



Cost-Saving Measures for the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated various cost-saving measures adopted by principals for the management of public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi. The study was guided by four specific purposes, four research questions and four null hypotheses. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was made up of all the 77 principals from the 77 public senior Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi state. There was no sampling since the study was a census survey. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Cost-Saving Measures Questionnaire (CSMQ)". The instrument was face validated by two experts in Educational Administration and planning, Department of Educational Foundations and one expert in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Science Education Department all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient index of 0.91. Data collected were analyzed using mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD). The findings indicated that principals' outsourcing tasks promotes efficiency of service provider which reduces cost on the long run, Principals' usage of itinerant staff supports students with hearing loss and other disabilities to gain professional services which enhance their communication without spending much, Principals' maintenance culture helps to reduce wastages and promotes security of school properties thereby saving cost, Principals' use of ICT helps to reduce cost of purchasing school files and other associated cost of providing storage facilities. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among other things that principals should adopt measures that will enable them to reduce costs for the management of secondary schools, that government at all level should increase funding of education so that principals will be sponsored to attend conferences, seminars and workshop where they update their knowledge of various cost-saving measures for efficient management of their schools and that administrators should make effort to queue into modern electronic filing system to minimize cost of manual record keeping. The educational implication of the findings is that the negative impacts of the persistent shortfalls in funding education may be minimized if principals adhere to the cost-saving measures as identified in this study.

Keywords: Educational management, secondary education, principalship, cost-saving measures.

Introduction

Management in any education system is concerned with the process of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and directing human and material resources in education to effectively tackle current and future challenges in education (Osakwe, 2015). Oboegbulem and Onwurah, (2011) stated that effectiveness in any school requires the manager to evaluate continuously, exercise quality control at all times and strategize for improvement. The inadequacy of resources available to education has made school administrators ineffective in the management of public school system. These principals are faced with precarious situations of carrying out numerous tasks of managing schools with limited human and material resources yet, they are expected to perform maximally for the achievement of educational goals especially in Abakaliki Education Zone.

It is important to emphasize the need for adequate funding of education. Money is needed to pay staff, maintain the facilities and keep the services going (Austin, 2009). This argument supported earlier finding of Enyi (2011) that finance plays a vital role in educational development. Many suggestions have since been put forward by researchers and observers to ensure improved funding and more resources for the effective implementation of education. Some have suggested more prudent management of available resources and reduction in wastages (Enyi, 2011) thus the need for cost-saving measures.

Incidentally, observation of the researchers show that many school administrators lack the knowledge of adequate financial management including cost-saving measures in school administration. Enyi (2011) stated that some school principals most times fail to explore the resources they have at their disposal but look for rather expensive ones. However, both male and female principal are all guilty of recklessness in financial management as often noticed in school administration especially in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

Literature review

Secondary education is of six years duration and be gain in two stages, at junior secondary school stage and senior secondary school stage, each stage being of three years duration (FRN, 2014). The objectives of secondary education include the following: to provide opportunities for further education, irrespective of sex, social status, religion, ethnic background; advance diversified curriculum to meet the differences in talents, opportunities and prospects; offer trained manpower in the areas of applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades. They also include to cultivate

and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage; motivate students to self-improve and aim to attain excellence; foster National unity stressing on the importance of the common ties that uphold our diversity; raise a generation that can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labor, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens; and be skilled with technical and vocational skills essential for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

The achievement of secondary education goals is vested on the principal's management abilities. Educational management is the process of bringing men and material resources together in order to ensure effective and functional teaching and learning in schools. It is the effective organization and utilization of the human, material and financial resources in educational system for the achievement of set educational objectives (Oboegbulem & Onwurah, 2011). It coordinates and regulates all the activities of various members of staff (human resources) in the organization (Unachukwu & Okorji, 2014). According to Nwite (2010), educational management is a system which involves the use of methods, principles and practices to achieve the objectives of education. In the context of this work, management is the arrangement and utilization of available human and material resources geared towards the achievement of educational objectives and goals.

