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SCHOOL PLANT MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated school plant management effectiveness of secondary school principals in Anambra State. The aim of the study was to identify the factors needed for principal's effectiveness in the management of school plant. To achieve this, the study adopted a descriptive survey design method. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. 400 respondents were studied in the area. The research was based on Max Weber's Bureaucratic Theory because of its relatedness. Mean rating was used to analyse the data collected. The findings of the study showed that the poor teaching and learning found in so many secondary schools today are as a result of inadequate provision, poor utilization, lack of maintenance and inspection of the school plants. Most of these problems happened due to the principal's ineffectiveness in the management of available school plants. The study concluded that academic performance of secondary school can be better if there is adequate provision of school plants and effective management by the principals. Based on the findings, the study recommended that: Government and other secondary school stakeholders should ensure that schools are provided with the necessary plants, this is to facilitate easy and effective learning; Principals must ensure that there is constant maintenance of the school plant, this will help to ensure that they are always functional and ready for use; Constant inspection should be carried on the plants by the principal, this will enable him detect problems early and find solutions to them.

Keywords: *School, Management, Plant Management, Principals*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial tool for the development of every country. It is seen as an instrument for the realization of a nation's growth and development, since the level of a nation's literacy determines her extent of development. This explains why nations of the world over accord priority attention to education in their development plans. Hence, the development of every society depends on the nature and functionality of its educational system; secondary education inclusive (Olatunji, 2012). Nigerian formal education has come of age, dating several years before independence. The school system is operated with some physical structures such as the school buildings, water supply sources, electricity supply etc. which are required for the smooth running of the schools. These support items to the running of schools are generally referred to as the school plant.

Secondary education, serves as a link between primary and tertiary levels. It is vital to national development. Management of school plant is vested on the school principal who is the head of his school. School plant provision and maintenance is very vital in the achievement of educational objectives. Okeke, (2013) noted that "As skeleton is to a body, so are school plant necessary for the realization of result-oriented teaching and learning in school". School plants are the skeleton of the school. The school plant/facilities consist of all types of buildings for academic and non-academic activities, equipment for academic and non-academic activities, areas for sports and games, landscape, farms and gardens including trees, roads and paths (Asiabaka, 2008).

Besides the school plant, other things such as lack of classrooms, desks, textbooks, chalks to work with, cause setback in school. The importance of adequate provision of school plant in education to teaching and learning cannot be over-emphasized. The dictum that "teaching is inseparable from learning but learning is separable from teaching" is that teachers do the teaching to make the students learn, but students can learn without the teachers (Okunamiri and Ajaeree, 2008).

The provision, availability, adequacy and relevance of school plant influence efficiency and high productivity in school. Onye (2008) stressed that the wealth of a nation or society could determine by the quality of education in that land; emphasizing that a society that is wealthy will establish

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good schools with quality teachers and provision of learning infrastructures. With this, students may learn with ease and achieve good academic performance. Balogun cited in Asiabaka (2008) noted that no effective education programme can exist without equipment and instructional materials/aids for teaching. When school plants are provided to meet relative needs of a school system, students will not only have access to the reference materials mentioned by the teacher will also learn at their own pace. This will lead to an increase in the overall academic performance of the student and achievement of school objectives.

Some school plant management practices, according to Uko (2015), are very necessary for the academic growth of any school. These include: provision, utilization, maintenance and inspection of the school plant. It is, however, the duty of the principal to ensure that these four practices are met. This can only be achieved where there is effective plant management in the school. School plant management effectiveness entails good leadership, effective monitoring of both the users and the plant itself; applying proper maintenance culture of those facilities and other vital checks required for the school plant to give maximum services (Allen, 2015).

A well planned school plant will gear up expected outcomes of education that will facilitate good social, political and economic emancipation; effective teaching, and learning as well as academic performance of students. Therefore it can be said that the school plant is an essential aspect of educational planning. However, schools are well suited, buildings adequately constructed, equipment adequately provided and maintained much teaching and learning may not take place.

