

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS FACILITIES AS DETERMINANT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ENUGU STATE NIGERIA

Nnamdi Boniface Uche & Nwachukwu Jane N.

Educational Management Department, Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Abstract

The study examined Management and maintenance of Public Secondary Schools Facilities as determinant of quality assurance in Enugu State Nigeria. Census Survey research design was adopted in the study. Two research questions guided the study. A total of 314 principals of the 314 public secondary schools including public special schools in Enugu State were used for the study. A researcher developed questionnaire was used for data collection in the study. Mean scores were used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that strategic application of managerial skills in school administration is crucial in the achievement of quality assurance through the development of school facility maintenance policy, formation of school maintenance committees in the schools, involving host communities in school management and facility maintenance, inclusion of students in the facility maintenance committee, recruitment of security personnel among others. Invariably, the study found out that some of the challenges that school administrators have to effective facilities management and maintenance that affect the achievement of quality assurance are political interference, lack of maintenance culture on the part of the principals, activities of students, attitudes of teachers towards work, insecurity, poor power supply, provision of outdated facilities among others. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made thus: that community people should be involved in school facility management, provision and maintenance, that teachers should form integral part of facility supervision committee, that government should recruit principals with the needed capacities to effective school administration as strategies for achieving quality of the educational outcome in Enugu State.

Keywords: Management, maintenance, school facilities and challenges, quality assurance

Introduction

Education is a crucial tool for the development of every country. It is seen as an instrument for the realization of a nation's growth and developmental will, since the level of a nation's literacy determines her extent of development. Education plays vital role in the sustainable development of any nation. It has been identified as viable tool for socio-economic, cultural and political transformation of any progressive society in the world all over. Aguba in Uche, Elechi and Ewegbu (2023), observed that education develops the mind of man and the mind of man develops the society, stressing that when the society is developed without developing the mind of man, the mind of man will grow and destroy the

society. This is the reason why countries of the world give priority attention to education in their development plans/agenda. It is the key to the acquisition of appropriate skills for the development of physical, mental and social abilities which helps an individual to be useful and contribute meaningfully to the development of the society where such individual finds him or herself at any given point in time. Education takes place at various levels as primary, secondary and tertiary. Offor (2017) noted that education at all levels is very important but more important at secondary level because, it is the biggest bridge that connect primary and tertiary levels, between present and the future of the recipient, between real life and assumption for the recipients. The National policy on education (2013) identified that secondary education in Nigeria should provide high quality training and equip students to live functional life in their immediate society. These objectives of secondary education may however not realize without adequate human and material resources provision and effective management. Apart from human resources, adequate attention to school physical facilities or school plant is needed to improve effective teaching and learning engagements in the school system.

School facilities are essential tool for driving the achievement of the expected goals in the educational system. Onuh (2018) defined school facilities/plant as the facilities such as the school building, furniture, playgrounds, hostels, classrooms, school libraries, school laboratories, apparatus and equipment etc, which are helpful in pursuing the realization of the objectives of the education system. School plant forms the major and integral aspects of school administration. These facilities are found at all levels of the education system which secondary education is one of them. The school plant/facilities comprise of buildings for academic and non-academic activities, equipment for academic and non-academic activities, areas for sports and games, landscape, farms and gardens including trees, roads and paths (Asiabaka, in Ofor 2017). The provision, availability, adequacy and maintenance of relevant school plant influence efficiency and quality assurance in schools. Observation has revealed that the great damages been done to the educational institutions especially in Nigeria, is as a result of poor maintenance culture among the educational administrators who feel less concern when school facilities started losing their values by ways of rusting, misplacement, leakages, breaking, outdated etc. Maintenance of facilities is a sure way of ensuring the sustainability and functionality of such facilities in the achievement of quality assurance in schools.

