inequality.

There is therefore a mountain of evidence that volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which mitigates violent conflicts at all levels and also foster reconciliation in post-conflict situations. The impact of voluntary service to a nation is also relevant to conflict resolution and reconciliation as was evident in the post Rwanda and Arab Spring development stride. This is what it means to embrace volunteerism in its entirety; but it has not been given such priority as it requires in Nigeria.

The influence of volunteerism on management has brought about different schools of thought, political supports and propaganda that have in a way affected different outcomes or political leadership, mentorship and governance. As our educational landscape continues to evolve, the role of volunteerism becomes increasingly significant in fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment. This paper delves into the relationship between volunteerism and management within the realm of education for good governance. It begins by defining volunteerism as a selfless commitment to benefitting others emphasizing the conscious choice and altruistic motivation that drives individuals or groups to contribute the time or skills without expecting personal gains. Management, as outlined by Robinson et al (2017) is detailed as the systematic process, planning, organizing, directing and controlling resources to achieve organisational goals, with a specific focus on its application in the educational context.

This article explores the utilization of volunteerism as a management tool in education for good governance and highlighted its potential in fostering community, developing skills, supporting teachers, and providing additional resources. Subsequently, it introduced management strategies essential to effective volunteerism in education for good governance, ranging from defining roles and responsibilities to implementing training, communication, recognition and monitoring and evaluation processes. This comprehensive exploration aims at elucidating the multifaceted impact of volunteerism on education for good governance and the strategic management approaches necessary for its integration.

Definition of Concepts

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a basic expression of human relationships. It is about people's need to participate in their societies and to feel that they matter to others. Attah and Anang (2021) strongly believe that the social relationships intrinsic to volunteer work are critical to individual and community wellbeing. According to Wilson (2000), "volunteerism is defined as any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause". This definition underscores the motivation of altruism that drives volunteers emphasizing their selfless dedication. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA, 2002) concurred with Wilson's perspective as it affirmed that volunteerism means "activities undertaken of freewill, for the goal of the general public and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor". This policy defined volunteerism as an act of offering time, energy, skills, financial, material and/or other resources out of one's own freewill without necessarily expecting monetary reward in return and the action or activity must be beneficial to the society or contribute to positive change. The Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS, 2020) aligned with Wilson's and UNGA's point of view, asserted that volunteerism is an altruistic endeavour undertaken by individuals or groups to enhance the quality of life and advance the common societal good.

This perspective underscores the selfless nature of volunteer activities and emphasize the principal goal of societal betterment. The volunteer is driven by his desire to contribute his own quota freely to humanity through his skills, energy, knowledge, time and talents without demanding anything in return. (NNVS, 2020). The ethos of volunteerism is infused with values such as solidarity, reciprocity, mutual trust, belonging and empowerment, all of which contribute significantly to quality of life. These are strong management indices, especially in the domain of teamwork and cooperation. According to McGrath and Bates (2017), in Likert's theory of team management, there is free and open communication, new ideas are welcomed, rewards and punishments are not necessary as the team assumes full responsibility for getting things done, as everyone has absolute confidence in everyone else.

Management at all aspects and levels of human endeavour dwells on interaction. Interaction is both basic in volunteerism and management. These are strong management indices, especially in the domain of teamwork and cooperation. In the light of the above, volunteerism could be seen as a selfless endeavour undertaken by a person(s) or groups with social conscience for the good of others. Volunteers are people who have social conscience. They readily offer services freely for the common and societal good. Marzano et al., (2005).

Management

According to Robinson et al (2017), management is the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling resources (human, financial, physical, and informational) to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively. It involves coordinating the efforts of people to achieve specific objectives. And involves various functions such as decision making, leadership, and communication within an organisation. In summary, management is the entire work done to put into effective use of the human and material resources to achieve organisational aims and objectives. In the context of education, management refers to the systematic and strategic organisation, coordination, and administration of educational resources and processes to achieve the goals and objectives of an educational institution. Bush et al (2002), opined that management encompasses planning and overseeing the allocation of human, financial and physical resources to ensure the delivery of educational services. Educational management involves a range of responsibilities, including curriculum development, staff supervision, student welfare, and community engagement, all aimed at fostering an optimal learning environment Marzano et al., (2005).

