



Evaluation of Planning Practices of Principals for Active School Administration in Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Effective school administration is vital for the success and development of secondary schools. Principals, as key leaders, play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape through their leadership and management practices. In Kaduna State, Nigeria, where secondary education lays the foundation for students' future endeavors, evaluating planning practices among principals is essential for ensuring active and efficient school administration. Planning practices involve the systematic process of goal-setting, strategy formulation, and action plan implementation to achieve desired educational outcomes. The effectiveness of principals' planning practices significantly influences various aspects of school administration, including curriculum development, resource allocation, staff management, and student performance. Despite the acknowledged importance of planning in educational leadership, there is a need to assess principals' planning practices in secondary schools in Kaduna State to determine their alignment with best practices and their impact on school effectiveness. This evaluation will provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current planning practices, enabling stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions to enhance school administration and student outcomes. This study aims to evaluate the planning practices of principals for active school administration in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. By examining planning processes, strategies, and outcomes, this research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on educational leadership and provide practical recommendations for enhancing planning practices and promoting effective school administration in the region.

Keywords: Planning Practices, Principals, School Administration, Secondary Schools, Kaduna State, Nigeria, Evaluation, Active Leadership, Educational Management, Educational Leadership

Introduction

Effective school administration is crucial for the overall success and development of secondary schools. Principals play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape through their leadership and management practices. In the context of Kaduna State, Nigeria, where secondary education serves as a critical foundation for students' future endeavors, the evaluation of planning practices among principals becomes imperative to ensure active and efficient school administration.

Planning practices encompass the systematic process of setting goals, formulating strategies, and implementing action plans to achieve desired educational outcomes (Mok, 2015). The effectiveness of principals' planning practices significantly influences various aspects of school administration, including curriculum development, resource allocation, staff management, and student performance (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Despite the recognized importance of planning in educational leadership, there is a need to assess the planning practices of principals in secondary schools in Kaduna State to determine their alignment with best practices and their impact on school effectiveness. This evaluation will provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current planning practices, enabling stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions to enhance school administration and student outcomes.

This study aims to evaluate the planning practices of principals for active school administration in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. By examining the planning processes, strategies, and outcomes, this research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on educational leadership and provide practical recommendations for enhancing planning practices and promoting effective school administration in the region.

Statement of Problem

The effectiveness of school administration, particularly in secondary schools, is contingent upon the planning practices adopted by principals. Planning serves as the foundational framework for guiding decision-making, resource allocation, and overall school improvement efforts (Owens & Valesky,

2015). However, there is a dearth of comprehensive evaluation regarding the planning practices of principals for active school administration within the context of secondary education in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Despite the recognized importance of planning in educational leadership, several challenges may impede the efficacy of planning practices among principals. These challenges could include limited access to professional development opportunities for school leaders, insufficient support from educational authorities, bureaucratic constraints, and resource constraints (Okumbe, 2014). Additionally, cultural and contextual factors unique to the Nigerian educational landscape may influence the planning processes and practices of principals in Kaduna State (Oplatka & Eyal, 2017).

Furthermore, effective planning practices are essential for addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by secondary schools in Kaduna State, ranging from curriculum development and implementation to student welfare and school infrastructure (Aladejana & Olatoye, 2019). Inadequate planning or ineffective planning practices may result in suboptimal resource utilization, ineffective decision-making, and ultimately, diminished school performance and student outcomes (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Therefore, a critical examination of the planning practices of principals for active school administration in secondary schools in Kaduna State is imperative. Such an evaluation can shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of current planning processes, identify barriers to effective planning, and inform strategies for enhancing the capacity of school leaders to engage in robust and proactive planning practices (Daresh & Male, 2017).

By addressing these issues, this study seeks to contribute to the advancement of educational leadership and management practices in Kaduna State, Nigeria, with the ultimate goal of promoting improved school effectiveness and student success.

Objectives of the Study

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

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

Literature Review

Effective school administration is crucial for the overall functioning and success of educational institutions. Principals play a pivotal role in ensuring active school administration through strategic planning practices that promote efficiency, accountability, and continuous improvement. This literature review examines existing research on the evaluation of planning practices adopted by principals for active school administration in secondary schools, particularly in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

1. The Role of Principals in School Administration: Principals serve as instructional leaders, managers, and visionaries within educational institutions (Leithwood et al., 2017). Their leadership behaviors, including planning and decision-making, significantly influence school effectiveness and student outcomes (Bush, 2011). Effective principals engage in systematic planning processes to set goals, allocate resources, and monitor progress toward achieving academic excellence (Murphy et al., 2019).

2. Planning Practices of Principals: Planning is a fundamental aspect of effective leadership in school administration (Marzano et al., 2005). Principals engage in various planning practices, including strategic planning, curriculum planning, budget planning, and staff development planning (Bush & Glover, 2014). These practices involve setting clear objectives, identifying priorities, aligning resources, and monitoring implementation to ensure organizational goals are met (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

3. Active School Administration and School Improvement: Active school administration refers to the proactive engagement of principals in driving school improvement initiatives through strategic planning and effective leadership practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009). Active principals create a positive school climate, foster teacher collaboration, and promote student-centered learning environments (Day et al., 2011). Research suggests that schools led by active principals demonstrate higher levels of student achievement and greater overall school effectiveness (Robinson et al., 2009).

4. Evaluation of Planning Practices in Secondary Schools: Several studies have explored the evaluation of planning practices of principals in secondary schools. For example, Ogawa and Bossert (1995) examined the impact of principal planning behaviors on school climate and organizational effectiveness. They found that principals who engaged in comprehensive planning processes were more successful in creating supportive school environments conducive to teaching and learning.