Cost-saving measures refers to the strategies used by school administrators to save certain amount of time or money from the limited resources available to them (Babalola, 2000). In other words, cost saving is any action that reduces the price of conducting business or carrying out routine activities in an organization. The intent is to use the limited finances or resources to achieve more expectations. The benefit is that more grounds will be covered using little resources. It can be achieved through use of budget to reduce spending, regular check on facilities usage and maintenance culture, downsize or staff sharing, outsourcing, use of ICT (e-learning/teaching, digital or open learning resources (Chitra, 2021; Ihuoma, 2012; Kones, 2012 and Nyangia, 2013). Cost-saving measures could be conceptualized as the different methods or approaches adopted in organizational expenditure to save cost. The following measures or strategies can be used to save cost in secondary schools by the principals: use of itinerant staff, outsourcing tasks, maintenance culture and use of ICT (e-learning).

Outsourcing is an abbreviation for "outside resources using". Outsourcing is the transfer of services or functions previously performed within the organization to a provider outside of the organization (Rundquist, 2006); or the process of entrusting non-core activities or operations from internal production within organization to an external entity that specializes in that particular operations (Sako, 2006). In the same vein, Mclvor (2008) asserted that outsourcing has become an important business approach and a competitive advantage may be gained as products or services are produced more effectively and efficiently by outside suppliers. Outsourcing can enable organizations tap into new ideas, knowledge and creativity through access to service providers' resources like skills, experience, specialized equipment and investments to provide services of better quality, at a lower costs than in-house departments. Ono and Stango (2005) argued that the reasons for outsourcing are cost savings, quality improvement, focus on core business and access to resources not available internally, access to modern technology and expertise.

Itinerant teachers refer to specially trained teachers who provide direct instruction to students with a hearing loss and other related health challenges. Itinerant services is presumably, a good cost-saving measure since the type of education as exist in this country emphasizes the need for inclusiveness to reduce discriminatory tendencies to the barest minimum and encourage mainstreaming a situation whereby the physically challenged children attend the same school and classes with the normal children (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). The United State Department of Education (2019) noted that students are supported by itinerant teachers who provide educational services to the students and consultation services to the teachers, administrators, school staff, the students' parents and sometimes members of the community. Itinerant teachers often provide academic support to help students succeed in the general education classroom. Examples include pre-teaching and re-teaching vocabulary and concepts and reviewing for upcoming tests. Itinerant teachers also collaborate and consult with general education professionals, families and sometime community agencies.

Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) usually receive less language input, affecting their acquisition of receptive and expressive language skills, which in turn negatively affects the development of other key areas, such as reading, writing, behavior, emotional regulation and career awareness. Working directly with students to address areas of need caused by a hearing loss and helping adults who have limited knowledge and skills in teaching and interacting with students who are (D/HH) or with other disabilities are the primary responsibilities of itinerant teachers.

Maintenance culture is the process of preserving a condition or situation or the state of being preserved. It is the act of keeping property or equipment in good condition by making repairs, correcting problems and so on. Otu (2002) noted that facilities in schools in the towns and villages within Nigeria disrupt educational programmes because they are not maintained. Poor maintenance of most public secondary school buildings, furniture, equipment, laboratories, and so on leave them in deplorable condition (Asiegbu, 2014 and Asiyat, 2012). There is need to initiate action that would enable principals to imbibe the spirit of maintenance culture not just to save school facilities and give them face lift but to reduce cost as well as enhance teaching and learning in our schools.

