

CONSEQUENCES AND SOLUTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS FACING SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN EZZA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE

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Abstract: The research topic is “consequences and solutions to the administrative problems facing secondary school principals in Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State”. The purpose of this study was to find out the consequences and solutions to the administrative problems that constitute impediments to the achievement of educational objectives. 66 principals and vice principals were selected through convenient sampling. The major instrument used in this study was questionnaire. The instrument was both face and content validated while the reliability of instrument showed the consistency of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using arithmetic mean. The following findings were made: ineffective management of the administrative task area, teachers are unaware of what the authority is doing, lack of delegation of authority and responsibility contribute to principals having excess work-load and stress and irregular payment of salaries or allowances, impede the realization of educational objectives, The results also revealed the solutions to the problem encountered by secondary school administrators such as adequate supervision of principals’ functions, presentation of school report of the school administrator, duties and accountability should be delighted at intervals, should keep and maintain adequate and accurate records, adequate funding of schools, and good principals-student relationship which brings about students discipline in the school. The researcher recommended that the government of Ebonyi State should without delay pay special attention to secondary schools which must range from provision of funds for infrastructural facilities to result oriented evaluation process and procedures.

Keywords: Consequences, Solutions, Administrative, Problems, Secondary school, Principals, Ezza Local Government, Ebonyi State.

Introduction:

Background of the study

Secondary school principals play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation of their schools and the education of their students. However, they face a variety of external administrative problems that can hinder their ability to effectively lead their schools. These problems can range from issues with school funding and resources to difficulties with parental involvement and community support.

One of the most significant administrative problems facing secondary school principals is the lack of adequate funding for their schools. Many schools struggle to provide their students with the resources they need, such as textbooks, technology, and extracurricular activities, due to limited budgets (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008). This can

lead to a decrease in the quality of education that students receive and can make it difficult for principals to effectively manage their schools.

Research has shown that these administrative problems can have a number of negative consequences for secondary school principals, including high levels of stress and burnout (Kyriacou, 2011). This can lead to a range of negative outcomes for students, such as decreased academic achievement and increased dropout rates (Hallinger & Heck, 2012). Additionally, the administrative burden placed on principals can lead to a lack of time and resources for important tasks such as teacher support and professional development (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008). To address these problems, a number of solutions have been proposed. These include providing principals with more time and resources to focus on instructional leadership, rather than administrative tasks (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008). Additionally, providing principals with ongoing professional development and support can help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to effectively manage their schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2012).

Secondary school principals in Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State are not exempted from these problems. They also face numerous administrative problems that hinder the effective management of their schools. These problems range from funding issues to lack of infrastructure and resources, bureaucratic red tape, and community involvement (Adeyemi, 2017).

Statement of the Problem.

In numerous secondary schools within the Ezza Local Government Area, a range of internal and external factors significantly hinder the effective administrative performance of principals. These factors encompass leadership challenges, personal attributes of the principals, their pursuit of financial gain through unauthorized fees, a lack of discipline across various levels, financial constraints, community-related issues, suboptimal academic conditions, and academic performance issues. These challenges can be categorized into Social, Economic, and Political Menaces, with a particular focus on the menace of examination malpractice and its implications for national development. This research endeavors to ascertain the veracity and extent of these challenges and subsequently develop viable solutions to address them.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed generally to find out the consequences and solutions to the administrative problems that constitute impediments to the achievement of educational objectives and to investigate the factors that can hinder a study growth in the administration of schools by principals at secondary school level in Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Specifically, the purpose of the study are:

- i. To determine the consequences of such problems in the administration of schools.
- ii. To proffer solutions to the problems encountered by secondary school administrators.

Research Questions

- i. What are the consequences of such problem in the administration of schools?
- ii. What are the solution to the problems encountered by secondary school administrators?

Rational for the Study

The study shall serve as a guide to the administrators of schools such as principals, vice principals and head teachers to how the best way to carry out their duties in the secondary school administration. The study will also enable the school to achieve over all educational goals by first investigating the various problems facing school prefects and determining solutions to these problems. It will also serve as basic data for policy makers to take decisions on educational matters especially as it affects the school principals and head teachers in administration

generally. Specifically, it will enable members of staff of the school as a team in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives of the school. The goal and objectives are teaching and learning to produce well educated citizens who will serve effectively in all the sectors of the economy where their services are needed. Another point is that of coordinating the efforts of people, so his programmes and policies are influenced by other people with whom he is constantly interacting. For example, a school principal may find that the aspirations of his students and the demands of the state are conflicting and not easy to resolve, yet the activities and efforts of the people with whom he deals must be coordinated towards the attainment of common educational goals. Therefore, this study serve as a guide to the school principals to possess the basic knowledge of how to co-ordinate activities within his establishment, how to discern and influence goals, policies and programmes and how to procure and manage available resources so as to achieve the main goals of the school.

