

PRINCIPALS' PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE

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Abstract

This study was embarked to determine the extent of principals planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. One research question and one null hypothesis tested at 0.04 level of significance guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted in the study. The study was carried out in Awka Education Zone with the population of 62 public secondary schools principals. 20 questionnaire items developed by the researcher was used for data collection. Three experts validated the instrument 2 from education management and policy and one from measurement and evaluation unit, all in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Reliability testing was conducted through pilot test on 10 male and 10 female Secondary Schools Principals in Delta State who were not concluded in the population of the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability method data obtained yielded co-efficient score of 0.70 with the overall co-efficient of 0.80 which was deemed fit for the study. Data collected from the respondents, statistical means was used to answer the research questions, standard deviation was used to ascertain the respondents' closeness in their ratings while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis with 0.04 level of significance. Findings of the study indicated that male and female principals of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone applied planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance to a high extent. The findings further showed that male and female principals did not significantly differ in their mean ratings on their planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. The following recommendations were made among others. That Ministry of Education in collaboration with Post Primary Schools Service Commission should organize conferences, seminars, in-service training, workshop for principals so that they can be educated and acquainted with the need for adequate planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance. Moreso, government should adequately fund

secondary schools and as well give grant/aids together with facilities to secondary schools for school improvement and for quality assurance.

Keywords: Principals, planning strategies, school improvement, quality assurance, secondary schools.

Introduction

In secondary schools principals are the chief executive officer charged with daily administration of school. According to Owino & Oloko (2015), a principal can be viewed as the chief executive officer of the school and the key person ensuring that the students receive quality experiences. Allerup (2019) viewed school principal as a leader that provides direction and expert advice on development of teaching and learning in school. Allerup moved further to opined that principal has a duty to lead, guide, conduct, direct and motivate both the teaching and non-teaching staff towards achievement of the school goals and objectives. Principal being the chief executive officer of the school are trusted with a lot of planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in order to attain the required standard of education in secondary schools. According to Adeolu (2017) planning requires the ability of school manager/ administrator to look ahead and be able to formulate and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the school system for purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance. Planning is essential aspect of good management; hence if you fail to plan you have plan to fail. Blondin and Giot (2019) stated that principals should carry out planning strategies such as staff meeting presided by the principals, effective delegation of duties, good channel of communication, appointment of different committees in the school for the purpose of school improvement and quality assurance. Adeolu (2017) define quality assurance as an activity to ensure that an organization is providing the best possible services focusing on improving the organization in order to meet up with the required standard. Adeolu further asserted that quality assurance is a way of preventing mistakes or defects and avoiding problems which will have negative effect on the school improvement.

Blondin and Giot (2019) stated that all schools want their students to succeed and success cannot be achieved without school improvement for the purpose of quality assurance. Enueme and Egwunyenga (2018) define school improvement as a process through which schools set goals for improvement, make decisions about how and when these goals will be achieved. Enueme and Egwunyenga further opined that school improvement are ultimate objective processes to improve students and staff achievement levels by enhancing the way curriculum is delivered, by creating a positive environment for learning and by increasing the degree to which parents are involved in their children's learning at school and in the home. Cole (2020) was of the opinion that school improvement are road map that the level of students and staff achievements, and shows how and when these changes will be made. Principals are charged with daily administration and as well charged with school improvement for the purpose of quality assurance. Cole (2020) also stated that principals should apply some planning strategies for school improvement for quality assurance for the attainment of educational goals/objectives. Cole further asserted that the followings are considered for school improvement like working documents that school use to monitor their progress over time and to make revisions when necessary to ensure that the plans stay on course for the development of the school. Allerup (2019) opined that principals, staff, school