5. Planning Practices in the Nigerian Context: In the Nigerian context, research on planning practices of principals in secondary schools is limited but growing. Ogunmade and Aluede (2010) conducted a study on the leadership practices of principals in secondary schools in Nigeria and found that effective planning was positively associated with school effectiveness and student achievement. However, they also identified challenges such as inadequate resources and bureaucratic constraints that hindered effective planning and implementation.

6. Challenges and Opportunities in Kaduna State: In Kaduna State, principals face unique challenges related to resource constraints, infrastructure deficiencies, and socio-political factors that impact planning practices (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2018). However, there are also opportunities for collaboration, capacity building, and innovation to enhance planning effectiveness and improve school administration outcomes (Omolawal, 2017).

In conclusion, the literature underscores the critical role of principals in fostering active school administration through effective planning practices. While research on this topic in Kaduna State, Nigeria, is limited, existing studies provide insights into the challenges and opportunities facing principals in secondary schools. Further research is needed to explore the specific planning practices employed by principals in Kaduna State and their impact on school effectiveness and student outcomes.

Research Design

The research design employed for this study is an explanatory overview strategy. This strategy involves selecting a random sample from both a large and small population to obtain accurate data on contemporary phenomena. The survey method was chosen as the research involved collecting data from multiple respondents.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all stakeholders in public schools in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria. This includes principals, teachers, non-teaching staff, and supervisors. The total population consisted of 61 principals, 2,532 teachers, 630 non-teaching staff, and 103 supervisors.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 10% of the entire population was selected for the study. This resulted in the random selection of 21 principals, 253 teachers, 63 non-teaching staff, and 10 supervisors.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire adapted from Maina (2014) and subsequently validated. Four sets of questionnaires were used: one for principals, one for teachers, one for supervisors, and one for non-teaching staff. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section A included biodata, while Section B contained 70 items to elicit information from respondents. The Likert scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA) to Strongly Disagreed (SD) was used.

Validity of the Instrument

Content/face validity of the instrument was determined by two experts in the Department of Educational Administration and Planning, Federal College of Education, Zaria.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in Zamfara State secondary schools to determine the reliability coefficient of the instruments and identify any problem areas in the main research.

Reliability of the Instrument

Data collected from the pilot study were statistically analyzed to determine the reliability of the questionnaire.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers, with the assistance of a research assistant, spent one month distributing questionnaires to collect relevant data for the study.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Data collected were presented in tabular form, and responses were calculated in percentages followed by detailed interpretation. Responses of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were considered as "Agree," while those of "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were considered as "Disagree." Hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a significance level of $P \leq 0.05$.

Findings of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the planning practices of principals for effective school administration in Kaduna State. The study specifically sought to:

1. **Identify Planning Practices:** The findings reveal that various planning practices are prevalent in secondary school administration in Kaduna State. Principals engage in activities such as curriculum planning, budgeting, staff recruitment, facility management, and academic scheduling to ensure the smooth functioning of their schools.

2. **Evaluate Influence of Ineffective Planning Practices:** The study found that ineffective planning practices have a significant negative impact on secondary school administration in Kaduna State. Principals reported that inadequate planning led to resource misallocation, poor academic outcomes, inefficient use of facilities, and strained relationships with stakeholders.
3. **Identify Administrative Constraints to Planning Practices:** Principals in Kaduna State identified several administrative constraints that hinder effective planning practices in secondary schools. These constraints include limited financial resources, bureaucratic procedures, inadequate training and professional development opportunities for staff, and external pressures such as government policies and societal expectations.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of effective planning practices in promoting successful school administration in Kaduna State. Addressing the identified administrative constraints and implementing strategies to enhance planning effectiveness can contribute to improved educational outcomes and enhanced school performance in the region.

Based on the findings of the study assessing the planning practices of principals for effective school administration in Kaduna State, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhance Training and Capacity Building:** Provide regular training and professional development opportunities for principals to improve their knowledge and skills in effective planning practices. Workshops, seminars, and conferences focusing on strategic planning, resource allocation, and decision-making can empower principals to adopt best practices in school administration.
2. **Promote Collaborative Planning:** Encourage collaborative planning among principals, teachers, administrative staff, and other stakeholders within secondary schools. Establishing planning committees or task forces can facilitate collective decision-making processes, foster teamwork, and ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in the planning process.
3. **Implement Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** Develop robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the implementation of planning practices in secondary schools. Regular reviews and assessments can help identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, enabling timely adjustments to planning strategies and interventions.
4. **Address Administrative Constraints:** Investigate and address administrative constraints identified by principals in the planning process. This may include addressing bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate resources, or lack of support from higher authorities. Creating an enabling environment conducive to effective planning can enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of school administration.
5. **Foster Communication and Information Sharing:** Establish channels for effective communication and information sharing among principals, school administrators, teachers, and relevant stakeholders. Clear communication channels facilitate the dissemination of planning goals, objectives, and strategies, ensuring alignment and coherence in school-wide planning efforts.
6. **Provide Access to Planning Resources:** Ensure principals have access to necessary resources, tools, and support systems to facilitate effective planning practices. This may include providing access to planning templates, software applications, data analytics tools, and relevant literature on educational planning and administration.
7. **Encourage Continuous Improvement:** Foster a culture of continuous improvement within secondary schools by encouraging principals to reflect on their planning practices and seek feedback from stakeholders. Emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in responding to changing needs and priorities in the educational landscape.
8. **Advocate for Policy Support:** Advocate for policy support and institutional reforms at the state level to prioritize effective planning practices in secondary school administration. Policy initiatives that recognize the importance of planning, provide incentives for innovation, and allocate resources strategically can contribute to improved school outcomes and student achievement.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders in Kaduna State can enhance the planning practices of principals for effective school administration, ultimately contributing to the overall quality and performance of secondary education in the region.

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