

**ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING PRACTICES OF PRINCIPALS FOR
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

MANAFA IFEYINWA F. (Ph. D)
Department of Educational Foundations
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University
Igbariam Campus.
Email:ifeyinwamanafa@gmail.com
+2348063416191

Abstract

The study assessed the planning practices of principals for effective school administration in Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which was guided by three research questions and one null hypothesis, while all the 257 principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State were used as sample because of the size. A questionnaire structured by the researcher, titled Assessment of Principals' Planning Practices Questionnaire (APPPQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from Educational Management Unit and one expert from measurement and evaluation unit all in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated to be 0.73 using Cronbach Alpha formular. Research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation while t-test statistics was employed to test the null hypothesis. The findings revealed that ineffective planning causes poor teaching and hazy preparation of budget. Inadequate fund to procure materials needed for planning and principals' not involving the concerned staff in planning are also causes of poor planning. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that; government should provide periodic in-service training on planning for principals and principals should practice good communication skills.

Keywords – Planning, planning practices, assessment, principals, administration.

Introduction

Planning is a very important administrative element in any organization. It is one of the components of education administrative processes that no administrator can do without especially in decision making and implementation. The school administrators need to always plan for the activities and programmes of the school ahead of time. Due to rapid growth and change in the education system there is explosive growth in the population of those that require education, with this, there is need for the educational administrator to plan effectively in order to avoid shortage and mismanagement of resources in their schools. The planning must be a long term one so as to accommodate all the processes. Planning occurs at many levels, from day-to-day decision made by individual and families to complete decision made by the school administrator and the government.

Ackoff (1970) described planning as the tool which is used in gaining control of the future through current acts by studying comprehensively the current problems, apply

appropriate solutions, anticipating similar events, preparing for contingencies by formulating directions, mapping out activities and providing orderly sequence for achieving stated goals. In other words, to plan is to get ready for a goal oriented action. Planning happens before the real action is done and is all about what should be done to achieve the stipulated goals.

Megbu (2005) described planning as an attempt to raise the rationality of decision – making, carefully specifying objective and systematically shifting alternative policy instruments so as to find the optimal means of achieving the objectives. This shows that planning is not a spontaneous action but carefully and purposely organized, prepared and channeled towards achieving an objective. Planning therefore is the process of selecting missions, objectives, strategies, policies, programmes and procedures for achieving them, decision-making, the selection of a course of action from among alternatives, Koontz, and Wehrich (1994). From the above definitions, one can deduce that planning is an intentional way of getting prepared in advanced of what is to be done in future. In other words, it is an effort to get things ready for future. For a school administrator it a good manner of reducing stress and frustration of trying to do this at the last minutes.

Administration is seeing to the day-to-day activity of an organization for the realization of the stipulated goals. Ogbonna (1995) sees administration as a process which entails the utilization of human, financial and material resources in maximizing the realization of goal- objectives. Educational administration is the arranging, organizing, planning and controlling the scare human, material and financial resources for the achievement of the educational objectives. This indicates that for a school administrator whether urban or rural school administrator to carry out his/ her administrative work well, he must plan on how to utilize the available resources effectively and efficiently to achieve educational goals.

Evidence has shown that planning practices is very necessary for principals in both rural and urban schools, though Nwite (2010) stated that principals of most of the schools in the rural areas are often short of their duties. There is also possibility that principals in urban areas are more effective in planning practices because it has been observed that one major cause of ineffective planning is inexperience of principals and most schools in urban have experienced principals.

Planning being an important management process, requires the school administrators to update their planning practices to enhance secondary school administration. Planning practices are many different ways of making arrangement for future; it could be ensuring adequate human and material resources, equipment, facilities and fund. These planning practices when handled well will result to the school administrator saving his/ her energy, time and resources and it is even stress free. Unfortunately, the quality of education in Anambra State secondary schools today arouses people’s attention to ask if the school administrators are actually planning the available resources, fund and facilities that are being used in these schools well. It is on this background that assessing the planning practices of principals for effective school administration in secondary schools becomes pertinent.

Statement of Problem

Proper and effective planning leads to the utilization of both human and material resources properly, proper management of fund, good relationship between the school principal and other staff, at the same time poor planning of administrative function in

schools brings about mal administration and failure to achieve the educational objectives which is quality education.