council, parents, education stakeholders, government, philanthropist and members of the school community work through variety of activities focused on three areas of priority. For example, curriculum delivery, school environment and parental involvement for each of these areas focused on the following goal statement, performance targets, area of focus, implementation strategies, indicators of success, time lines, responsibility for implementing strategies, checkpoint for status updates and opportunities for revisions. Principals being the chief administrator of the school are expected to live up to their roles by applying some planning strategies in order to ensure school improvement towards quality assurance like monitoring, supervision holding staff meetings, delegation of duties, disciplining of staff and students, creation of good channel of communication Cidree (2018). Cidree opined further for school improvement to be achieved for the purpose of quality assurance there is need for principals of schools to involve the students and teachers in the decision making especially in the matters concerning them, appoint different committees in schools headed by vice principals like exam committee, administration committee, general duty committee, block supervisors, sanitation committee, manual labour committee, clubs and societies among others. These committees appointed are attached with different portfolios charge with different responsibilities. Brown and Anfara (2020) opined that some school administrators implement administrative strategies like query, surcharge, denial of promotion, demotion, good communication channel, adequate delegation of duty, monitoring, supervision for the purpose of school improvement towards quality assurance. According to Sharma (2020) opined that some of the schools principals are failing in their administration which will not lead to school improvement and for quality assurance. While some implement certain administrative strategies like election/ appointment of school functionaries provision of diaries and white boards, attendance to school register for both the staff and students, recommended textbooks for staff and students, distribution of lesson note to teachers, allocation of classes and subject to teachers, organizing different school programmes, school evaluation/internal supervision for the purpose of school improvement which will meet the stated standard of quality assurance. Brown & Anfara (2020) stated that duties of principals include marking of lesson note of the vice principals, marking of the register, on the spot check, writing of duty roaster, attendance to class check among others. Hence all these were used for school improvement and for quality assurance. Enueme and Egwunyenga (2018) viewed school improvement for the purpose of quality assurance as when the principal monitor, supervise, delegate duties to ensure that the following are carried out in secondary school by both staff and students. Enueme & Egwunyenga asserted further that Staff and students are expected to attend the morning assembly and roll call taken, lesson plan written by the teachers and marked, continuous assessment, class exercise and project marked and recorded by the teachers, on the spot check on the teachers, attendance to class register teach and sign register by the teachers. Adeolu (2017) upheld that for any school to be improved for the purpose of quality assurance parents' teachers association (P.T.A.), stakeholders of education, school base management committee (SBMC), school community, post primary schools service commission ministry of education and Government should not be left out hence all hands should be on deck.

Allerup (2019) asserted that principals should ensure that he/she mark her vice principals lesson note, discipline both staff and students without being partial, be a role model, be honest and responsible, lead by example, fair and just in handling cases in the school, devoid of forming clicks/faction in the school, ensure adequate delegation of duty and as well create

good channel of communication. Hence, all these will help for school improvement and for quality assurance.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school is important level of education which requires adequate planning strategies by the principals for school improvement and for quality assurance which will lead to the attainment of education goal/objectives including academic excellent, discipline, high enrolment, good administration and high tune of the school. Therefore, adequate planning strategies by the principals will contribute to the attainment of educational goal. Principals of secondary schools are expected to carry out certain responsibility in the administration of the school for the purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance. Unfortunately, there are some administrative lapses going on in secondary schools if left unchecked, it will definitely lead to poor academic performance of the students and poor administration of the school. Thus the researcher considered the need for this study.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to determine principals' planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Specifically, the study determine the extent of principals' planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Research Question I

To what extent do principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted. The study was carried out in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Awka Education zone is made up of five Local Government Areas namely Anaocha, Awka-South, Awka-North, Njikoka and Dunukofia respectively. The population of the study comprised 62 public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. Instrument for data collection was twenty structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Questionnaire on Principals' Planning Strategies for School Improvement and for Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools (PPSSIQASS)". The instrument had one cluster structured on 4-point rating scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent, very low extent. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from education management and policy, one from education measurement and evaluation unit, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

The instrument was further subjected to reliability testing through pilot test on the 10 male and 10 female principals of secondary schools in Enugu metropolis in Enugu State who were not included in the population of the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability method obtained data

yielded co-efficient value of 0.70 with the overall reliability co-efficient of 0.80 which was deemed fit. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and t-test. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise the closeness of the respondents ratings while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.04 level of significance. Item by item analysis was based on the real limit of the numbers of very high extent 3.50-4.49, high extent 2.50-3.49, low extent 1.50-2.49, very low extent 1.00-1.49 where the calculated t-value is less than the critical value of t, it means that there is no significant different in the mean ratings and the hypothesis was not rejected (accepted). Conversely, where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical t-value, it means that there is significant different in the mean rating and the hypothesis was rejected (not accepted).

Results

Research Question I

To what extent do principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone?

Table 1: Mean ratings on the extent principals' apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone.

