

CHALLENGES OF REPORT, DOCUMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study has presented challenges of report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo State. The recent decline in the standard of education in Imo State has elicited this study. The objective was to examine and identify the challenges of report, documentation and administration in Imo State. Also to proffer implementable recommendations that could help the government and the secondary school authorities to achieve their set goals. In order to carry out this study, a descriptive research method was adopted. Data collection was done through participants' observatory and oral interview by random selection of respondents from different secondary schools across the three senatorial zones of the state. The collected data was studied and analyzed. The findings obtained indicated different challenges facing report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo State. It was recommended that, adequate fund should be provided by government to run schools. Also, that principals and teachers should be encouraged and supported with grants to take part in conferences and workshops. Finally, for effective report, documentation and administration in secondary schools across the state, a network system should be developed to enhance information sharing and innovative idea within the schools, across the schools and with the state government through the ministry of education.

Keywords: Administration, Challenges, Documentation, Education, Report

INTRODUCTION

The present day educational institution is built on proper management. One of the areas of management that has been explored for institutional or organizational growth is report management. Report management, when properly applied in educational institution will help authorities to have greater depth of information. This will empower for example, the principals (who are the administrators of secondary schools in Nigeria) to make important or relevant educational decisions, increase in efficiency of operation, and consequently remain competitive. It also makes school authorities to build a system where relevant data that would ensure profitable growth for the institution can be accessed by stakeholders.

In Nigeria, one of the challenges facing secondary school education is non-availability of report management system. This is because no adequate mechanism is in place to monitor the activities going on in the school community. This would ensure that the activities of staff and students are properly monitored and checked with adequate feedback to the school leadership. A reporting system should be an integral part of an institution like secondary school where the leadership is required to know the general behaviour and performance of the staff and students. It will be necessary to have a weekly evaluation of teachers' classroom performance to ascertain their effectiveness in impacting on students. In the same vein, a similar evaluation report on classroom performance and general conduct of students will be worthwhile. The poor teaching practice that has become the bane of secondary school education in our society can be traced to the inability of administrators to regularly monitor and evaluate teachers' performance in classroom. This has continued because no proper mechanism is in place to checkmate teachers.

On the other hand, students' academic performance and behaviour can put a school in spotlight. One of the problems of educational system in Nigeria at the secondary school level is the lack of good report card detailing how a student has performed in terms of learning and character for each term of the school calendar. The behaviour and disposition of students are no longer taken into consideration in secondary

schools today. An administrative reporting system would have helped to put the students in order knowing that an outright display of offensive and arrogant behaviour would have them face school disciplinary action.

Also, with a reporting system in place, a secondary school would certainly develop a good record keeping practice. The absence of reporting system has adversely affected documentation and administration in secondary schools in Nigeria. When a reporting system is developed, a good record is kept on daily basis to continuously update the school management on recent happenings in the school community. According to, "Education law demands that every educational institution should keep certain school record." The school reports which are kept for easy access represent the records of administrative duties. Staff regularly updated professional credentials, students' academic performance (in form of report card), and even some notable achievements acquired from sport and academic activities of the students such as quiz competition. Hence it was stated in that apart from administrative records and teacher professional records required by law, other records though not required by law are kept due to the fact that useful information could be obtained from them to serve the interest of the school community and stakeholders.

There are several factors that help school management to achieve success in their educational goals and objectives regardless of the country or state concerned. One of such factors is the system or style of administration adopted by the school leadership and management. This is unarguably an essential component required of any institution because achieving success depends largely on the effectiveness and efficiency in leadership and management. One of the challenges of secondary school administration in Nigeria is that the leadership powers and authorities in school governance are not fully exercised by principals of secondary schools. They may possess the administrative competence with respect to available skills and knowledge in achieving institutional objectives but most times they lack the power to exert their authority in the school community. This makes administration to suffer.

A basic requirement of a secondary school administrator is that he/she should be able to positively influence teachers, students and other members of the school community in achieving the educational objectives. Equally included in the role of the administrator is the ability to change policies of education into programme and actions in school. Secondary school administration can be successful, or a failure, depending on the ability and capacity of leadership to impact positively on expected desired institutional goals. To this effect, much is expected of the administrator to lead and motivate the school members including teachers and students, towards realizing set objectives.

