

EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined effective principals' administrative strategies as a means of improving teachers' job performance in Nigerian secondary schools. Principals' administrative strategies involve roles played by secondary school principals towards ensuring that goals are met within the school set standards through directing, supervising and guiding every activity within their mandate. Specifically, the paper paid attention to the concept of principals' administrative strategies and what these administrative strategies entails, who the principal and teachers are, and the roles they play in the teaching and learning process, teachers' job performance and the challenges of teachers' job performance. Among the challenges of teachers' job performance are: Understanding the different learning challenges amongst learners, parental involvement, funding, low motivation of teachers, students discipline issues, extended working hours, time management, pressure from school administrators and teachers' burn-out. The paper also made recommendations that would enhance principals' administrative strategies. These recommendation among others, include the following: The Federal and State ministries of Education should set out clear key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for secondary school principals with clear timelines, school host-communities should maintain a close monitoring eye on school principals performance, timely and regular seminars, workshops and symposiums should be organized for secondary school principals, robust motivational packages should be put in place for both principals and teachers to enhance their performance among others.

KEY WORDS: *Administrative Strategies, Job Performance, Secondary Schools, Principals, Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

In the past, there has been serious concerns about the poor performance of teachers amidst poor administrative strategies of secondary school teachers across Nigeria, leading to fallen standards of secondary school education. It has been observed that there are a number of challenges that may gradually jeopardize the image and quality of secondary education in Nigeria. Issues such as lateness to school by teachers, teachers' attrition rate, frequent conflict, absenteeism, inadequate coverage of schemes of work, indiscipline, gross misconduct, truancy among students, inadequate physical facilities, examination malpractice, poor performance in internal and external examination, shortage of funds, unprecedented high fee-charges and high student-teacher ratios have become the norm (Cletus, 2023). Most of these challenges may be attributed to ineffective administrative strategies put forward by Principals.

Principals' administrative strategies particularly in the area of supervision, communication, motivation among others have been neglected across most secondary schools. Similarly, decision making that involves teachers has in most cases been overlooked. As a result, teachers and students are not properly carried along. Egboka and Olisah (2020) lamented that poor motivation and irregular evaluation of teachers' performance affect negatively students' performance which is mostly observed in their assessment and their final examinations. These

failure and poor resultant performance by teachers may be perceived as direct consequences of poor Principals administrative strategies. Most teachers are merely staying on the job as a means of survival and a last resort.

Indeed, concerns have been raised by the general public about the perceived ineffectiveness of most principals in their approaches to supervision, apathy towards leadership and evaluation, ineffective communication, poor decision making and insensitive of staff motivation among others (Abdulkadir, 2018). This scenario poses great dangers to secondary education as it capable of resulting in low quality output on teachers' side, poor classroom management, gross indiscipline, ineffective record keeping and poor students' performance in external examinations.

Despite good spirited efforts by Federal and State Ministries of Education in building secondary school principals' leadership capacity through seminars and workshops among others, the problem still persists. Poor administrative strategies by principals of secondary schools, breeds negligence of duty and wrong application of skills possessed by these principals in the day-to-day running of secondary schools. These issues, if not properly handled are capable of eroding the already fallen standard of education, slowing teachers' performance and hampering students' learning reducing their performance. Hence, this paper seeks to examine principals' administrative strategies as a means of enhancing teachers' job performance in Nigerian secondary schools.

CONCEPT OF PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES

Administrative strategies cannot be pinned down to a single or particular definition. This is largely owing to the fact that various writers and scholars viewed it from diverse perspectives. Ngeripakam Nkporbu and Acheya (2019) viewed administrative strategies as being managerial functions concerned with obtaining, developing and motivating the human resources required by an organization to achieve its objectives. Administrative strategies involve managerial techniques of planning, organizing controlling the available human and material resources needed to achieve set objectives. Administrative strategies components have been identified by scholars. For example, Ayodele, Buari and Oguntuase (2019) identified the following as administrative strategies: monitoring, use of committee system, staff performance appraisal, regular meetings, delegation of duties, participatory decision-making and motivation, similarly, administrative strategies as put forward by other scholars include: motivation, supervision, monitoring of staff discipline, delegation of duties, planning and communication (Ofejebe & Nnebedum, 2020; Osakwe, 2021).