Quality assurance is a process of ensuring effective resource input, control, refining the processes and raising the standard of output in order to meet the set goals. Okanya (2015) Stated that quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluating and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality output (students) that meets set standards and expectations of the society. Quality assurance in education aims at preventing quality problems and ensures that the products of the system conform to the expected standard. Thus, the quality of education is the degree of excellence of the output (students) which can be achieved through the influence of the principals' effective administrative/management processes

implementation especially in the area of school plant maintenance. Eggha, Agah and Oguike (2016) opined that quality assurance in any educational institution indicates that students' learning is well supported with adequate resources and that those actively involved both in school administration and teaching have clear job descriptions and know their job responsibilities. It involves series of operational techniques and activities which include all the actions taken in order for the quality requirement to be met. The quality of education cannot be met without adequate provision of facilities necessary for the educational programmes over time.

However, provision of school plant has no meaning when it cannot continually serve the purposes for which it is being provided and the extent to which it can serve that purpose is determined by the ability of the school administrator to develop a frame work policy for maintaining the plant as at when due (Ajah, 2021). Egbueze, (2018) held that Maintenance has to do with functional checks, servicing, repairing or replacing of necessary devices, equipment, machinery, building infrastructure, and supporting utilities in industrial, educational, business, and residential institutions. The objective of school plant management and maintenance is to keep school facilities in the conditions that will enable it meet the requirements of the educational set programmes. In order to achieve the objectives of school facilities' maintenance, Codelia (2022) suggests that maintenance should include painting, repairs, replacement of damaged chairs etc. The first step in maintaining physical facilities in schools should be to ensure that there are periodic and systematic checks of facilities in order to identify areas that need repair. This is achievable through school functional management system put in place by the school administrator who has the commitment for quality in the school system.

Hence, management is the process involving an effective utilization of human and material resources in driving the achievement of specific objectives of an institution over a period of time. Obi (2016) observed that the quantity and quality of material resources available in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria as a result of the increased investment of the government in education sector have improved in the recent times. This testimony was obtained from the school Principals who confirmed that the state government assisted the schools to procure more material resources and renovated some facilities to improve the quality of teaching and learning activities within the public school system. The great boost given to school plant in the state has resulted in improved academic performance of secondary school students in national and international examinations. However, availability and application of these facilities to teaching and learning can only be sustained through adequate management and maintenance culture. Lack of maintenance culture has been one of the issues plaguing Nigeria as a nation. It seems to be permeating nooks and crannies of the system. At the school level also, the school Principals seem to be facing challenges of adequate management and maintenance of school plants. Such challenges may include poor quality of materials supplied, lack of skilled workmen, effect of harsh weather, theft, adequate materials for preservation, poor storage system, poor handling, lack of time for supervision, inadequate funding.

Principals of schools as primary leaders in the school building, are saddled with interwoven responsibilities which require managerial strategies to enhance effectiveness towards achieving educational goals. They are the executive heads of secondary schools in Nigeria. Their administrative functions include; implementation of educational programmes at the school level, management of human and material resources, keep school records, manage funds, supervise facilities and create conducive environment for teaching and learning activities. The management and maintenance of the school plant should be part of the regular administrative functions of the school heads. It is an important duty that should not be overlooked because much capital has been invested in the procurement by the government and the school to some extent. Maintenance of the school facilities is also necessary for the health of the staff and students who use them. Maintenance strategies to be adopted by the school would depend on many factors such as; school location, weather conditions, soil factors, rate of usage and human resources. Strategies such as regular inspection, use of preventive chemicals, adequate storage system, use of cleaners, technicians, refurbishing of damaged facilities could be useful in the maintenance of school facilities.

The importance of plant maintenance culture introduction in public secondary schools cannot be over emphasized, since it is the bedrock for the actualization of educational goals. To achieve quality assurance in public secondary schools, school administrators need to change their administrative strategies for managing the schools especially as regard to plant maintenance culture. It was in view of this background, that this study was designed to examine Management and maintenance of Public Secondary Schools Facilities as determinant of quality assurance in Enugu State Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the study, was to determine the Management and maintenance of Public Secondary Schools Facilities as determinant of quality assurance in Enugu State Nigeria.