Also, important in school management and policy implementation is documentation. In order to bring school objectives to function, a proper documentation of activities and events carried out in the school or being embarked upon is worthwhile. Document keeping is one of the essential and integral parts of school records as behaviour for effective management of educational system. For effective school administration, proper documentation and management of the document themselves are a key responsibilities of the school administrator.

In this paper, the challenges of report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo state is considered. The three elements have been considered in this paper because a good report system brings about proper documentation and which eventually enhances administrative policy and implementation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The need to have a good reporting system, documentation of academic achievements and other notable records, and effective administrative policy and implementation, has been a major concern to stakeholders in secondary school education in Imo state. Research has shown that most secondary school in Imo state are lacking competencies in the way and manner they handle their report, documentation and administration. This has resulted to low record keeping, staff performance checklist, indiscipline among staff and students,

lack of proper planning and budgeting and lack of useful information about activities in and out of the school community. In recent time, secondary schools do not maintain archives as folders or files therefore documents that should be properly kept in safe place are often exposed to rain and intense heat from sunlight which in turn damage the contents. This has negatively affected educational standard in Imo state, which once pride itself as one of the best states in Nigeria in terms of achievement in academic performance and enrolment. This has continued with the blame passed to the principals while the ministry of education looks the other way. This study intends to look at challenges facing report, documentation and administration in secondary school education in Imo state and provide implementable recommendations to help secondary schools in Imo state to achieve the desired quality education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to consider the challenges of report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo state. The specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the secondary school education in Imo state.
- ii. To identify various challenges of report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo state.
- iii. To proffer possible solutions to the challenges

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Previous research works related to this study have been carried out with focus on record keeping practices of secondary schools by scholars such as [1],[3]. Some other scholars have also looked at the issue of administration as it affects principals of secondary schools such scholars include [2], [4], [5], and [9]. Challenges and prospects of secondary education have been presented by such scholar like [10], [11]. This study closes the research gap in literature by considering the challenges of report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo state. It carefully analyses these three elements to present a wide view of the problems hindering their effective implementation and what it has caused in the growth of secondary school education in Imo State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Owo studies record keeping practices of secondary school principals with focus on Enugu State education zone. The study was carried out to ascertain secondary school principals' record keeping in Enugu State education zone and the challenges associated with record keeping. The result of the findings indicate that principals and teachers of secondary schools in Enugu State maintain that available records in their schools are admission, register, attendance register, diaries for weekly work, log book, visitors book, staff record register, staff minutes book, school time-table, punishment book, school accounts book and education edict manual. The source states that, inadequate funds to purchase books and equipment for records, shortcomings in the supply of record books to principals and lack of passion on the part of teachers to record keeping are some of the challenges facing record keeping in secondary schools in Enugu State education zone.

Uzoma presents a research on administrative challenges confronting school principals in Nigeria with a gender based perspective. The author analyses the plights of women in administrative leadership and how it affects the performance of female principals in Nigeria. It showed its disappointment over lack of interest on women leadership struggle. Uzoma makes some recommendations such as "tackling the gender stereotyping in labour force and works relation." Also that policy makers in secondary school should ensure that selecting principals be made more gender bias free.

Amanchukwu and Ololube present a study on excellent school behaviour for effective management of education system. The text theoretically studies the function of school records for effective educational management, the essence of record keeping in schools, types of school records, and good record

management behaviour. The sources proffer an excellent way of keeping records in school so as to help stakeholders in the management or administration of education.

Ikegbusi and Iheanacho present a study on factors militating against effective administration of schools in Anambra state. The text state that, the investigation carried out showed that most administrators (principals) of secondary schools are forced to teach in classes as a result of the understaffing of schools. The authors then gave some recommendations such as making qualified teachers adequate in secondary schools so as to ensure effective teaching and learning and to relieve the principals from classes. The sources maintain that, this would make the principals to have full concentration on the administrative works in schools.

Olowoselu and Aishatu investigate the challenges to secondary school principals' leadership in Northern region of Nigeria. The authors made a study on the challenges of leadership faced by principals in secondary schools own by the government in terms of instructional supervision and provision of funds.

METHODOLOGY:

According to and a research design can be described as an outline, general plan or arrangement from which something could be made. Also, and stated that a research design is a plan or blue print which states the way data relating to a specific problem should be gathered and studied and also provides the procedural outline on the conduct of any given investigation.