Administrative strategies in the secondary school setting refer to the roles played by school principals towards ensuring that goals are met within set standards by directing, supervising, and guiding every activity within their mandate (Igwe, 2021). Thus, Administrative Strategies in secondary schools refers to taken by school principals based on their knowledge and experiences to ensure proper coordination of teaching and learning resources, providing guidance and performance of oversight roles in the improvement of teaching and learning activities. This is achieved by way of ensuring that teachers, learners and auxiliary staff follow all procedures, regulations and principles that have been set to control the relationship and interaction among these groups. It is only through this that principals can ensure the effective implementation of educational goals and objectives.

In the secondary school context, administrative functions entails carrying out assessments, maintaining discipline, curriculum management and teaching, carrying out examinations and evaluations, management, resource allocation, staff appraisal, creating cordial relationship with host community, providing pastoral care, costing and future planning, good

decision-making, negotiating, bargaining, conflict resolution, initiating meetings and communication among other (Adeyemi, 2022). This implies that the principal roles covers organizing, directing, planning and evaluation of the entire school system and the principal must make sure that all efforts are geared towards effective learning and teaching in the school for better results to be achieved.

Administrative Strategies

This refers to efforts put in place towards ensuring that the goals of the school are attained. In the secondary school context, administrative strategies refer to administrative mix put in place by school heads and other relevant stakeholders towards the attainment of the set objectives of the school (Igwe, 2021). Igwe further outlined the following as some of the administrative strategies principals use in ensuring that the goal and objectives of the school are achieved:

Monitoring: This has to do with proper collection of data relating to ongoing projects or programmes within the school system. The aim is to constantly assess performance level with the aim of finding out how far set objectives are being achieved.

Evaluation: This is a formal process carried out in the school system. It is based on available data which are used to arrive at conclusions. It could either be formative or summative. The aim of evaluation as a quality assurance strategy is to find out how far the system can be assisted to improve on the existing performance level.

Supervision: Supervision might involve inspection, but goes beyond inspection and includes efforts aimed at bringing about improvement in the quality of instructions. It involves staff as essential part of the process. It is a way of advising, refreshing, encouraging and stimulating staff.

Inspection: Inspection usually involves an assessment of available facilities and resources in a school has achieved set objectives. It is more of an assessment than improvement initiative.

Quality Control: The importance of quality control cannot be overemphasized. It is one of the administrative strategies principals use in order to enhance quality assurance in the school system. Quality control can only be enhanced where teacher's qualification is examined, enhanced quality curriculum, availability of equipment in required number as well as proper use of the processes involved in the various skills to ensure that graduates are of high quality.

PRINCIPAL

A principal is the head administrator, especially a grade school or a secondary school. Tadas (2019) posits that the title of principal is an appropriate designation for the chief administrator of a school. Udoh and Akpa (2010) referred to the principal as the executive head of a secondary school. The early principalship was given to any teacher found to possess some sign of demonstrable administrative ability. A teacher with academic qualifications and the right type of personality could be appointed the administrative head in addition to full-time teaching duty. Many of such principals were pre-occupied with such task as scheduling, attendance taking, reporting, among others. The idea of a principal serving as a teacher as well as an administrator continues today in most urban and rural areas (Ukeje, 2010).

As schools became more complex, the principal was relieved of some part of the teaching duties. In Nigerian schools, the principalship has evolved from the position and performance of teachers. Hence, the title of principal usually refers to the head of a secondary school or a post-primary institution (Aderonmu&Ehiametalor, 2005).