It seems that quality education has not been achieved in secondary schools in Anambra State because most of the secondary school learners cannot express themselves, some cannot even write good essay, letter or defend what they have read, worst of all is that most of them cannot compete with their contemporaries outside the country. Observation shows that most of the principals lack fund to purchase instructional materials for teaching in their schools and also poor planning skills of principals and their inexperience contribute to the problem of administration. Most principals also complain of insufficient time for comprehensive planning of administrative functions in their schools due to either being engaged in meetings in ministry of education or having official engagements. Therefore, the problem of this study is to access the planning practices of principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purposes of the study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the planning practices of principals for effective school administration in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out planning practices prevalent in secondary school administration in Anambra State.
2. Assess the influence of ineffective planning practices on secondary school administration in Anambra State.
3. Find out the administrative constraints to planning practices in secondary schools as perceived by the principals in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the planning practices prevalent in secondary schools administration in Anambra State?
2. To what extent has ineffective planning practices influenced secondary school administration in Anambra State?
3. What are the administrative constraints to planning practices in secondary schools as perceived by the principals in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide this study at $P < .05$ level of significance.

- Ho1. There is no significant different between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural areas on the extent of influence of ineffective planning practices on the secondary school administration in Anambra State.

Methodology

The design of this study is a descriptive survey which sought to assess planning practices among secondary school principals for effective administration in Anambra State. The population of this study comprises all the 257 principals in Anambra State (165 urban principals and 85 rural principals). There was no sampling because of the size of the population. A self developed questionnaire titled "Assessment of Principals' Planning Practices Questionnaire" (APPPQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was made up two parts, part A and B. Part A contains information on

personal data of the respondent which part B had three clusters developed from the three research questions. It comprises items in which the response modes were Strongly Agree (SA) Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, Agree (A) – 3 points, High Extent (HE) , Disagree (D) , Low Extent (LE) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD), Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point.

The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from educational management unit and one expert from measurement and evaluation unit, all from faculty of education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. Their suggestions were used for the modification of the instrument. To ensure the validity of the instrument, a trial testing was carried out with 15 principals in Delta State. The internal consistency reliability estimate yielded for cluster A (0.71) and cluster B (0.75). The grand reliability co-efficient of the instrument yielded 0.73. Two research assistants were trained by the researcher to help in administering the instrument to the principals. The questionnaire collected were 250 which is 97% return rate. Research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to analyzed the null hypothesis. In view of the fact that four point scale was used for research questions, the decision rule was based on the mid point of the scale, which is 2.50. Therefore, the criterion mean of 2.50 and above was accepted as indicators of agreement, while mean scores below the criterion mean indicated disagreement.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent has ineffective planning practices influence secondary school administration in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on the planning practices prevalent in the secondary school administration in Anambra State.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision
1	Checking the students and teachers movement	3.22	0.61	Agree
2	Coordinating admission exercise of students	3.69	0.95	Agree
3	Organizing class and lesson time table	3.04	0.98	Agree
4	Organizing counseling service for students	3.01	0.72	Agree
5	Planning students' orientation and staff meeting	3.40	0.63	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.27	0.78	Agree

Result on table I has a grand mean of 3.27 which is above 2.5 benchmark. This shows that these are the only planning practices practiced effectively by principals in the administration of Anambra state secondary schools.

Table 2: Response of respondents on the extent ineffective planning practices influences secondary school administration in Anambra State.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision
1	It causes poor planning of periodic workshop, seminars, conferences for staff and teachers	3.53	0.82	HE
2	It brings hazy preparation of school budget	3.34	0.62	HE
3	It breeds role conflict amongst members of staff because of poor communication	3.41	0.66	HE
4	It causes poor teaching because of poor teaching plan	3.42	0.65	HE
5	It encourages poor planning on record keeping	3.44	0.51	HE
6	Causes inadequate and poor facilities and instructional materials	3.35	0.61	HE
7	Brings school insecurity, tension and frustration of staff and students	3.62	0.71	HE
8	Creates room for poor maintenance of school buildings, equipments and facilities	3.79	0.91	HE
9	Leads to poor in-school/ classroom supervision by the principal	3.48	0.93	HE
10	Poor planning of extra-curricular activities in school.	3.34	0.62	HE
	Grand Mean	3.47	0.70	HE

The data on table 2 with a grand mean of 3.47 revealed that ineffective planning practices influences administration of secondary schools in Anambra State negatively to a high extent.