The methods of data collection for this study were through participants' observation and oral interview. This was performed considering one hundred and twenty participants including principals, teachers, and students who are mostly head boys and girls, which were selected randomly from different secondary schools in the three senatorial zones in Imo state. The respondent in the oral interview were selected through stratified random sampling technique and since the study is based on descriptive research, the collected data was studied and analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Research Findings

The findings obtained were presented with respect to the research objectives.

- 1) Examining the challenges of secondary schools in Imo state revealed:
 - i. Inadequate funding for secondary school education
 - ii. Inadequate teaching and learning facilities and decay in infrastructure.
 - iii. Inadequate and low quality teachers
 - iv. Ineffectiveness of teachers in delivering of quality teaching skills
 - v. Indiscipline among staff and students
 - vi. Poor academic performance of students
 - vii. High level of examination malpractice
 - viii. Inappropriate application of school curriculum in teaching and learning
- 2) Identifying various challenges to report, documentation and administration in secondary schools in Imo state revealed the following:
 - a) Challenges of report:
 - i. Incompetence in report management
 - ii. Negative attitude of staff and students in report keeping
 - iii. Inadequate reporting system
 - iv. Sentiment and insecurity in report keeping
 - v. Inconsistency in administration
 - b) Challenges of documentation:

- i. Inadequate management of document
 - ii. Insufficient skilled and experienced document management personnel
 - iii. Low priority attention to document management
 - iv. Inadequate and decaying infrastructure or facilities for proper documentation
 - v. Insecurity and vandalism
- c) Challenges of Administration:
- i. Negative attitudes of principals for proper administration
 - ii. Poor funding of schools by the government
 - iii. Lack of effective system for capacity building
 - iv. Possession of less disciplinary authority by principals.

DISCUSSION

The findings on challenges of secondary school education in Imo state reveals the problem of inadequate funding which is seriously affecting the standard of education in the state. According to eighty per cent (80%) of the respondents that were orally interviewed, since there is inadequate provision of funds for secondary schools in Imo State, the teaching and learning facilities as well as decay in infrastructural facilities, have largely hindered the attainment of secondary educational standards and fulfilment of educational objectives. There is also the problem of inadequate and low quality of teachers in secondary schools as the respondents maintained that lack of attention to the welfare of teachers has reduced teaching morale and quality of teaching. This has made the “best brains” that represent the bulk of quality teachers, to leave the secondary school education for tertiary institutions. The outcome of the mass movement of quality teachers out of secondary school system is the decrease in the quality of teaching. This has encouraged ineffectiveness and inefficiency in teaching skills.

On the issue of indiscipline among staff and students, ninety per cent (90%) of the respondents who were orally interviewed, opined that lateness and inability to make and update lesson notes are the most worrisome attitude exhibit by teachers. And for the students, increase in cultism and students’ misconduct has made staff of secondary schools to refrain from giving appropriate punishment and sanctions to students. This is because there is the possibility of students collaborating with their friends, parents or even relatives to attack teachers, who they perceived as “enemies” because of the punishment given to them. Some students with the support of their parents or relatives even go to the extent of using security agents to intimidate and harass their teachers. Ikegbusi and Iheanacho [4] collaborated this fact by stating that “parents terrorize principals especially when it comes to utilization of school money and in the area of discipline.” This support afforded the students by their parents or relatives have made the students to behave in such a manner that is in defiance to the norm of the secondary school policies and regulations. Also, on the academic performance and examination malpractice among students, the respondents, who are mainly staff, described it as depressive because it has impacted negatively in the society as most of the students do not make up to five (5) credit including the English Language and mathematics in their school examinations. This, according to the opinion of the respondents, can be attributed to the lack of functioning and well equipped school libraries, poor laboratories, and nonchalance in the part of the parents or the guidance in encouraging and supporting the students to study at home and do their homework.

On the appropriate use of the school curriculum, forty per cent (45%) of the respondents, who were mainly principals and vice principals, stated that most of the teachers deliberately skip some topics/activities in the school curriculum because they found them difficult to understand and to perform (such practical).

The findings on challenges of report, according to sixty five per cent (65%) of the respondents who are mainly principals and teachers, the practice of report management has not been effectively adopted in secondary schools in the state. They maintained that for effective report management, secondary school authorities and the ministry of education should develop a good policy framework on report keeping. The

absence of good policy framework for report keeping has breed incompetency in the way activities in secondary schools are reported. This has encouraged nonchalance in the way teachers and students give out information on the happenings or activities within school community. Report management among staff and students is poor because they believe that keeping a fact or information that the authorities would probably not ask of or act upon is needless. On the other hand, the fear of being victimized by colleagues or classmate has made teachers and students to withheld vital information that would have helped get rid of certain nefarious attitude and clandestine association early enough before metamorphosing into complex situation. Also impacting negatively on report keeping, is the changing of secondary schools' principals. This has adversely affected administrative activities including report management.

