

Perceived Challenges to Effective Administration of Secondary School in Imo State

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State. The study employed a survey design and it was guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis that were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consisted of 5,896 subjects, comprising 268 principals and 5,628 teachers in the 268 public secondary schools in Imo State. The sample for the study was 600 respondents that were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The study sample was made up of 100 principals and 500 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item research-developed structured questionnaire that underwent validity and reliability tests. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null hypothesis was tested with t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed, among others, that the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state include: insufficient funds; inadequate physical facilities, equipment and instructional materials; inadequate qualified staff, inadequate staff motivation, poor decision-making, and poor leadership style of school principals.

Keywords: perceived challenges, effective administration, and principals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has been widely acknowledged as an instrument for achieving socio-economic growth and national development. This is true of the fact that it is through well planned and implemented educational systems that advanced nations of the world have achieved high level of socio-economic growth and national development. No wonder Okolo (2010) viewed education as the key to solid development of the individual for the acquisition of competencies necessary for self development and national development.

In Nigeria, there are different levels of education institutions among which is the secondary school level which is also regarded as the post-primary school level. Ogbonnaya (2003) conceptualized secondary school as an educational institution where full-time education is provided and directed at pupils between the ages of eleven or twelve and eighteen plus. This definition shows that secondary school is a school where children receive education after they have received primary education and it, therefore, serves as a link between primary and tertiary education institutions.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) articulated the broad goals of secondary schools as including the preparation of students for useful living within the society, and preparation for high education. It is noteworthy that the achievement of these goals of secondary schools depends on effective administration of these schools. Gregg (1997) defined administration as the process of directing and controlling life in an organization, while Osuala and Okeke (2006) viewed it as a systematic process involving the use of human, financial and material resources in achieving specified goals and objectives. It can be deduced from these definitions that administration is an activity that is concerned with making people, activities and things to function so that objectives will be achieved; administration involves using men, materials and funds in an organization to achieve objectives; and it also involves directing and controlling the affairs of an organization. In support of these views, Ogbonnaya (2004) remarked that educational administrators play very important roles in the enhancement of teaching and learning process in schools by procuring and managing funds; proving and maintaining staff, physical facilities and equipment as well as establishing and maintaining school-community relations.

However, it is pertinent to note that there have been allegations of poor administration of secondary schools in Imo State as a result of the challenges to effective administration of these schools. For instance, Udoka (2006) and Mbagwu (2011) observed that secondary school students in Imo state study under leaking roofs and in an environment not conducive for effective teaching and learning. Okeke (2008) also remarked that secondary schools in Nigeria (Imo State inclusive) are now characterized by dilapidated infrastructure, obsolete equipment, out-dated books, journals and above all, irrelevant curriculum which make the effective realization of their goals impossible.

In his own perspective, Emenike (2010) attributed the ugly state of affairs in secondary schools in Imo state to the challenges faced by the secondary school principals in their administration of these schools and which were not yet known because no study has been carried out to determine these challenges. In relation to Emenike's view, Anakwe (2010) opined that there are possible strategies that can be adopted to tackle the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in South East Nigeria. By Virtue of the fact that the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state and the strategies for dealing with the

challenge lacked empirical knowledge gap, the problem of this study put in a question form was: what are the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State and what are the strategies that can be adopted to deal with these challenges.

1.2 Research Questions

The study was guided by the two research questions below:

1. What are the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State.
2. What are the strategies that can be adopted to deal with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state?

1.3 Hypothesis

The study was also guided by one null hypothesis as formulated below:

H_{01} There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived challenges to effective administrating of secondary schools in Imo State.

1.4 Research Method

Survey research design was adapted for the study which was carried out in Imo state. The population of the study was 5,896 subjects, comprising 268 principals and 5,628 teachers in the 268 public secondary schools in Imo State. Using proportionate stratified random sampling technique, a sample of 600 respondents were selected and used as sample for the study. This comprised 100 principals and 500 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire developed by the researcher and subjected to validity and reliability tests. The instrument was structure along a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). These ratings have weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument consisted of two clusters. Cluster A was on the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state, while Cluster B focused on the strategies for dealing with these challenges. The instrument was faced validated by three experts, two in Educational Administration and planning and one in Measurement and evaluation at the Enugu State University of Science and technology. The comments and suggestions of these experts were used in modifying the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was further ascertained by trial-testing it on 20 principals in the neighboring Abia state that was not involved in the study. Cronbach's Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items and it yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.86 which showed that the instrument was reliable in collecting the required data for the study. The researcher and eight research assistants administered the questionnaire to the respondents in their various schools. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using + -test statistic. Since a four-point rating scale was used for the instrument, the decision rule was based on the mid-point of the scale which is 2.50. Therefore, mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated agree while those below 2.50 indicated disagree.

1.5 Results

The results of the study are presented on the tables below based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

1.6 Research Question One

What are the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools.