Statement of the Problem

Adequate facilities are the bedrock of quality teaching and learning in schools. Among the major requirements for a secondary school to be certified for operation are the facilities which are referred to as the school plant. The plant makes the school an environment for learning. However, the problem some school plants are facing is management. This management problem is neither traceable to the students nor the teachers, but to the school principal whose responsibility is majorly to ensure good utilization of the school plant for effective teaching and learning. The principal's ineffectiveness in the

management of school plant in some schools have led to the collapse of many schools, poor quality of teaching and learning, lack of seriousness by both the teachers and the students, as well as graduation of incompetent students. This not only affect the future of the students, but also that of Anambra state and Nigeria at large. It was against this background that the study examined school plant management effectiveness of the secondary school principals in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine school plant management effectiveness of the secondary school principals in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. Identify the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant provision
ii. Ascertain the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant utilization
iii. Identify the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant maintenance
iv. Identify the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant inspection

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the study:

1. What are the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant provision?
2. What are the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant utilization?
3. What are the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant maintenance?
4. What are the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant inspection?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is generally acknowledged that school plant is a critical input that aids in the attainment of school goals. As a plant is put into use daily, the need for effective management becomes imperative to sustain its continuous usage. Herein, therefore, different scholars' views, opinions and ideas were examined with regards to school plant management effectiveness of secondary school principals.

School plant

According to Xaba (2012) school plant incorporates operational input resources in the school system. It comprises

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buildings, ground, facilities and equipment which are essential in the implementation of educational programmes as well as attainment of school goals. Ololube, Kpolovie, Amaele, Amanchukwu and Briggs (2013) described school plant as the site, the buildings, the equipment and all the essential structures, permanent and semi-permanent as well machines, laboratory equipment as well as blackboard/chalkboard needed for effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, Yusuf, Ajayi, and Sofoluwe (2013) defined school plant as space interpretation of the school curriculum. It will be impossible for the curriculum to be implemented if the physical facilities required for teaching and learning are not available. Absence of school plant makes teaching ineffective and also hampers desired learning.

Hillary and Wehiuzo, (2018) carried out a research on School Plant Management for Effective Instructional Delivery in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The purpose of the study was to investigate the management of school plant by principals for effective instructional delivery in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. To achieve this, four research questions and four null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A systematic random sampling technique was adopted to sample 672 from the population of 2131 teachers and principals. The instrument for data collection was researcher's structured questionnaires of likert scale. The data collected were analyzed with mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. Findings show that teachers disagreed that school principals made use of professionals in procuring facilities and equipment, failed to carry out routine services of facilities and equipment, as well as establishment of maintenance units.

Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015) carried out a research on Managing School Plant for Effective Service Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. The study centered on influence of school plant management on principals' administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Thus, two research questions and two hypotheses were drawn for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 257 (principals) and 187 (supervisors) of the

Rivers State Post Primary Schools Board. The entire population was used for the study. It was concluded that principals need adequate planning and procurement for effective utilization of school plant. In other words, a well-planned school plant produces expected outcomes of education for the students. Hence, principals need to plan for the allocation and utilisation of the available school plant for effective usage.

Nwafukwa, Onele and Anigbo (2019) conducted a research on School Plant Maintenance as a Determinant for Principals Effectiveness in Administration of Secondary Schools in Nigeria; Focus on Ebonyi State. The study examined school plant maintenance as a determinant for principal's effectiveness in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria with its focus on Ebonyi State. The study was guided by three research questions and two null hypotheses. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 223 public secondary school principals and 5,082 secondary school teachers in both urban and rural areas of the state. The sample consists of 100 principals, while 1,510 teachers were selected through disproportionate stratified sampling procedure. This gave a total of 1,610 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. Mean scores and standard deviation were used in data analysis. Findings among others were that school plant maintenance ensures prudent management of funds and that student's personnel management is enhanced by school plant maintenance for principal's effectiveness in the administration of secondary schools. The researcher recommended that principals and teachers should be trained to acquire knowledge and skills in financial management.