TEACHER

The Nigeria Ministry of Education is always curious about the job performance of its teachers and also demands a very high degree of loyalty, patriotism, dedication, hard work and commitment from its teachers (Udoh & Akpa, 2010). The term teacher as used in this paper refers to those who work in schools providing education for pupils and students in educational institutions like secondary schools. Teachers are also referred to as all persons in school who are responsible for instructions of pupils or students in curriculum (Igwe, 2021). It includes only the members of tutorial or academic staff of schools.

Teachers are placed in focus because teachers, as professional workers are the lenses through which much of the organized endeavor called education is brought to focus upon the end-object of the endeavor. In professional context, a teacher is a person trained or recognized and (in some cases) employed to help learning in a classroom situation so that the set educational goals could be achieved (Udoh & Akpa, 2010). Teachers occupy strategic positions, so sensitive and indispensable that they assume a nature whose absence leaves a vacuum that cannot be easily filled any other person. Teachers could be seen as an object, institution, prime-mover, accelerator, facilitator, motivator who embodies, exhibits knowledge, makes some impact that brings about changes and meaningful enduring results in the learner (Igwe, 2021).

Generally, a teacher is one who has undergone some training, programmed and equipped with basic knowledge, drills and skills peculiarly for him to bring about changes as outcomes to an individual called learner. It can therefore be deduced that teachers are those who have been exposed to a period of training specifically designed to equip them with knowledge, principles and practice of teaching. Udoh & Akpa (2010) observed that in the absence of the teacher, the school is something else. Akpan (2022) argued that the teacher is the spark that fits the whole development process, the key man in the drive to progress. Teachers are really required physically and in large quantity because of the valuable contributions they make in the educational process.

TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE

Job performance could be seen as the execution, conduct, compliance or conformity with outlined decisions or directives issued by a super-ordinate or demanded by a job (Casting, 2016). This implies that performance of any job must be in accordance with the pattern set for such performance. Teachers' job performance is a judicious devotion and dedication to the attainment of standards within and outside the school system. Teachers' job performance is anchored on statutory instructional curricula responsibilities that are performed by the teachers themselves so as to enable learners' benefit from set educational objectives. This however, depends on how committed the principals and teachers are in making judicious use of materials within and outside the school setting.

To ensure quality in the education process, teacher quality must be given the attention it deserves. Teacher quality is the ability of the teacher to demonstrate sound professional attributes like scholarship through adequate training and it is essential to successful teaching, student learning outcomes and attainment of quality education in secondary schools (Igwe, 2021). Teachers' quality is manifested in their subject-matter knowledge, skills and competences in the teaching and learning processes, which eventually results in the attainment of set educational goals and objectives. This implies that a good teacher must possess demonstrable abilities needed for effective teaching and learning within the school system. He must know what to teach, how to teach and who to teach. The purpose is to deliver the curriculum effectively with a view to achieving set aims and objectives of the school.

Thus, a trained teacher is someone who has undergone formal education in teachers' training institution or in a planned programme of training. Among such areas of training include principles and practice of education as well as being exposed to an observed period of internship either after or as part of the training period. Teachers who are well trained to fulfill the various functions expected of them within and outside the classroom. Fika (2016) provided the following as some of the standards for measuring teachers' job performance:

- ❖ They are clear about instructional goals
- ❖ They prepare lesson notes regularly
- ❖ They deliver their lessons properly in classrooms
- ❖ They are knowledgeable about curriculum content and the strategies for teaching it.
- ❖ They communicate to their students what is expected of them and why
- ❖ They make expert use of existing instructional materials in order to devote more time to practice that enrich and clarify the content
- ❖ They are knowledgeable about their students, adapting instruction to their needs and anticipating misconceptions in their existing knowledge
- ❖ They address higher as well as lower-level cognitive objectives while delivering their lessons
- ❖ They teach students meta-cognitive strategies and give them opportunities to master them
- ❖ They monitor students' understanding by offering regular appropriate feedback
- ❖ They accept responsibility for students' outcomes

Job performance is critical to the success or failure of any organization. School heads are most concerned about the job performance level of their staff as only through such the set goals of the school can be achieved (Akpan, 2022). School heads or principals need to constantly encourage their teachers by clearly describing their jobs to enable them perform optimally.

CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Teaching, a noble profession is a daunting and challenging task that has a number of challenges. According to Tadas (2019), some of the challenges faced by secondary school teachers include among others:

1. **Understanding the different learning challenges amongst students:** Given that there are different teaching methods and learning styles, a teacher has to think outside the box when it comes to meeting the need of individual learners. Various teaching strategies satisfy and stimulate learners differently, and as a teacher, he is required to put in extra efforts in order to meet the different learners' needs.
2. **Parental involvement:** Keeping parents informed and involved is one serious task that teachers and administrators are having difficulty in meeting up. Teachers have to explore ways of having parents of the students to be part of the students academic pursuit and have a better understanding of their skills by monitoring their performance on a regular basis. However, most parents appear not to have the time and interest to collaborate with teachers in that regard.
3. **Funding:** One contemporary educational issue confronting teachers in secondary school's today is inadequate funding. This issue occurs in different forms such as meagre or no salary increases, poor remunerations, delays in salary payments and poor facility maintenance among others. When schools face budget issues, they resort to increasing student-teacher ratios which directly affects students' learning. Teachers face overcrowded classrooms which prevents them from providing one-in-one attention to the learners.

4. **Low Motivation:** Most secondary school teachers lack the required motivation to enable them effectively perform their jobs. Some of the privileges previously enjoyed by secondary school teachers in the past are no longer available to present-day teachers. As a result, the present-day teachers just work to survive while praying for a better job offer to enable them quit the job.
5. **Understanding Changing Technology:** With the advent of the internet and everchanging technological landscape, teachers find it difficult to access easy and effective platforms to operate their classrooms.
6. **Students' Discipline:** Students' discipline within the classroom and beyond can be timely, emotionally-tasking process for teachers. It is not uncommon to come across students who lack good manners and being disrespectful. Such students are capable of reducing teachers' love for teaching and teachers cannot be delightful during interactions with such students who does not seem to change positively.
7. **Endless paper work and extended working hours:** Teachers in secondary schools are always engaged with marking and grading students' performances. Moreso, scripts marking is a task that is not carried out during teaching hours. This leaves teachers marking even after working hours. Paperwork has to do with accounting for students' progress by keeping track of their records throughout the year. Additionally, teachers engage in individual evaluations and record same. This is often a process that requires extended working hours.
8. **Time Management:** Teaching is a job that requires practitioners being active all day long, with little or no time for rest. This is where planning and time management comes in. secondary school teachers often find it difficult in designing a stimulating schedule that covers the year's work.
9. **Pressure from school Administrators:** The educational sector is a very competitive industry that requires teachers to regularly think outside the box. Competition takes place even within the school environment, with may teachers feeling as they need to achieve better things each year. Amidst the competition, teachers are usually responsible for their students' development, growth and discipline. This process puts so much pressure on the teachers.
10. **Burn-out:** It is a fact that teaching can be such a demanding job. With the ever-increasing pressure to burn-out as a result of rigours involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS ENHANCING PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES

1. The Federal and State Ministries of Education should set clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for secondary school principals with timelines attached. This would serve as a yard-stick for monitoring principals' performance with a view to enhancing their overall performance.
2. Secondary school host-communities should maintain a close monitoring-eye on the activities of school principals for the purpose of ensuring that principals operate within the confines of their responsibilities and report under-performing principals to the relevant authorities.
3. Government, through the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders in education should organize timey and regular seminars, workshops, symposiums for secondary school principals aimed at updating and further enhancing their capacities for optimal performance of the statutory responsibilities.

4. Robust motivation packages should be given to both secondary school principals and teachers to serve as an energizer. This is capable of positively influencing them positively towards greater productivity and effectiveness.
5. Secondary school principals and teachers should be regularly encouraged to go for further studies in order to enhance their performance capacities. This could be through awards of in-service sponsored opportunities and proper placements on completion of such studies.

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