N – 52					N – 10		
Female Principals of Secondary Schools					Male Principals of Secondary Schools		
S/N	Principals' application of planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone.	$\bar{X}_1$	SD	Remark	$\bar{X}_2$	SD	Remark
1.	Principals of secondary schools attend in service training, workshop, seminars, conferences, for the purpose of school improvement.	3.00	0.80	High Extent	3.00	0.50	High Extent
2.	There is a lot of indiscipline in secondary schools due to unjust/partial attitude of principals of secondary schools in handling cases.	1.50	0.07	Low Extent	1.30	0.58	Very low extent
3.	Principals delegate duties adequately to staff and students for the purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance.	3.00	0.85	High Extent	2.30	0.43	Low Extent
4.	Principals ensure that all the learning materials and facilities are available for such improvement and for quality assurance.	2.00	0.57	Very Low Extent	1.20	0.80	Very Low Extent
5.	Principals of secondary schools create good channel of communication and involve students in decision making in matters concerning them.	3.40	0.90	High Extent	3.00	0.88	High Extent
6.	Principals of secondary school involve P.T.A., Government, SBMC, PPSSC in the school administration.	3.49	0.89	High Extent	3.30	0.70	High Extent

7.	Principals provide diaries, registers, notebooks, biro, textbooks, visitors books and admission register for the propose of school improvement for quality assurance.	4.00	0.75	Very High Extent	4.00	0.95	Very High Extent
8.	Principals supervise, monitor, mark lesson note of her vice principals and other staff.	3.49	0.60	High Extent	3.40	0.07	High Extent
9.	Principals of secondary schools elect/appoint school functionaries, block supervisors, class teachers for school improvement and for quality assurance.	4.00	0.95	Very High Extent	4.00	0.70	Very High Extent
10.	Principals of secondary schools allocate subjects to staff, assign duties to vice principals, provide recommended textbooks for staff and students.	3.49	0.60	High Extent	3.00	0.80	High Extent
11.	Principals of secondary schools gives oral warning to staff, query, surcharge, demote etc.	2.49	0.89	Low Extent	1.10	1.50	Very Low Extent
12.	Principals' appoint different committees in school like duty, administration, general departments, sanitation for school improvement and for quality assurance.	3.00	1.40	High Extent	3.00	0.82	High Extent
13.	Principals' organizes different school programmes like inter-house sports, prize giving day, cultural day etc for purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance.	4.00	0.80	Very High Extent	4.00	0.80	Very High Extent
14.	Principals of secondary schools hold periodic meetings with staff, students, PTA, SBMC, school community for school improvement and for quality assurance.	4.00	0.67	Very High Extent	3.49	0.88	High Extent
15.	Principals expel or suspend any student who is adamant to charge from being indiscipline.	1.35	0.50	Very Low Extent	1.30	0.67	Very Low Extent
16.	Principals of secondary school report any staff found guilty of gross misconduct to the authority in charge.	2.00	0.80	Low Extent	2.35	0.76	Low Extent
17.	Principals of secondary schools form clicks/faction in the school for school improvement and for quality assurance.	1.20	0.70	Very Low Extent	1.49	0.66	Very Low Extent
18.	Principals of secondary school ensure that duty roaster is provided and staff on duty carryout their duties and weekly report is written accordingly.	3.30	0.78	High Extent	3.20	0.82	High Extent
19.	Principals of secondary schools should ones in a while invite any man of God to help and bring up the spirit of staff and students for good behavior and discipline.	3.20	0.60	High Extent	3.30	0.72	High Extent
20.	Principals should ensure that the staff goes to class to teach by using teach and sign, on the spot check, mark students exercise and projects, involve them in exam invigilation	3.40	0.53	High Extent	3.00	0.70	High Extent

for school improvement and for quality assurance.