Education

According to Onigiobi et al. (2020), Education is the right of every individual and is given in formal, informal and non-formal templates as a form of integration, assimilation and enculturation into the society. Basically, education revolves on the ever-changing values of world social culture. Each era of world history produced its own values which are incorporated into the society through appropriate processes and procedures. Our present world culture is both innovative and competitive having a global village lifestyle that enhances volunteerism ethos. The challenge of this globalised lifestyle has upturned most processes and procedures in the society making a demand of educational techniques, production and consumption patterns. It is necessary that education should be proactive in its content and rendition to maintain its relative concepts in development. Volunteerism has been observed as community service in some schools' curriculum.

Status of Volunteerism in Nigeria

Uzoagu (2019) is of the opinion that volunteerism in Nigeria is as old as the people because different forms of volunteering activities have always existed in times that predates modern civilization. In traditional society, there is a level of volunteerism that is expected at a certain age often based on experience, gender, ability, location or availability. Instances of volunteerism in Nigeria include communal farming, burials, festivals, security operations, rescue, advocacy and other community actions. Culture and tradition have had an impactful influence on service-oriented programmes such as in health, economic and education sectors. Initially, voluntary agencies emanating from religious bodies and communities offered minimal provisions until the gradual cultivation of interest in such scenarios by government and individuals through democratization process in later years that led to the commercialization of health and education facilities. Their management was supervised and controlled by government policies under the probity of ministerial agencies.

In education, the National Policy on Education spelled out the educational principles which are being implemented by the federal and state government structures and parastatals. Most times, the task is how to ensure that the passion and spirit of volunteerism in Nigerians is sustained and encouraged to thrive with the conviction that volunteerism is not a means of livelihood but a way of life in service to humanity. In the Nigerian context, Uzoagu (2019) argued that volunteerism in its natural form is the manpower needed to fight socio-economic uneasiness in the form of economic depression presently bedevilling Nigeria's economic growth and development. Also, to a large extent, volunteerism contributes to individual's development, social cohesion, and could as well serve as veritable tool in addressing social needs. They have the capability to offer skills, energy, expertise and knowledge, which cannot be overlooked, as they have the potential to assist the government in delivering better public programmes and policy objectives.

According to Corporation for National and Community service (2017), Majority of opportunities for individual volunteers are highly unexplored. Programmes like the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Volunteers in the National Graduate Volunteering Programme (NGVP), National Volunteers in the International Citizen Service Programme (ICS), Skilled and Professional Volunteers Programme, among other models in the history of the country were found to be underutilized. Rather than engaging themselves in promoting efficient community based voluntary services, and in the fight against poverty and inequality, the government officials channel volunteer programmes toward selfish gain. In reality, national voluntary service is understood to contribute to personal and social development.

Volunteerism as a Management Tool in Education

Volunteerism is a management tool that can be very effective in educational settings. When volunteers are involved in education, they bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills that can benefit students. Naggy et al (2023). Volunteerism also help to build a sense of community and engagement in the school. In addition, it allows the school access to resources that might otherwise be unavailable and emerges as a potent management tool, bringing forth a plethora of benefits and transformative impacts. According to Oluka (2020), as our educational landscape continues to evolve, the role of volunteers becomes increasingly significant in fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment. This discourse explores the multifaceted dimensions of volunteerism as a management tool in education, delving into its practical applications, advantages, and the potential it holds for shaping the educational experience

It can be used to supplement and complement the work of paid staff such as providing extra support in the classroom or after school. Volunteerism in education emerged as a portent management tool, bringing forth a plethora of benefits and transformative impacts. As our educational landscape continues to evolve, the role of volunteers becomes increasingly significant in fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment. Gabriel (2015). This discourse explores the multifaceted dimensions of volunteerism as a management tool in education, delving into its practical applications, advantages and the potential it holds for shaping the educational experience. Volunteerism can exist in school through the following Academia/Educational institutional ways.

Teaching, training and transferring skills, creating awareness, mentoring, strengthening expertise, evidence gathering, research and knowledge sharing on volunteerism and development themes, policies and actions, providing access, supporting governments and partners in the use of evidence for policies and practice on volunteerism and Facilitating establishments of volunteer groups.