Another variable of interest in this study is the use of e-learning through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a cost-saving measure in school administration. The application of e-learning, which refers to the internet, wireless network, cell phones, computers, software, video-conferencing, social networking and other media applications and services enable users to access, retrieve, store, transmit and manipulate information in a digital form. The term e-learning (electronic learning) is defined as the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to enhance and/or support learning in school (Nwajioha and Chukwu, 2021). E-learning is designed to deliver training, education and collaboration using various electronic media but with internet tools as main drivers. A properly designed and managed e-learning can overcome many barriers associated with traditional educational methods. These barriers are students' tardiness, conflicts in schedules, unavailable courses, geographical problems, economic disadvantage and so on.

E-learning is applicable to Open Distance Learning (ODL) and can also be 'blended' with face-to-face teaching. Rosenberg (2001) observed that because e-learning is networked, it makes it capable of instant updating, storage/retrieval, distribution and sharing of instruction or information thereby reducing the associated costs.

Statement of the Problem

Management of secondary schools in Ebonyi State with particular reference to Abakaliki Education zone is characterized with researcher's observed problems which are majorly linked to inadequate funds with its implication on facilities for a conducive teaching and learning environment. Principals are faced with the predicaments of managing limited resources to effectively run their schools in order to achieve educational goals. The problem is mostly that of appropriating meager financial resources at their disposal. The issue of inadequate fund for the management of secondary schools in Nigeria, especially in Abakaliki Education Zone has become the everyday song of many principals of secondary schools. It is alleged that many of the principals appear to have failed in achievement of the desired results, due to limited financial resources. There are cases where principals are faced with the problem of provision of instructional materials, maintaining facilities and equipment in the school compound without or with meager impress. It is worrisome too that parents and interested members of the public sometimes accuse some public secondary school principals of mismanaging funds put in their custody by not channeling the funds appropriately. Both male and female principals are not spared by this allegation therefore, it became imperative to carry out this study on cost saving measures principals can adopt for the effective management of Secondary School in Abakaliki education zone.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to establish cost-saving measures that can be adopted by principals for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study was designed to:

1. Find out the ways principals' outsourcing tasks constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.
2. Ascertain the ways principals' use of itinerant staff constitutes a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.
3. Determine the ways principals' maintenance culture serves as cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.
4. Examine the ways principals' use of ICT (e-learning) constitutes a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study;

1. In what ways do principals' outsourcing tasks constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary school in Abakaliki Education Zone?
2. What are the ways in which principals' use of itinerant staff constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?
3. In what ways does principals' maintenance culture constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?
4. What are the ways in which principals' use of ICT (e-learning) constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Methodology

The study was carried out in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Survey was suitable for the study because it involved an intensive collection of data from secondary school principals in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State through the use of questionnaire.

The population of this study comprised (77) principals in the seventy- seven (77) public senior secondary schools in the zone. The entire population was used for this study. The study was a census survey because the whole population was used therefore, there was no sampling.

The instrument that was used for the study was structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and it is titled cost saving measures questionnaire (CSMQ). The questionnaire was given to 3 experts, 2 of them were drawn from the researchers' Department, Educational Foundations and an experts from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Science Education Department for face and content validation. The instrument was trial tested using 30 secondary school principals outside the area of this study (Afikpo Education Zone of Ebonyi State). The results were analysed using Cronbach Alpha procedure which yielded a coefficient of 0.91 for items on the questionnaire clusters A-D.

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researchers together with four (4) research assistants briefed on how to administer the questionnaire. The researcher and her assistants administered seventy-seven (77) copies of the questionnaire and waited to collect them at the spot to avoid loss of questionnaire. This ensured one hundred percent return of the instrument as all the administered copies of the instrument were retrieved.

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test of independent sample was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for the research questions was based on the mean score of items at a benchmark value of 2.50. Thus, items with mean score of 2.50 and above were considered as agreed (A); while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was considered as disagreed (D).