Specifically the Study:

1. Identify the challenges encountered by school principals in the management and maintenance of the school physical facilities.
2. Examine measures that can be adopted to ensure maintenance of the school facilities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges encountered by school principals in the management and maintenance of school facilities?
2. What measures can be adopted for effective management and maintenance of the school facilities?

Methods

The design of the study was descriptive survey research design. Alio in Uche et al (2019) stated that descriptive survey research is the type of research that is characterized by the features of existing situation. It involves the description, analysis and interpretation of conditions that exist. In this type of research, Alio in Uche et al (2019) maintained that there is no room for the manipulation of data. The design was adopted because the study gathered opinions on challenges encountered by school principals in the management and maintenance of the school plant. Population for the study is made up of all the 314 principals in the 314 Public secondary schools in Enugu State. However, Enugu State has six education zones which include Agbani zone, Awgu zone, Enugu zone, Nsukka zone, Obollo zone and Udi zone. There was no sampling of the respondents because; the entire population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the researcher-developed questionnaire. Direct observation of the school facilities was also made in the selected schools. The instrument had three sections, A, B and C. Section "A" contained information on personal data of the respondents, section "B" had 15 items on the challenges encountered by school principals in the management and maintenance of the school plant while section C had 10 items on measures to be adopted to ensure maintenance of school facilities. The instrument has a four-point rating scale of Very High (VH = 4 points), High Extent (HE = 3 point), Low Extent (LE = 2 points and Strongly Very Low Extent (VLE = 1 points). The instrument was validated by three experts, two in Educational management and one from measurement and evaluation, Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The corrections and modifications in content and language clarity made in the instrument during validation were incorporated in the final copies of the instrument used for the study. The reliability of the instrument was established using 15 principals from Abia State, Nigeria. The overall internal consistency coefficient computed, using Cronbach Alpha was .79 which was considered very good enough for the study. The instrument was administered to the respondents on face to face personal contacts with the help of three research assistants. The research questions were answered using mean scores. An item with mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted while item with a mean score of less than 2.50 was rejected.

Results

Table 1: Mean (X) scores rating on the challenges facing management and maintenance of school physical facilities by the principals.

S/N	Item description	Mean	Decision
1	Provision of sub-standard facilities to schools	3.32	HE
2	Shortage of manpower in relevant areas	4.00	VHE
3	Poor funding	2.26	LE
4	Poor maintenance culture on the part of school principal	4.00	VHE

5	Lack of adequate security architecture	3.28	HE
6	Provision of outdated school facilities	3.42	HE
7	Corruption among staff	3.37	HE
8	Irregular power supply to the school	4.00	VHE
9	Political Interference on the principals	3.61	VHE
10	Poor managerial skills on the part of principals	4.00	VHE
11	Lack of interest in school affairs by host communities	3.69	VHE
12	Activities of students on school facilities	3.40	HE
13	lack of in-service training of the staff on maintenance techniques.	4.00	VHE
14	Poor records of damages in the school	3.09	HE
15	Negative activities of the community members	2.47	LE
Mean		3.46	HE

From the data presented in the table above, principals agreed to a high extent with mean score which is above 2.50, that the challenges encountered by principals in the management and maintenance of school facilities include Lack of adequate security architecture, Provision of outdated school facilities, Corruption among staff, Irregular power supply to the school, Political Interference on the principals, Poor managerial skills on the part of principals, Provision of sub-standard facilities to schools, Poor maintenance culture on the part of school principal among others. However, the respondents observed that poor funding and Negative activities of the community members are not major challenges bedeviling principals' school plant management and maintenance in public secondary schools in Enugu State with mean scores less than 2.50.

