

Managerial Strategies for Quality Management of Child Friendly Schools Model in Abia State

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the managerial strategies for quality management of Child Friendly Schools Model in Abia State. It used a survey design that made use of eight hundred and fifty-five (855) school heads in all the seventeen (17) Local Government Areas in Abia State. Proportionate stratified simple random sampling technique was used to get a sample of seven hundred headteachers (700), 200 from urban while 500 were from rural areas. The study was guided by 3 research questions and one hypothesis that was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A questionnaire named “Managerial Strategies for Quality Management of Child Friendly Schools Questionnaire (MSQMCFSQ)” was used for data collection. It was a 42-item researchers-developed questionnaire. The items were validated by experts while reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Statistics, and reliability co-efficient of 0.74 attested to the reliability of the instrument. Mean was used in answering research questions while z-test statistics was used in testing the hypothesis. The result revealed the following as managerial strategies: adequate supervision of instruction, proper assigning of duties to teachers etc. It was recommended, among others, that Ministry of Education should strengthen the monitoring and supervisory service of the unit.

Keywords: Managerial, Strategies, Child, Friendly, Schools

Introduction

Primary Education according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) is aimed at inculcating permanent literacy, numeracy, laying of sound basis for scientific thinking and others. For an individual to have a solid secondary and tertiary education, solid primary education is inevitable and that is why policies and programmes at this level should be properly managed to ensure its effective and smooth implementation. Maduewesi (2005) added that since primary education is the foundation for an individual's education, therefore anything that is done at this level should be done with all sense of dedication and seriousness because education is the gateway to whatever an individual can achieve in life. In a related view, Fafunwa (1985) earlier opined that education comprised of all efforts, conscious, direct, incidental and indirect made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of the individuals' needs as well as the needs of the society where the programme is based.

In realizing the importance of primary education to the development of any child, Ekemezie and Ezeh (2015) stated that UNICEF in collaboration with Federal Government of Nigeria came up with child friendly school model in the year 2000. Child Friendly School (CFS) model is a school "where the learning environment is conducive, the staff are friendly to the children and the health and safety needs of the children are adequately met. The school, as a community-based institution, recognizes the right of all children, irrespective of gender, religion and ethnic differences, family status, physical and mental abilities and disabilities." Such school must ensure quality education and positive learning for the child. In a related view, UNICEF (2009) stated that CFS model is a simple one at heart, and should operate in the best interest of the child. Education environment must be safe, healthy and proactive, endowed with trained teachers, adequate resources and appropriate physical, emotional and social conditions that facilitate learning. In such school, children's right must be protected and their voices must be heard for children to learn and grow, with innate respect for their identities and varied needs. The child friendly school model promotes inclusiveness, gender sensitivity, tolerance, dignity and personal empowerment.

Considering the nature, characteristics and benefits of CFS to both the child and the society, one would ask whether enough preparation have been made to accommodate adequate management and implementation of this model in terms of human resources utilization. This is necessary because management is at the helms of every effective implementation of any policy. It means making use of both human and non-human resources to achieve an organizational goals and objectives. Human resources

utilization and management are very imperative in ensuring the success of any programme. Proper utilization of human resources entails actualization of management strategies needed for effective management of the programme.

In actualization of programmes in Primary Education, Headteachers are the actual personnel needed for effective implementation and management of such programmes. Headteachers are guarantors to the implementation of qualitative educational policies. They ought to possess some managerial strategies which are vital to their effectiveness in management of innovations in schools. They are expected to oversee the activities of both teaching and non-teaching staff, to ensure that they conform to general accepted practices. Managerial strategies, according to Lewis (1995), are the competencies and strategies through which a leader plans, controls and directs the activities of an organization including the effective use of resources. It means a body of skills and competencies a leader manifests in order to effectively direct the affairs of an organization. In order to carry out these enormous responsibilities, the school heads should possess the competences, behavioural traits and ability to enable them do the work. Ekemezie (2012) stated that for principals of schools to maintain quality instruction in schools, adequate supervision of instruction, delegation of duties to teachers, creating good enabling environment for staff, being democratic in dealing with staff and students etc. are imperative. In a related view, Mkpa (2014) added that headteachers are expected among other things to provide varieties of resources, directions and directives that may be necessary for teachers to implement the demands of the instructional process. In view of the expected managerial roles of administrators, Aghadiuno (2006) observed that schoolheads are not sufficiently engaged in instructional practices in their schools. Dibor (1985) also added that most principals of Nigerian schools lacked most attributes that will make them effective managers. Managerial skills are imperative because they will furnish administrators with skills necessary to discharge their duties effectively.

Problem of the Study

Child Friendly School (CFS) is a school that encourages intersectional programming, such as the inclusion of health, water, sanitation and nutrition components, broadening to safety and protection, inclusiveness, emergency preparedness (UNICEF, 2009). It is a school that is indeed friendly and conducive for effective learning. It integrates effectiveness, inclusiveness, safety, protectiveness, gender sensitivity, school and community partnership, in promoting teaching and learning of a child. Ekemezie (2015) added that management is at the core of the success of any innovative practice. Any innovation stands the risk of failing if adequate management practice was not

applied to it. In child friendly school, proper management is imperative so as to achieve the desired goal. Considering the unique qualities of CFS in fostering the worth of every child and its collaborative nature, one will ask whether school heads apply these managerial strategies in the management of schools, because up till now, it seems that the effectiveness of implementation of CFS is still questionable. The researchers therefore intended to find out the managerial strategies needed for effective management of CFS, the extent of utilization of these strategies, whether it anchors on location and also to find out the challenges to effective utilization of these strategies for effective management of child friendly schools in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the managerial strategies for quality management of CFS in Abia State?
2. To what extent do administrators utilize these strategies in quality management of CFS in Abia State?
3. What are the factors that hinder effective utilization of these strategies in Abia State?