Secondary school administration

Secondary school administration is a crucial aspect of ensuring the smooth operation of educational institutions, and it encompasses a wide range of responsibilities and tasks. According to Wormeli (2011), secondary school administration involves the management of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, as well as the supervision of teachers and other staff members.

One of the key challenges facing secondary school administrators is the need to balance the demands of different stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and the broader community. As noted by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), administrators must be able to navigate these competing demands while maintaining a focus on student learning and achievement.

To be effective, secondary school administrators must also be skilled communicators and leaders. As emphasized by Fullan (2012), they must be able to inspire and motivate their teams, as well as communicate clearly and persuasively with parents and the broader community.

In addition to these leadership and communication skills, secondary school administrators must also be knowledgeable about curriculum design and instructional strategies. As highlighted by Darling-Hammond (2010), they must be able to support the development of rigorous and engaging curricula, as well as provide ongoing professional development for teachers to help them improve their instructional practices.

To support the academic success of their students, secondary school administrators must also be aware of the latest research and best practices in education. As noted by Marzano and Pickering (2006), they must be able to use data and assessment results to inform their decision-making and drive continuous improvement.

Overall, effective secondary school administration requires a combination of leadership, communication, and instructional expertise, as well as a deep understanding of the needs of students and the broader community. By focusing on these key areas, administrators can help to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes the academic success and well-being of all students.

Theoretical Rationale

This study was based on the theory of Adam (1973) who contended that there is a good reason for wondering the extent and characteristics of students' participation in the school administration. Education as we know is a complex-activities and the successful operation of any education programme demands a high level of co-operative activity on the part of the stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved.

The Problems Encountered by Principals of Secondary Schools in Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State

In Ezza, heads of secondary schools, now find that over such matters as staffing, finance control, to teachers and even the use of school buildings, they can no longer maintain the independence and freedom which leads of secondary schools enjoy in the post while they also do not have the power and authority which heads of secondary schools once had rather they face these problems such as:

Problem of Finance

Today's secondary school principals are grappling with a severe shortage of financial resources, which is grossly inadequate to cover the substantial costs associated with managing a secondary school. Unlike in the past, when schools had more leeway to collect fees and receive additional funding, which was judiciously managed to meet daily operational needs, the current financial allocation is insufficient. This funding is further exacerbated by its irregularity, forcing principals to run schools on credit, or in some cases, dip into their personal finances to bridge the financial gap.

In certain states across the country, principals are prohibited from collecting any fees, as secondary education is expected to be fee-free. This constraint compounds the financial challenges they face.

Many of our schools are grappling with poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and deteriorating buildings. In such austere conditions, it becomes exceedingly challenging for school administrators to deliver their best. Effective learning is hindered when laboratories remain under-equipped, and even minor expenses necessitate principals to make numerous trips to headquarters for approval due to the limited funds available at the school level.

These financial constraints represent a considerable obstacle for principals striving to create conducive learning environments and deliver quality education to their students.

The Home, PTA and Society

The home contributes a lot of indiscipline in the Nigerian school system; example children from broken homes obviously lack parental care and supervision as well. This later creates indiscipline among such individuals nearly, whatever habits children from at home, they also carry to school. For instance, the type of language children use at school and other public gathering is most obviously to be the same as the type used in their home. The language may be either rude or refined. Parents who are immoral are likely to have children who resemble acts of indiscipline. It will be impossible for the students to live high moral standard of life.

The Students Peer Group

Most students lack respect for the constituted authority that is elders or those in the position of authority. They have negative peer group that result in breaking bounds, smoking, substance abuse and use of alcohol and hooligans etc. as a result of lack of moral laxity among students. Some of the school administration to help them solve their problems. Over pampered students sometimes request for something that is improper, and when they are denied those things, they show undisciplined behaviour. Some school students are involved in cultism, examination malpractice, drug abuse, rape and killing of innocent souls (Umueh E.N. and Asogwa, C.N. 2004). Some students are wayward; some have rebellious tendencies that they will like to break rules just for the fun of it. Some students feel that they are covered under their parents shadow simply because their parents are influential public figures; they use the opportunity to act against the law. Lack of word of encouragement or motivation of students by their teachers also may cause indiscipline of students.