Theoretical framework

Bureaucratic Theory

Bureaucratic Theory was propounded by Max Weber's (1864-1920). The theory is based on value oriented thinking and affective action in workers. He believed that civilization was changing to seek technically the optimal results at the expense of emotional or humanistic content. Weber developed a set of principles for an idea bureaucracy as follows; Objectives, specialization, co-ordination, authority and responsibility. The organization hierarchy must have clearly defined objectives according to priority and all logically related to one

another in terms of preparation for the achievement of the organizational objectives. In terms of specialization, it means that organizations should adopt a distinct division of labour, and each position filled by an expert

Weber is of the view that management's activities should follow stable, knowable rules based on written records to prevent favouritism because rules, regulation, procedure and practices are made clear to everyone in the organization. Weber noted that depersonalization would encourage human interaction between members in a given organizational management. This theory is relevant to the present study in that it highlights the importance of effectiveness in leadership. Principal's leadership effectiveness can be seen in his plant management effectiveness. It suffices to say that quality of a good principal can be gleaned from his management effectiveness.

METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This was used because it studied people or objects, their attitudes, belief system, opinions and other behavioural manifestations. The population of the study comprised of all the 6,974 secondary school teachers in Anambra State. The sample size was made up of 400 secondary school teachers. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select the sample size. Structured questionnaire contained 20 which items was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire has sections A and B. Section A was on personal data of the respondents while section B provided answers to the research questions raised for the items on a modified Likert scale of Very Effective (VE), Effective (E), Less Effective (LE) and Very Less Effective (VLE) which were rated as 4points, 3points, 2points, and 1point respectively. The data collected were summarized from the responses of the subjects analysed using mean scores. The data were analysed using the mean rating, with a decision rule of 2.5.

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DATA PRESENTATION/ANALYSIS

Cluster1: respondents' mean ratings on the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant provision.

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	$\overline{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Ensures that standby generators are provided to the school	1.9	1.2	Not effective
2	Makes sure that laboratories are equipped	2.9	1.1	Effective
3	Ensures that libraries are equipped with books	2.8	1.1	Effective
4	Ensures that ICT learning centres/tools are provided	2.0	1.2	Not Effective
5	Ensures that school environment is spacious	3.0	1.0	Effective
	Cluster Mean	**2.6**		**Effective**

Table 1 above shows that items 1,2,3,4 and 5 have mean scores of 1.9, 2.9, 2.8, 2.0 and 3.0 respectively. Item 1 is below the cut-off mean while others are above. This shows that the respondents accepted that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant provision.

Cluster2: respondents' mean ratings on the effectiveness level of secondary school principals in school plant utilization

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	$\overline{x}$	SD	Remarks
6	Maps out school premises and draw maintenance schedule	3.0	0.1	Effective
7	Ensures effective use of laboratory and replace any damaged school facility	2.8	1.1	Effective
8	Uses school plant for evening and extra-mural programmes	3.2	0.9	Effective
9	Makes sure that students always engage in practical works with school plants such as farming.	2.5	1.2	Not Effective
10	Gives query to staff or student for any destruction or mishandling of facilities	3.6	1.1	Effective
	Cluster Mean	**3.1**		**Effective**

Table 2 above shows that items 6,7,8,9 and 10 have mean scores of 3.0, 2.8, 3.2, 2.5 and 3.6 respectively, and are all above the cut-off mean. This shows that the respondents accepted that there is high level effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant utilization.

Cluster 3: respondents' mean ratings on theeffectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant maintenance

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	X	SD	Remarks
11	Delegates school plant maintenance to committee and school prefects	2.8	1.1	Effective
12	Seeks community participation in management of facilities and maintenance	2.8	1.1	Effective
13	Organizes direct labour maintenance on the facilities	3.0	1.0	Effective
14	Reports to management about school plant issues	3.2	0.9	Effective
15	Organizes orientation for staff and students on school plant maintenance	3.5	0.8	Effective
	Cluster Mean	**3.1**		**Effective**

Table 3 above shows that items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 have mean scores of 2.8, 2.8, 3.0, 3.2 and 3.5 respectively, which are all above the cut-off mean. This indicates that the respondents accepted that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant maintenance.