Results

Research Question 1

In what ways do principals' outsourcing tasks constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the ways in which Principals' Outsourcing Tasks constitute a Cost Saving Measure for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEMS	N	\bar{x}	SD	DECISION
1.	Principals' outsourcing tasks provides for a competitive advantage that reduces cost of service providers.	77	3.29	0.72	Agreed
2.	Outsourcing task of school principal promotes efficiency of service provider that reduces cost at the long run.	77	3.37	0.66	Agreed
3.	Principals' outsourcing tasks help administrators to enjoy the service of experts in a reduced cost.	77	3.45	0.65	Agreed
4.	School administrators gain access to modern technologies in a low cost through outsourcing tasks.	77	3.20	0.76	Agreed
5.	Outsourcing enable school management to make use of expertise in a particular area without necessarily spending much	77	3.44	0.63	Agreed
Grand Mean (\bar{X})		77	3.35	0.68	Agreed

The result of the data analysis presented in Table 1 revealed that principals' outsourcing tasks constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools. This is because all the items have mean scores that are more than the benchmark of 2.50. It was also seen on the same Table that the grand mean value of 3.35 was obtained which is greater than the benchmark of 2.50 this showed full agreement that principals' outsourcing task constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

Research Question 2

What are the ways in which principal' use of itinerant staff constitutes a cost – saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education zone?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the ways in which Principals' use of Itinerant Staff constitute a Cost Saving Measure for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEMS	N	\bar{x}	SD	DECISION
6.	Principals' use of itinerant staff supports those with hearing loss by providing educational services to them in a low cost basis.	77	3.22	0.80	Agreed
7.	Principals' usage of itinerant staff help deaf or hard of hearing children to gain professional services which enhance communication without spending much.	77	3.02	0.77	Agreed
8.	Principals' collaboration of itinerant staff help individuals with distinct personal challenge in a minimize cost	77	2.93	0.81	Agreed
9.	Principals' use of itinerant teacher works directly with students to address areas of need caused by hearing loss to minimize cost.	77	2.96	0.73	Agreed
10.	Principals help teachers with limited knowledge and skills in teaching students with hearing loss with the use of itinerant staff will reduce cost.	77	3.02	0.77	Agreed
Grand Mean (\bar{X})		77	3.03	0.63	Agreed

The result of the data analysis presented in Table 2 revealed that principals' use of itinerant staff constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools. This is because all the items have mean scores that are more than the criterion of 2.50. However, it was also seen on the same table that the grand mean value of 3.03 was obtained which is greater than the criterion of 2.50 too which showed full agreement as in the table above. It implies that principals' use of itinerant staff constitutes a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Research question 3

In what ways does principals' maintenance culture constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the ways in which Principals' Maintenance Culture constitute a Cost Saving Measure for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEMS	N	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
11.	Effective maintenance of facilities helps to reduce wastages in the school thereby saving cost.	77	3.58	0.52	
12.	Regular maintenance culture promotes security of school property thereby reducing cost.	77	3.36	0.60	Agreed
13.	Maintenance culture reduces the level of replacement of properties in school.	77	3.46	0.52	Agreed
14.	Proper maintenance of school help management to rate high in cost effectiveness.	77	3.38	0.67	Agreed
15.	School should only purchase facilities they have need of in order to save cost	77	3.37	0.62	Agreed
	Grand Mean (\bar{X})	77	3.45	0.45	Agreed

The result of the data analysis presented in Table 3 revealed that principals' maintenance culture constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools. This is because all the items are in agreement as shown in the table above. Again, the grand mean of 3.43 was obtained and it showed full agreement that principals' maintenance culture constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Research question 4

What are the ways in which principals' use of ICT (e- learning) constitute a cost saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education zone of Ebonyi State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the ways in which Principals' use of ICT (e- learning) constitute a Cost Saving Measure for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEMS	N	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
16.	Principals' use of ICT (e-learning) reduces cost of purchasing school files	77	3.33	0.59	Agreed
17.	Teaching staff should be trained for giving lectures electronically by using the teachers who have already received the training in order to save cost	77	3.24	0.69	Agreed
18.	It help to reduce cost of providing storage facilities	77	3.38	0.61	Agreed
19.	Principals' use of ICT reduces cost of transferring information from one geographical location to another.	77	3.49	0.57	Agreed
20.	Principals' use of ICT will make them global in their administrative approaches without much cost.	77	3.32	0.65	Agreed
	Grand Mean (\bar{X})	77	3.35	0.62	Agreed