Students in Boarding School

Students engage in bullying the smaller one's especially these of them in boarding schools. Sometimes they practice fagging, stealing and truancy etc, and most of the time, the school authority appears unable to control those bad behaviours.

The School Management (Principals and Teachers)

The work of the school management is to ensure that discipline maintained in the schools.

Indiscipline in schools, which are traceable to the school management are:

a. Poor school administration, that can manifest in many ways

- i. As a result of undisciplined by the school management, this made it impossible for them to enforce laid down rules and regulation.
- ii. They lack firmness integrity and fairness
- iii. Most of the time, power intoxicate absolutely, this may result in abuse of authority by the principals.
- iv. Lack of physical present by the principals teachers especially when their presence is highly needed to their function.
- v. Some principals are corrupt and autocratic and also apathetic
- vi. Admission of unqualified student and awarding students automatic promotion.

Moral Ministry of Education

Lack of moral instruction in schools causes indiscipline, some students are either from religious or non-religious home. They behave in such ways that are contrary to the norms of the society and cause indiscipline in the school in one way or the other.

The Ministry of Education

If you carefully study the school system, very well, you will notice the inefficiency and inadequacy of ministry of education. They fail to visit secondary schools occasionally for adequate supervision.

Poor Academic Performance

The menace of examination malpractice on national development. Anything that effects education, effects the nation.

This is true because the knowledge, skills, ability, attitudes and values necessary for people to contribute to national development are imported by the educational system (Achimuya, 2005a). The failure of our educational system to produce a workforce that will ensure higher social, economic and political indices to move the country forward rest squarely on many years of examination malpractice. The cumulative effects of this is a national menace in our development efforts characterized by low Gross National Product (GNP), low industrial capacity, low agricultural productivity, poor health conditions, poor nutrition, mass illiteracy, lack of portable water, rising unemployment, self-leadership, political instability etc. (Achimuya, 2005b).

The menace of examination malpractice on national development can be summarized under the headings:

1. Social menace
2. Economic menace
3. Political menace

These include:

- a. Examination malpractice promotes the breakdown of moral and ethical values amongst the youths and thereby encourages social vices such as prostitution, rape, cultism, armed robbery, duty abuse, street thuggery, garage touting, examination malpractice mercenaries.
- b. It engenders indiscipline amongst the parents and adult in the society. As parents struggle to raise the fund needed for examination malpractice, they are load into social vices such as corruption, bribery, pen robbery, stealing human sacrifice.
- c. It leads to the production of large number of unemployable youths in the society as the skills and competences needed for government, public and self-employment are lost to examination malpractice.
- d. It plants the seed of frustration in the innocent and honest Nigerians and youths whose result are wrongly delayed and cancelled/ the consequences of such frustrations could be grave to our social development.
- e. It endangers frustrations when the culprits are caught and punished in the law court or by the cancellation of their results by the examination bodies. Such frustrations could lead them to commit anti behaviour such as suicide, murder, assassination, drug abuse.
- f. It leads to the loss of hard work and dedication to duty, thereby impede the quality of private and public policy making machinery.

- g. It leads to national disgrace as certificate awarded in Nigeria are openly discriminated against in American and Europe, thus subjecting Nigerians students overseas to embarrassing treatment and disgrace.
- h. It leads to the public loss of confidence on our educational system at the local level, thereby making the certification useless as a basis assessing skills and capabilities.
- i. It leads to national shame and poor performance in international competitions. For instance Okebukola (1994) reported that Nigeria participated in international science study in 1990 and came out last in primary science and second to the last in secondary science.
- j. It promotes the perpetuation of international crimes such as drug addiction/trafficking, child abuse, 419.

Economic Menace

These include:

- a. Examination malpractice encourages the nation to build and plan her economic development on fake claims of skills, abilities, knowledge and experience. The consequences are that we have failed contracts, collapsed building, collapsed roads, collapsed bridges.
- b. It leads to the production of unethical and fake professional such as teachers, medical doctors, bankers, administration etc leading to bastardized educational system, bastardized hospitals, epileptic banking system and selfish leadership.
- c. It leads to wastage of time, energy, materials and money wherever result are withheld or cancelled. Fasua and Osegbete (2005) reported that estimated N100, billion has been wasted due to examination malpractice as a result of cancellation and withholding of results.
- d. It leads to wasting of money as government and examining body spend a lot of money on prevention measures and courts cases (Olisah, 2000).
- e. It leads to parents spending a lot of money in aiding and abetting examination malpractice.
- f. It beclouds the students in view eyes, thereby preventing him/her from identifying and pursuing his/her bad given talents. Thus a lot of youths who could contribute to economic development of the country are wasting away thereby showing down the economic development of the country.