Grand Mean or Cluster Mean	2.96	0.73	High Extent	2.73	0.73	High Extent
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Result in table 1 indicate that male principals that items 7, 9 and 13 was to a very high extent with mean ratings of 4.00, 4.00 and 4.00 with standard deviation of 0.75, 0.95 and 0.80 respectively. Male principals applied item 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 19 and 20 to a high extent with mean ratings of 3.00, 3.20, 3.00, 3.40, 3.00, 3.00, 3.49, 3.20, 3.30, 3.00 with standard deviation of 0.50, 0.88, 0.70, 0.77, 0.80, 0.82, 0.88, 0.82, 0.72 and 0.70 respectively. Items 3 and 16 as indicated by male principals were to a low extent with mean ratings of 1.30 and 2.35 with standard deviation of 0.43 and 0.76 respectively. Finally, item 2, 4, 11, 15 and 17 shows that male principals' applied planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance to a very low extent with mean ratings of 1.30, 2.30, 1.10, 1.30, 1.49 with standard deviation of 0.58, 0.80, 1.50, 0.67 and 0.66 respectively. On the other hand it was indicated that female principals applied items 7, 9, 13 and 14 to a very high extent with mean ratings of 4.00, 4.00, 4.00, 4.00 with standard deviation of 0.75, 0.95, 0.80 and 0.67 respectively. Female principals applied items 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 18, 19, 20 to a high extent with mean ratings of 3.00, 3.00, 3.40, 3.49, 3.49, 3.00, 3.00, 3.30, 3.20, 3.40 with standard deviation of 0.80, 0.85, 0.90, 0.89, 0.60, 0.60, 1.40, 0.78, 0.60 and 0.63 respectively. Item 4, 15, 16 and 17 was to a very low extent with mean ratings of 2.00, 1.35, 2.00, 2.20 with standard deviation of 0.57, 0.50, 0.80 and 0.70 respectively. Finally, items 2 and 11 indicated that female principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance to a low extent with the mean ratings of 1.50 and 2.49 with standard deviation of 0.07 and 0.89 respectively.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent principals' apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone.

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings on the extent principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	α	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Female Principals	52	2.96	0.73	60	0.04	1.04	1.96	Not Significant
Male Principals	10	2.73	0.73					

Data in table 2 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.04 at 60 degree of freedom at 0.04 level of significance was less than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Discussion

Findings of research question of four, fifteen and seventeen revealed that female principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary

schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State was to a very low extent. However, it was in support of the male principals with research question two, four, eleven, fifteen and seventeen that male principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone to a very low extent. In agreement with this, Owino and Oloko (2015) who upheld that school principals seem not to understand the importance of planning strategies for the purpose of school improvement due to lack of understanding and inexperience which have resulted in their inability to effectively implement the strategic plans in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. Finding of the following research questions two, eleven and sixteen revealed that female principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance to a low extent. In agreement with this, male principals' apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone to a low extent. In line with this, Sang, Kindiki, Rotich and Kupnito (2017) asserted that most secondary school principals do not have functional plans to guide their respective schools to achieve their desired mission and vision. Manafa (2019) stated that inadequate fund to procure materials needed for planning and principals' not involving the concerned staff in planning are also causes of poor planning and implementation. Other findings in research question one, three, five, eight, ten twelve, eighteen, nineteen and twenty revealed that female principals apply planning strategies to a high extent. This was in support of male principals with research questions one, five, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, eighteen, nineteen and twenty was also to a high extent. According to Chukwuma and Ezeugbor (2015) who stated that finding is an essential element in the application of planning strategies by principals of secondary schools in order to achieve the desired educational goals. Moreso, research question seven, nine, thirteen and fourteen revealed that female principals' apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary school to a very high extent. In agreement with this, research questions seven, nine and thirteen revealed that male principals apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools was to a very high extent due to the fact that adequate fund was provided, procurement made based on the mission and vision of the secondary schools Chukwuma and Ezeugbor (2015). It was further revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings it was concluded that principals' applied planning strategies to a low extent due to the fact that there was inadequate funding, poor communication channel, non involvement of stakeholders of education, inadequate provisions of resources, inability of the principals to implement planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations based on the findings of the study-

- (1) Ministry of education in collaboration with Post primary schools service commission should organize training programmes like workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service training for principals so that they can be educated and acquainted with the

needs and procedures for adequate planning strategies in secondary schools and its implementation for the purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance.

- (2) Principals of secondary school should involve staff and students in the decision-making processes of the school for adequate planning strategies for school improvement and for quality assurance.
- (3) Government should adequately fund secondary schools and as well give grants aids together with facilities to secondary schools for the purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance.
- (4) Principals should be innovative, intelligent, role model by initiating good procedures and implementation for adequate planning strategies in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.
- (5) Principals should endeavour to delegate duties adequately, create good channel of communication and also devoid of forming clicks/factions in secondary school for the purpose of school improvement and for quality assurance.

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