On the documentation challenges, seventy five per cent (75%) of the respondents, who were orally interviewed, maintained that documents are not adequately managed by principals. Therefore vital information or records are often times missing. Also, less attention or priority is given to document management which is visible in the area of missing office folder or files containing vital and confidential documents. This in the respondents' opinion can be attributed to insufficient skilled and experienced document management personnel. Also, according to the respondents, inadequate and decaying infrastructure has encouraged falsification, missing of school plans and destruction of documents. This they maintained that without good facilities in place to properly and safely keep official documents, people can easily access confidential files to change records to suit their greed. They also opined that insecurity and destruction of school property for cover up purposes is the greatest threat to documentation in secondary schools. Often, administrative blocks are set ablaze to cover up certain to perpetuate and hide certain illegalities such as age falsification and academic achievement.

On the findings on challenges of administration, eighty five (85%) of the respondents, who were orally interviewed, asserted that negative attitudes of principals for proper administration poses serious threat to the attainment of administrative objectives in secondary schools. They maintained that principals are often not involved in the instruction supervision processes in schools rather senior masters are assigned the duty. This is not right because effective and result oriented supervision requires the administrative leadership to be fully involved to ascertain the willingness and passion of teachers to deliver effective teaching that promote academic excellence in students. This is in collaboration with that of [8], [5]. In the area of school funding by the government, the respondent stated that the principals are not provided with adequate fund to run the school. In some cases, no fund is even release for a whole academic session to carry out the administrative tasks by the principals. This reduces the morale of administration and weakens the principal to perform their leadership tasks to the fullest. The issue of lack of effective system for capacity building is reported as stated by the respondents that secondary school standard is at the decline. Quality education has eluded Imo State. This is caused by the government lack of interest in solving educational needs of the state. They maintained that governments at all level should provide fund for running the school and to help teachers and principal to take part in conferences and workshops. Also on the disciplinary authority of the principal, the respondents maintained that the principals are often terrorized by staff and students who have people or relatives in high positions of authority in the state. These are people in the political class who probably have the capacity to control or use the security agents to attack passive enemy for show of power.

CONCLUSION

The challenge of report, document and administration has been examined in this study. It investigated the challenges hindering the attainment of the objectives of secondary school education in Imo State. It observed that inadequate funding, poor learning facilities, inadequate and low quality of teachers, poor academic performance, ineffectiveness and incompetence in teaching, and indiscipline among staff and students are responsible for the decline in standard of secondary school education in Imo State. The study further examined secondary schools in Imo State to identify the challenges of report, documentation and administration. The findings obtained on report showed that incompetence in report management, wrong

attitude of staff and students in report keeping, sentiment and insecurity, and inconsistency in administration are the challenges of report in secondary schools in Imo State. For documentation, the findings showed that poor managing of document, low number of skilled and experience persons to manage documents, dilapidating infrastructure, and insecurity and document destruction are the challenges of report in secondary schools in Imo State. Finally, the findings on administration indicated that wrong attitudes of principals towards administration, insufficient fund provision by government to run schools, lack of effective capacity building, principals having less disciplinary authority over staff and students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. The state government should make adequate fund available for proper running and administration of secondary schools. This should be reflected in the educational budget by increasing allocation to the educational sector. The grant to run secondary schools should be provided promptly.
- II. There should be special grant for secondary schools to ensure that functioning and well equipped laboratories and libraries are once restored again.
- III. The secondary schools in collaboration with the state ministry of education should develop a well networked information communication technology centre across the schools to check indiscipline, irregularities, and compromising attitudes of staff and students. This system should be linked to a social media network where reports, documents and administrative skills and ideas can be shared among schools and the state ministry of education.
- IV. Competitions like quizzes and sports should be restored to the secondary schools in the state to ensure healthy and robust academic exercises that would promote and encourage the students to take their studies seriously and thereby promoting academic excellence.
- V. The state government should support and encourage the leaderships and staff of the schools to grow in their career by ensuring that conferences and workshops are organized on regular basis in the state.

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