Political Menace

This includes:

- a. Examination malpractice dents the record or image of an examination malpractice practitioners; especially, if you are found guilty by law court or administrative panels. This therefore, will prevent one from completing to become president, governor, senator, local government chairman and other political position in the country. The Buhari-Toronoto Saga is a good point of reference.
- b. It Jettisons merits and enthrone unmerited persons to occupy leadership positions. Such a leader lack vision for development and equal distribution of national wealth.
- c. It recycles mediocrity and installs self-centered and selfish leaders with the attendant negative consequences.
- d. It leads to the production of destined citizens who may occupy leadership positions to cheat the nation. The moral conduct of such a leader will be seriously held in question.
- e. It recycles election malpractices such as election rigging, political thuggery, assassination of political opponents, snatching of ballot boxes.

Therefore, education is the corner stone of socio-economic and political development of any nation. This is why in Nigeria, a lot of emphasis is placed on our educational system. Despite this emphasis, Nigeria educational system has failed to deliver the much needed dividends of development in our national struggles. Sufficient to say that one of the major problems that hamper the educational development vis-à-vis national development is examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon. The first publicly reported case of examination malpractice in Nigeria occurred in 1914 when the senior Cambridge Local Examination leaked (Ognuka, 1995). This phenomenon remained unnoticed and essentially inconsequential until in the seventies when the involvement

of persons other than the candidates was noticed (Umar, 1998) and Maduemezia, 1998). Ever since then, this socio-economic and political menace has with increasingly rapidly defied every effort to arrest it.

Examination malpractice makes nonsense of our education system by undermining the very purpose of education in inculcating in the individual, the right type of values, attitudes, skills, abilities and competence for his/her survival and contributions of the development of his/her nation.

This is true because, the heightening of examination malpractice has resulted to turning out half bakes graduates who are incompetent in their chosen field of endeavour. Indeed, the high degree of examination malpractice in Nigeria has led to a total collapse in our educational system and hence the national menace.

Methodology

Research Design

The design adopted for this study is survey research where a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only few items considered to be representative of the entire group.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in the secondary schools in Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State which made up of schools in Ezza South, Ezza North and Education zones. However, these education zones make up of secondary school management board with its headquarters at Abakaliki.

Population of the Study

The study's population was all the secondary schools in Ezza South and North which comprised of all the principals and vice principals in twenty-two (22) secondary schools from the two (2) education zones in Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The research did not sample the population, all the secondary schools in Ezza South and North was used. The researcher decided to carry the whole population of twenty-two (22) principals, twenty-two (22) vice principals Admin/discipline and twenty-two (22) vice principal's academic, given a sample size of respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument employed in this study for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument has twenty-three question items. The questionnaire was developed based on the research questions for the study. The questions demanded ticking the correct option. It of likert scale which includes strongly agreed, agree, disagree and strongly disagreed.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument used for this study was both face and content validated by experts from Educational Administration and two from measurement and evaluation. All the corrections given by them were reflected in the final copy of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire used was distributed and collected through face to face contact on personal delivery. The researcher delivered the questionnaire with the help of two research assistants to the respondents. All were returned given 100% rate of return.

Method of Data Analysis

The arithmetic mean was used for data analysis. The arithmetic means (\bar{x}) was computed for each of the items. Numerical values were assigned to each rating scale in the questionnaire as shown below:

Strongly Agree	-	(SA)	-	4
Agree	-	(A)	-	3
Disagree	-	(D)	-	2
Strongly Disagree	-	(SD)	-	1

The arithmetic mean

(\bar{x}) was calculated using the formular

$(\bar{x}) =$

Where = mean

X = scores in the distribution

= number of occurrence in the distribution

Therefore, to get a response categories, the formular will be thus:

$$4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.5$$

Decision Rule

The arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) was calculated using the above formular in which a total below 2.5 was disagreed while a total score 2.5 and above was agreed.