The data analysis as presented in Table 4 of this study revealed that all the items of serial number 16-20 have mean scores that are more than the criterion of 2.50. However, it was also seen on the same table that the grand mean value is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. These scores imply that the respondents were of the opinion that ICT (e-learning) constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Discussion on the findings**Principals' Outsourcing Tasks for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.**

The finding of this study as shown in Table 1 revealed that all the item as contained therein constitute ways in which outsourcing tasks constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools. Principals of Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State can outsource tasks that promote efficiency of service provider and reduce cost on the long run. Also, the finding revealed that principals can outsource tasks that enable administrators to enjoy the services of experts in a reduce cost. It further revealed that Principals can gain access to modern technologies in a low cost through outsourcing tasks, just as principals can make use of expertise in a particular area without necessarily spending much.

This finding is in agreement with the early findings of Okoye-Chine (2021) which revealed that outsourcing tasks positively and significantly affect performance of organization (education inclusive). The author further stated that outsourcing of certain technical aspects of business that has to do with knowledge and professionalism, enhance customers' relationship. The study is also in line with Kennedy, Holt, Ward and Rehy (2002) who stated that outsourcing is an effective cost saving measure because it is sometimes more affordable to procure goods/services from other organization than providing

them internally. These authors further revealed that principals can significantly reduce cost of labor by outsourcing certain tasks, while having simultaneous access to technology without investing huge amounts of money to own the technology.

From this indications, it could be said that outsourcing tasks constitute a good cost-saving measure for the management of formal organizations such as secondary schools.

Principals' use of Itinerant Staff for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone

The finding of this study revealed the ways use of itinerant staff constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone. Principals can use itinerant staff to supports those with hearing loss by providing educational services to them in a low cost basis since principals' usage of itinerant staff help deaf and other children with disabilities to gain professional services which enhance their communication without spending much. Similarly, the finding showed that principals' usage of itinerant staff can help individuals with distinct personal challenges in a minimize cost. Again, principals can use itinerant teachers to work directly with students to address areas of need to minimize cost. Also, principals can help teachers with limited knowledge and skills in teaching students with disabilities with the use of itinerant staff. Hence, this finding summarily revealed that principals' use of itinerant staff constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools.

This finding is in line with the previous study of Antia and Rivera (2016) who revealed that children who are deaf or with special needs are required consistently to increase their knowledge skills in a variety of areas, including academic content, appropriates resources and adaptation of classroom materials by collaborating with itinerant staff to minimize cost and promote expertise in instructional practices. It was further pointed out by the scholars that itinerant staff works collaboratively with a variety of individuals with distinct personalities to promote inclusive education in line with global best practices.

It could be deduced from this discussion that principals' adoption of itinerant staff would encourage inclusiveness and administrative efficiency in secondary schools in Nigeria and Abakaliki Education Zone in particular. Thus, the use of itinerant staff would go a long way in promoting inclusive education as advocated in the World Declaration for Education for All since the use of itinerant staff allows children with special needs to mix together with other students with less implications.

Principals' Maintenance Culture for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education zone

The finding of this study in table 3 of the analyzed result presented in chapter four above showed the ways maintenance culture constitute a cost- saving measure for the management of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone. That principals' maintenance culture include effective maintenance of facilities which helps to reduce wastages in the school thereby saving cost, regular maintenance culture promotes security of school properties. Also, it revealed that school should only purchase facilities they have need for in order to save cost, maintenance culture reduces the level of replacement of properties in school as well as proper maintenance of school help management to rate high in cost effectiveness.