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Cluster 4: respondents' mean ratings on the effectiveness levels of secondary school principals in school plant inspection

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	X	SD	Remarks
16	Ensure periodic inspection of facilities	3.5	0.9	Effective
17	Acts as inspectors to physical conditions of school plant	2.8	0.8	Effective
18	Regularly inspect school plant programme by delegated officers	3.7	1.1	Effective
19	Ensure the sanitary personnel regularly inspects the school toilet facilities	2.7	0.1	Effective
20	Regularly inspects games and sports facilities of the school	2.7	0.8	Effective
	Cluster Mean	**3.0**		**Effective**

Table 4 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 have means scores of 3.5, 2.8, 3.7, 2.7 and 2.7 respectively, and are all above the cut-off mean. This implies that the respondents accepted that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant inspection.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In cluster 1, the data showed that respondents accepted that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant provision in Anambra state. This can be seen in the principal's efforts in making sure that laboratories are equipped, ensuring that libraries are equipped with books, etc. This is in agreement with Hillary and Wehiuzo, (2018) that the principal's ability to ensure that required equipments in school are made available is evidence of his effectiveness. Ensuring that necessary school plants are made available not only helps to facilitate quality teaching and learning, but also makes administrative work easy and creates cordial relationship between the principal, teachers and the students. Max Weber supported this in his bureaucratic theory. Weber's model explained that when bureaucracy is established, there is general unity among every member of the organization. Apparently, it can be deduced here that the provision of school plant is very essential for principal's effectiveness in administration.

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In cluster 2, the data showed that respondents accepted that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant utilization in Anambra state. This can be seen in the principal's effort in ensuring the use of school plant to conduct extra-moral programmes, makes sure that the students always engage in practical work with the plants, etc. This is supported by Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015) that duty of the principal doesn't end at the provision of the school plants but also, effective utilization of the plants. Max Weber's bureaucratic theory further highlighted the point by explaining that quality administrative management will result to good production.

Cluster 3 showed that the respondents accepted that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant maintenance. The principals achieve this by ensuring periodic inspection of facilities, act as inspector to the physical conditions of the school plants, etc. Nwafukwa, Onele and Anigbo (2019) supported this by positing that principal, as the school manager, has the responsibility of ensuring that school plants are maintained frequently. Weber's bureaucratic theory, in support of this, explained that specialization helps to maintain organization and its equipment; specialization here means ensuring that people are assigned jobs based on their professions. To have a good maintenance of school plant, the principal needs to get those who are trained to carry out the task.

In cluster 4, the respondents agreed that there is high level of effectiveness of secondary school principals in school plant inspection. The inspection of the school plants is very necessary in the school, as it enables the principal to discover the plants that are not effective or malfunctional in the school, and devise a means of repairing or replacing them. In this regards, Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015) noted that the reason, some school plants get damaged to the extent they can't be recovered or maintained is as a result of lack of inspection which could have helped to discover and detect the fault on time if those faults are detected.

CONCLUSION

The school plant management is among the responsibilities of the school principal. The nature, condition, adequacy and relevance of the school plant have direct impact on the teaching-learning process. Where there is inadequate availability of school plant, learning and teaching are not adequately achieved. The findings of this study,

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therefore, affirms the fact that management effectiveness of a secondary school principal can be gleaned from his ability to ensure quality provision, utilization, maintenance and inspection of school plants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Adequate provision of school plant should be the major priority of government in development of schools. This will assist in achieving effective teaching and learning in schools.
2. Having the school plants in the school is important. The principals should ensure that the plants available in the school are utilized for effective teaching and learning.
3. Efforts should be made by the principal and other school authorities to preserve the available plants in the school and prevent wrong use of the plants, especially, by external persons who are not members of the school.
4. However, faults detected that will affect the functionality of schools plants should be immediately rectified and dealt with on time in order to avoid total breakdown of school plant.

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