Volunteerism as a management tool in education can be realised in the following:

Enhanced Learning Atmosphere/Support to Teachers: Volunteerism injects vitality into the educational ecosystem, creating a vibrant and engaging atmosphere. Volunteers often possessing diverse skills and experiences contribute to a rich tapestry of knowledge that transcends traditional classroom boundaries. This infusion of varied perspectives not only broadens students' horizons but also adds a practical dimension to theoretical concepts. Volunteer teachers who could be retired and active contribute to educational programmes and processes as they undertake mentorship work to achieve educational goals. When students are mentored by these volunteer teachers, they perform better than those who are not mentored (Bernard, (1990), Bloom (1984), cited by Onigiobi, (2020)) observed that 98% students' success is courtesy of trained mentors. Beyond its impact on students, volunteerism serves as a tool for personal and professional development for those involved. Volunteers hone their leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills, gaining a real-world understanding of the challenges within the education sector. This reciprocal relationship ensures that both the volunteers and the educational institutions benefit mutually.

Management Strategies for Effective Volunteerism in Education

The way roles for regular workers and teachers are defined in an educational environment should equally be the way roles for volunteers should be defined regarding their contributions to education. In fact, the educational institutions strategically leverage volunteerism, as a way to unlock a wealth of possibilities for shaping a more inclusive, dynamic, and impactful learning experience. The Management Strategies give a sense of purpose and direction to volunteers. Wilson, (2000) stated that the contributions of volunteers in education go beyond conventional teaching methods, creating an environment that nurtures individual growth, embraces diversity, encourages innovation, addresses societal disparities, and instils a sense of civic duty among students. Volunteers bring a personalized touch to education by offering tailored support to students with diverse needs. Whether it's one-on-one tutoring, mentoring sessions, or specialized workshops, volunteers can adapt their approach to address individual learning styles. This customization fosters a more inclusive educational experience, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Therefore, for an effective volunteerism in Education there is need to have management strategies like:

- A proper training and an orientation program to enable volunteers for gathering necessary information which will dispose them well, on how and where to channel their volunteer services (Nagy et al., 2023). This infusion of varied perspectives not only broadens students' horizons but also adds a practical dimension to theoretical concepts.
- A constant communication between the volunteers and the manager with regular feedback which will help volunteers to deliver an optimum service. This optimization allows schools to redirect limited resources to areas that need more attention.
- An appreciation and recognition in the form of awards from the manager for the service well delivered by the volunteers which will push and encourage them to do better in the future. In fact, witnessing volunteers contribute their time and expertise for the betterment of the community fosters a spirit of giving back. This not only enhances the students' understanding of social responsibility but also cultivates a generation of individuals who are actively engaged in their communities and committed to making a positive impact.
- Regular assessment of the work of volunteers which can eventually help to identify the best and successful strategies to adopt for improvement. Volunteers can provide additional resources, mentorship, and opportunities that may be lacking for students facing economic challenges. This targeted support helps level the playing field,

ensuring that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to a quality education and the tools needed for future Success.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Volunteerism stands as a powerful management tool in education, contributing to a holistic and enriched learning environment. Its ability to enhance the learning atmosphere, optimize resources, foster community engagement, and facilitate skill development for volunteers makes it an invaluable asset for educational institutions. As we navigate the complexities of modern education, embracing volunteerism not only addresses immediate challenges but also lays the groundwork for a more collaborative, inclusion.

Recommendations

Volunteers report greater life satisfaction and better physical health than do non-volunteers, and their life satisfaction and physical health improves at a greater rate as a result of volunteering. Therefore, the writers recommend that volunteerism should not be seen as an optional activity, rather it should be placed at a position of prestige because of its necessity and input in education and that students should be empowered by government, that way they would feel a great sense of obligation towards the community, for the measure you give is the measure you receive. What the government offers the students would determine their participation and their support to the things related to their education.

Every student had to go through volunteerism to receive the necessary training to become more experienced. Politicians are not exempted from the list of professions that requires adequate training. Students in departments or students offering courses related to political activities, should be guided and taught the right skills of leading the people, to avoid making similar mistakes as the past politicians did. Poor enlightenment of student is major deterrent to the effectiveness of education in our nation. Communication skills ought to be manifest in the curriculum, in other words, entrepreneur skills should be built into the curriculum.

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