Table 3: Response of respondents on the administrative constraints to planning practices in secondary school administration in Anambra State.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision
1	Poor time management by principals and insufficient time for comprehensive planning	3.55	0.83	Agree
2	Delay in communicating government policies to teachers and poor planning skills of principals.	3.89	0.99	Agree
3	Inexperience of principals, poor knowledge of the rudiments of planning and not involving the concerned staff in planning	3.66	0.64	Agree
4	Inadequate funds to procure materials needed for planning and delay in the disbursement of funds to secondary school principals	3.72	0.52	Agree
5	Inadequate training, seminars, workshops and conferences on planning practices for principals.	3.45	0.67	Agree
GRAND MEAN		3.65	0.73	Agree

Result on table 3 indicates with a grand mean of 3.65, that the respondents agreed that the items above are the administrative constraints to effective planning practices in secondary school administration in Anambra State.

Table 4: t- test analysis of the mean difference in the ratings of principals in urban and rural areas on the extent ineffective planning practices influence secondary school administration in Anambra State.

Group	Location	X	SD	N	DF	T-cal	T-crit	Decision
Principal	Rural	3.79	0.57	85	248	1.14	1.96	Accepted
Principal	Urban	3.62	0.61	165				

$P > .05$, $DF = 248$.

From the result in table 4, the calculated t- value of 1.14 with a degree freedom of 248 and t-critical value of 1.96 is greater than t- cal value of 1.14 at .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted which states that, there is no significant different in the mean responses of the respondents on the extent that ineffective planning practices influences secondary school administration in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one sought to find out planning practices prevalent in secondary school administration in Anambra State. The result shows that respondents strongly agree that principals checks the students and teachers movement, co-ordinate admission exercise of students, organize classroom and lesson time table, organize counseling service for students and plan students orientation and staff meeting. This is in

conformity with Olibie (2013) who noted that every school administrator plans ahead the steps to be taken in order to achieve the schools' curriculum objectives. This indicates that principals should be engaged in all round planning in the school for an effective administration.

The responses for research question 2 shows that ineffective planning practices has negative influence on secondary school administration in Anambra State by encouraging poor planning on record keeping, causing poor planning of periodic workshops and conferences in schools, brings hazy preparation of budget, causes poor teaching because of poor teaching plan, breeds role conflict amongst staff, causes inadequate and poor facilities and instructional materials, brings school insecurity, causes poor maintenance of equipments, poor planning of extracurricular activities and leads to poor classroom supervision. This is in line with Ikediugwu and Chukwumah (2015) who stated that probably the reason for poor infrastructure, inadequate staffing, inadequate funding and poor quality assurance owing to various training limitations could be adduced to poor strategic management skills of the principals who have not dutifully planned strategically to put things in place. Therefore, poor planning breeds mismanagement and mal administration in secondary schools. Principals should try as much as possible to see that effective and proper planning is carried out in their schools to avoid all these negative influences on their schools.

The result of research question three as presented in table 3 showed the administrative constraints to planning practices in secondary school administration in Anambra State. The result analysis revealed that respondents strongly agree that poor time management , poor planning skills, inexperienced principals and poor knowledge of the rudiments of planning, inadequate funds to procure materials needed for planning, inadequate training and insufficient time for comprehensive planning are the administrative constraints to planning practices in secondary schools in Anambra State. Supporting this, Ukeje, Akobogu and Ndu (1992) asserted that if the time available for planning is too short, coupled with too many official engagements, planning is constrained. This also agrees with the view of Uwazurike (1991) that people who are not experts or specialists engage in planning, consequently, skipping or missing some vital stages and end up making faulty plans. Thus there is poor quality planning.

Result in table 4 shows that there is no significant different in the mean rating of urban and rural principals on the extent of ineffective planning practices influence secondary school administration in Anambra State.

Conclusion

An effective planning practice is necessary for good administration of secondary schools. Practicing good planning in schools helps in maximizing fund resources, human and material resources to meet the demands of education in order to achieve the desired goals with the given time. Also good planning is required to get full cooperation of staff in the school and the need to change, improve and adapt the educational system to suit our needs. With all these things in place, good school administration is guaranteed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:-

1. Government should provide periodic training, seminars, and workshops on planning for principals.
2. Government should place experience and high level of education as conditions for principal ship. This will improve successful planning in schools.
3. Principals should have and practice good communication skills in their schools.

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