Data Analysis and Results Presentation

Research Question 1:

What are the consequences of such problems in the administration of schools?

Table 1: Mean responses of the respondents on the consequences of such problems in the administration of schools

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	AS	Total	Av. Resp.	X	Decision
1.	The problems encountered by the principals affect the effective management of the administrative task areas.	40	20	2	4	66	228	3.5	Agree
2.	Communication does not effectively flow along the hierarchy and as such teachers are unaware of what the authority is doing	50	10	5	1	66	241	3.7	Agreed
3.	Lack of delegation of authority and responsibility contributes to principals having excess work load and stress	40	20	5	1	66	231	3.5	Agreed
4.	The problems encountered by the principals influence and affect them negatively in formal and informal communication in their administration task areas.	30	40	3	3	66	219	3.3	Agreed
5.	Irregular payment of salaries or allowance, impede the realization of educational objectives	30	30	4	2	66	220	3.3	Agreed
Grand mean								3.6	

Table 1 indicates that 66 respondents agreed on all the items as the consequences of such problem in the administrative of schools. Such as ineffective management of the administrative task area, teachers are unaware of what the authority is doing, lack of delegation of authority and responsibility contribute to principals having excess work-load and stress and irregular payment of salaries or allowances, impede the realization of educational objectives. These items scored the mean of 3.6

Research Question 2:

What are the solution to the problems encountered by secondary school administrators?

Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on solution to the problems encountered by secondary school administrators

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	AS	Total	Av. Resp.	X	Decision
6.	There must be adequate supervision of principals functions	30	30	5	1	66	221	3.3	Agree
7.	Principals must always present reports of his school administration	50	10	5	1	66	241	3.7	Agreed
8.	His duties and accountability should delighted at intervals	50	20	5	1	66	231	3.5	Agreed
9.	Principals should keep and maintain adequate and accurate records	30	30	4	2	66	220	3.3	Agreed
10.	Adequate funding of schools should be made	30	30	3	3	66	219	3.3	Agreed
11.	Good principals students relationship brings students discipline in the school	40	20	2	4	66	228	3.5	Agreed
12.	Good principals/teacher relationship contributes to the establishment of good human relationship in the school	10	10	30	16	66	146	2.2	Disagreed
13.	Principals leadership style contribute to adequate supervision of instructional procedures	10	10	20	26	66	136	2.1	Disagreed
Grand mean								3.6	

In table 2, it shows that 66 of the total respondents agreed that items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 are the solutions to the problem encountered by secondary school administrators such as adequate supervision of principals' functions, presentation of school report of the school administrator, duties and accountability should delighted at intervals, should keep and maintain adequate and accurate records, adequate funding of schools, and good principals-student relationship which brings about students discipline in the school. These items scored the mean of 3.6 but respondents agreed on items 12 and 13 as the solutions to the problems encountered by secondary school administrators. Therefore, items number 12 and 13 scored the total mean of 2.14.

Summary of the Results

The study aimed to explore the administrative challenges confronted by secondary school principals in the Ezza Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Four research questions provided the framework for this investigation. The research employed a questionnaire-based data collection method, leading to the following key findings: Inadequate attention to administrative issues poses a significant challenge. Legal constraints on the authority of principals contribute to disciplinary issues. Irregular disbursement of salaries and allowances hampers the achievement of educational goals.

Insufficient supervision impedes effective principal performance, particularly in the realm of educational standards.

As a result, principals are compelled to independently manage administrative processes, areas, and responsibilities in a manner that impacts the quality of education provided.

Explanation of Findings

From the findings in this work, it was discovered that principals of secondary schools have serious administrative problems to battle with such things as internal factors:

1. Organizational problems
2. Problems of authority and power
3. Lack of discipline among people involved in levels of child's education
4. Community related problems
5. Problem of finance
6. Poor academic environment and performance under the following headings social menace, economic menace, political menace, all relating to the effect of examination malpractices on national development.

Recommendations

The researcher has without hesitation decided to make some recommendation which of it adhered to will create a road towards school system.

- There has to be payment of salaries/allowances to principals and teachers at right and proper time. This enhances all round efficiency of staff.
- There has to be adequate funding for the production and maintenance of infrastructural facilities such as school blocks, classroom for staff, school bus and toilet among others.
- The legal and supervision units of the ministry of education and the post primary school management board must have routine aimed at improving quality teaching and learning within the legal frame work or in schools.
- The school finance or finance records must be free from financial and records must be straight without cancellations.

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