Also, Otu (2002) and Asiegbu (2014) acknowledged that school plant at all level of education are poorly maintained which invariably lead to unnecessary spending. They further stated that the attitude of school personnel to maintenance culture is generally very negative. Repairs only take place when a problem arises due to breakdown. In corroboration, Asiyat (2012) stated that facilities in public schools were generally in a state of disrepair due to inadequate maintenance which result to increase capital expenditures. This therefore necessitates the need to solve this problem in order to meet the expectations of secondary education Abakaliki education zone.

From this finding, it could be seen that maintenance culture constitutes a cost- saving measure for the management of secondary schools because regular maintenance of school facilities by the administrators help to elongate the lives of such infrastructural facilities and equipment in order to save cost.

Principals' use of ICT (e-learning) for the Management of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education zone.

The result of the study in items 15-20 Table 4 above revealed the ways ICT(e-learning constitute a cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools. That principals' use of ICT (e-learning) helps to reduce cost of purchasing school files and other associated cost of providing storage facilities. Also, it was found that ICT reduces cost of transferring information from one geographical location to another and that principals' use of ICT makes them global partners in their administrative approaches without much cost.

This finding agreed with Rosenberg (2001) who observed that e-learning is a communication technology with internet drivers, it enables users to access, retrieve, store, transmit and manipulate information in a digital form. The author further stated that because e-learning is networked, it makes it capable of instant upgrading, storage, retrieval, distribution and sharing of instruction or information thereby reducing the associated costs. This also agreed with Nwajioha and Chukwu (2021)'s view that the adoption of ICT/e-learning promote inter-connectivity and enhance students' motivation/participation in teaching and learning process. This implies that ICT/e-learning constitute a good cost-saving measure for the management of secondary schools since it can help the principals to queue into the modern electronic filing system, enhance teaching and learning practices, and as well make the educational administrators to be in line with the global trends of this century.

Conclusion

Education is an expensive and capital intensive project. This implies that adequate funding is one of the basic prerequisite for its success. Lack of fund has prevented the execution of meaningful projects in most of educational institutions in Nigeria. The attitude of some administrators has affected the

utilization of the fund sent to their schools. Undoubtedly, principals' tasks are becoming more complex and demanding therefore, principals need to have the knowledge of cost-saving measures and equally adopt cost-saving measures for the management of secondary schools, for them to be able to achieve maximum results vis-à-vis achieving educational goals.

This study centered on cost-saving measures such as outsourcing tasks, use of itinerant staff, maintenance culture and the use of ICT(e-learning) as indices to ascertain ways they constitute cost-saving measures for the management of public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The educational implication of the findings is that the negative impacts of the persistent shortfalls in funding education may be minimized if principals adhere to the cost-saving measures as identified in this study.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are derivable from the findings of this study:

1. The Government at all levels, with particular reference to Ebonyi State should be more realistic in funding education. Hence, the financial budget for education should be increased to commensurately meet the growing demand for quality education and provide more financial access to principals in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State.
2. The State Ministry of Education and Secondary Education Board should provide more opportunities through conferences, seminars and workshops for school principals to update their knowledge of various cost-saving measures such as the use of outsourcing tasks, itinerant teachers etc, in order to minimize the problem of inadequate funding, reckless spending, misappropriation and other financial fraud that characterize school management of the present time.
3. The Ministry of Education and in fact all stakeholders including parents should be more proactive in their supervisory roles and maintenance of school facilities to minimize cases of breakdown/repairs and elongate their life span. This of course would help to promote the culture of regular maintenance, decency and security to school property to avert cost of replacement in the event of damage or theft.
4. School administrators should make efforts to queue into modern electronic filing system to minimize cost of manual record keeping. School records should be automated while ICT targeted training for principals and teachers on the best ways to exploit digital tools and resources for effective teaching and learning should be encouraged.

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