Table 2: Measures to be adopted to ensure maintenance of school facilities

S/N	Item description	Mean	Decision
1	establishment of school facility maintenance committee	4.00	VHE
2	developing facility maintenance policy	3.42	HE
3	Conducting Regular inspection of school facilities	3.35	HE
4	Maintaining registers for damages and repairs	3.42	HE
5	Training personals on specific maintenance techniques	4.00	VHE
6	Development of maintenance schedules	3.20	HE
7	recruiting Security personnel to guide school facilities	4.00	VHE
8	involving host community in plant maintenance planning	3.69	VHE
9	Involving Students in school plant maintenance committee	3.80	VHE
10	Organization of seminar on plant maintenance for teachers	3.45	HE
Mean		3.63	VHE

The result in table 2 above revealed that items 1 – 10 with mean scores ranging from 3.20 – 4.00 are above the bench line set for the study, showing that all the measures as contained in

the table are very crucial to a High Extent for principals to strategically adopt in school facility management and maintenance in public Secondary Schools in Enugu State Nigeria.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that the major obstacles bedeviling principals facility management and maintenance in public secondary schools in Enugu State include Lack of adequate security architecture, Provision of outdated school facilities, Corruption among staff, Irregular power supply to the school, Political Interference on the principals, Poor managerial skills on the part of principals, Provision of sub-standard facilities to schools, Poor maintenance culture on the part of school principal among others. This implies that the administrative stress on the school principals allows little or no room for regular supervision and routine check on the school facilities, which is in accordance with the opinion of Egbueze (2018) who observed that Lack of motivation usually brings in low teachers' morale, hence militating effective maintenance of school facilities. Lack of motivation of teachers has negative influence on teachers' job performance (Okonkwo 2018). Inadequate power supply, political interference, activities of the students etc are challenges militating management and maintenance of school facilities as indicated in table 1. Consequently, preservation and storage of consumables for practical lessons in schools, autonomy of principals in managing school facilities and supervision would be difficult for the school principals. Poor funding also is a limiting factor. The finding justified the position of Obi (2018) who opined that lack of adequate funding to schools has very high negative effect to school administration. It was also observed that large student population exert pressure on the limited facilities which would lead to frequent need for repairs. Other factors observed to be militants to effective maintenance of school facilities include: improper handling of the facilities by the students, inadequate number of skilled workers, poor records of damages in the school non-recruitment of personals and inadequate training of the staff on maintenance techniques. The study equally justified that; negative activities of community members and poor funding are not major issues to effective school facilities management and maintenance to principals in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

This finding is in tandem with the position of Ume (2025) who observed that an administrator who knows his job very well should know how to strategically raise the expected fund for running his administration rather than relying on fund that may not be readily available for him. Also, Igah (2018), noted that a good school administrator has the duty of integrating community people into his school administration as a way of improving school facility security, provision and maintenance, hence, justify that negative activities of community people is not a major challenge to effective management and maintenance of school facilities in Enugu State. Invariably, the study found out that some measures that can be taken to ensure effective and efficient school facility management and maintenance in public schools in Enugu include formation of facilities maintenance committee to help the administrator drive the maintenance activities, formulation of maintenance policy to guide the activities of both staff and students, involve host communities in the management and

maintenance of school facilities, involving students in the maintenance committee, recruiting security personnel as well as developing maintenance schedules and follow it accordingly are all key to effective school management and maintenance strategies that a principal can adopt.

Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that strategic application of managerial skills by principals in very crucial management and maintenance of school plant in secondary schools in Enugu State. The finding also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the challenges and measures to effective management and maintenance of school facilities in Enugu State.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. That community people should be at the center of public schools administration for effective supervision, provision and maintenance.
2. Those teachers should be trained and recruited into school facilities maintenance committee with the students inclusive.
3. That school maintenance policy should be developed by the principals alongside maintenance schedules which must be strictly adhere to at all times in the school.
4. Those modern facilities should be provided for schools by government to reduce the challenges regular repairs.
5. That government should recruit principals who are skilled on school administration not those with certificate that they cannot defend in terms of effective school administration.

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