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Principals			Teachers		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Decision
1	Insufficient funds for effective administration of school	2.59	0.80	A	2.73	0.82	A
2	Inadequate physical facilities, equipment and instructional materials	3.04	0.86	A	3.43	0.92	A
3	Inadequate qualified school staff	2.94	0.94	A	2.64	0.81	A
4	Inadequate staff motivation	2.56	0.80	A	2.59	0.80	A
5	Poor decision-making in the administration of schools	3.41	0.92	A	2.83	0.79	A
6	Poor leadership style of school principals	2.80	0.83	A	2.56	0.80	A
7	Indiscipline among teachers and students	2.77	0.83	A	3.11	0.87	A
8	Inadequate training of principals in school administration	3.04	0.87	A	3.27	0.90	A
9	Frequent changes in education policies	2.91	0.84	A	3.46	0.92	A
10	Political interference by both government and the political class.	2.74	0.82	A	2.71	0.81	A
Cluster Mean		2.88	0.85	A	2.93	0.84	A

Table 1 reveals that the respondents agree that all the listed items are the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State.

This is because all the questionnaire items 1-10 are rated above 2.50 which is the criterion mean. Therefore, these items 1-10 are the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State.

1.7 Research Question Two

What are the strategies that can be adopted to deal with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state.

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on the strategies for dealing with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools.

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Principals			Teachers		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Decision
11	Increased funding of secondary school	3.10	0.90	A	2.89	1.02	A
12	Adequate provision of physical facilities, equipment and instructional materials in secondary schools	3.08	0.90	A	2.75	1.06	A
13	Adequate provision of qualified staff in the schools.	2.86	0.96	A	2.52	1.08	A
14	Increased motivation of the staff for maximum performance	2.79	0.96	A	2.53	1.04	A
15	Proper decision-making in the administration of the schools	2.74	0.99	A	2.68	1.11	A
16	Good leadership style of school principals	2.79	1.04	A	2.90	1.06	A
17	Enforcement of discipline among teachers and students	2.92	1.00	A	3.07	1.00	A
18	Adequate training of principals in school administration	2.96	1.06	A	3.07	1.12	A
19	Maintenance of educational policies	2.80	1.03	A	2.78	1.06	A
20	Discouragement	2.57	1.01	A	2.66	1.04	A
Cluster Mean		2.82	0.97	A	2.79	1.07	A

Table 2 above presents the mean ratings and standard deviations of the respondents on the strategies that can be adopted to deal with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state. The table shows that all the items 11-20 are rated above the acceptance mean of 2.50. Therefore, they are the strategies that can be adopted to deal with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State.

1.8 Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis for hypothesis I

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal.	Sig.	Decision
Principals	100	2.88	0.85	598	2.86	0.00	Significant
Teachers	500	2.93	0.84				

a = 0.05, S = Significant

Table 3 indicates that a t-values of 2.86 was obtained which was significant at 0.00. Since the significant value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance at which the null hypothesis was tested, the single null hypothesis of this study is, therefore, rejected. The implication of this is that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state.

1.9 Discussion

The result of data analysis shown on table 1 revealed that the perceived challenges to affective administration of secondary schools in Imo state are: insufficient funds; inadequate physical facilities, equipment and instructional materials; inadequate qualified schools staff; inadequate staff motivation; poor decision making; poor leadership style of school principals; indiscipline among teachers and students; inadequate training of principals in school administration; frequent changes in educational policies, and political interference.

The above research finding is in agreement with the view of Okeke (2008) that secondary schools in Imo state face challenges in their administration which have led to their dilapidated infrastructure, obsolete equipment, out-dated books and journals which makes the realization of their goals difficult if not impossible. The implication of this finding is that measures have to be taken in order to ameliorate these challenges for the benefit of effective school administration. However, there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state and this led to the rejection of the single null hypothesis of this study as formulated.

The findings of this study also revealed that the strategies that can be adopted to deal with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state include: increased funding of secondary schools; adequate provision of physical facilities, equipment and instructional materials in schools; adequate provision of qualified staff; increased motivation of staff, proper decision-making; good leadership style of school principals; enforcement of discipline among staff and students; adequate training of principals in school administration; maintenance of educational policies; and discouragement of political interference in school administration.

The above findings agree with Anakwe (2010) that there are possible strategies that can be adopted to deal with the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state. Thus, the implication of this finding is that if these strategies are unattended to, the challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state will persist and the effective realization of the schools' goals and objectives will continually be hampered. It is, therefore, imperative that secondary schools in Imo state have to adopt these strategies for the benefit of effective school administration and quality education delivery.

1.10 Conclusion and Recommendations

Effective administration of secondary schools is pivotal to quality education delivery in these schools. This is due to the fact that it is through effective and efficient administration of secondary school that effective teaching and learning can be guaranteed in these schools. However, the research findings have shown that there are challenges to effective administration of secondary schools in Imo state as well as strategies that can be used to tackle these challenges. It is, therefore, necessary that the secondary school principals should employ these strategies in dealing with the multifarious challenges facing their administrative endeavours so as to enable them realize their educational goals maximally. In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be increased funding of secondary schools in order to enable them have sufficient funds at their disposal for effective administration of their schools.
2. There should be adequate provision of physical facilities, equipment and instructional materials to secondary schools.
3. Quality staff should be adequately provided in secondary schools.
4. The secondary schools staff should be adequately motivated to enable them perform maximally.
5. Secondary school principals should ensure that they adopt good leadership style in their leadership roles.
6. There should be strict enforcement of discipline among staff and students of secondary schools.
7. Finally, the ministries of education and educational policymakers should discard the idea of making frequent changes in educational policies so as to avoid the confusion and chaos that go with it.

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