Hypothesis

This hypothesis that was tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

Ho1: The extent of utilization of managerial strategies for quality management of CFS in Abia State is not significantly dependent on school location.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The population of the study was made up of eight hundred and fifty-five (855) school heads in all primary schools in 17 Local Government Areas in Abia State. It is made up of 247 in Urban areas and 608 in rural areas. A sample of 700 headteachers (200 from urban and 500 from rural) was gotten through proportionate stratified simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for this study was researchers-developed questionnaire named “Managerial Strategies for Quality Management of Child Friendly School Questionnaire (MSQMCFSQ)”. It was a 42 item questionnaire; it was made up of 3 research questions and one hypothesis. Research questions 1 and 3 were structured on a 4 – point rating scale of strongly agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point while research question 2 was structured on a 5 point scale of Very Great Extent (VGE) 5 points, Great Extent (GE) 4 points, Moderate Extent (ME) 3 points, Low Extent (LE) 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1 point.

The instrument was validated by two experts from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka for face and content validity. Their inputs and comments were effected by the researchers and used as final instrument. Reliability of the instrument was determined by using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and the co-efficient of 0.74 yielded was considered high and attested to the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to the respondents through the use of two research assistants. A total number of 700 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 698 copies were duly filled and used for the study, totalling 200 from Urban and 498 from rural areas. Data collected was analyzed using mean. For research question 1 and 3, the mean scores from 2.50 and above were regarded as accepted while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as rejected. For research question 2, mean scores of 3.00 and above were accepted while mean scores below 3.00 were rejected.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What are the managerial strategies for quality management of CFS in Abia State?

Table 1: Mean rating of Urban and Rural administrators on managerial strategies for quality management of CFS in Abia State?

S/No	Items	Urban		Rural	
		Mean	Decision	mean	Decision
1.	Proper planning of school curriculum leads to effective management of CFS	2.60	Accept	2.50	Accept
2.	Proper assigning of duties to teachers	3.01	Accept	3.21	Accept
3.	Proper controlling of the activities of both teachers and learners	3.70	Accept	3.51	Accept
4.	Proper discipline of teachers and learners	3.25	Accept	3.02	Accept
5.	Employing enough qualified teachers	2.06	Reject	2.21	Reject
6.	Ability to take good decision on time	2.81	Accept	2.93	Accept
7.	Adequate motivation of teachers	3.21	Accept	3.33	Accept
8.	Ability to communicate effectively to both teachers and learners	3.25	Accept	3.06	Accept
9.	Ability to coordinate all the activities of both teachers and learners	3.27	Accept	3.15	Accept
10.	Ability to give feedback to both government and parents	2.85	Accept	2.80	Accept
11.	Adequate evaluation of the progress of the programme	3.00	Accept	2.90	Accept
12.	Use of participating teaching techniques	2.51	Accept	2.60	Accept
13.	Ability to detect individual differences on learners	2.65	Accept	2.56	Accept
14.	Adequate supervision of instruction	3.05	Accept	3.06	Accept
15.	Adequate decentralization of authority	3.01	Accept	3.06	Accept
16.	Adequate specification of hierarchical order	3.26	Accept	3.21	Accept
17.	Adequate recognition of spirit of welfarism	3.01	Accept	3.16	Accept
Grand Mean		2.95		2.97	

Table 1 shows responses of urban and rural headteachers on the managerial strategies for quality management of CFS in Abia State. 16 items out of 17 items are accepted as the managerial strategies, because they had mean scores of 2.50 and above. Item 5, employing enough qualified teachers, was rejected by both urban and rural headteachers, as it recorded mean score below 2.50. This means that it is not in their place to employ staff that will man CFS in Abia State. Items that scored the highest mean for urban is item 3, that is proper controlling of the activities of both teachers and learners, it scored 3.70. While for rural, the item that scored the highest is item 14 (proper supervision of instruction) with a mean of 3.60. The grand mean scores of 2.95 and 2.97 for urban and rural schoolheads respectively attest to the fact that the above items are managerial strategies needed for effective implementation management of CFS in Abia State.

Research question 2: To what extent do administrators utilize these strategies in quality management of CFS in Abia State?

In table 2, looking at the above items for both urban and rural headteachers, one will observe that items 18, 19, 33 and 34 are at the range of 3 points and that means moderate extent, items 22, 27 and 28 were at the range of 1 point and that means very low extent while all others are at the range of 2 points and that means low extent. This result means that headteachers plan curriculum, assign duties to teachers, based on areas of specialization and at the same time recognize the place of love and oneness among themselves but that does not mean that all other strategies are utilized. The grand mean of 2.41 and 2.23 for both of them attest to the fact that these strategies were utilized to a low extent.

Table 2: Mean responses of urban and rural administrators on the extent of utilization of these strategies in quality management of CFS in Abia State

S/No	Items	Urban			Rural		
		mean	Response	Decision	mean	Response	Decision
18	Proper planning of school curriculum leads to effective management of CFS	3.01	ME	A	3.06	ME	A
19	Proper assigning of duties to teachers	3.00	ME	A	3.10	ME	A
20	Proper controlling of the activities of both teachers and learners	2.61	LE	R	2.05	LE	R
21	Proper discipline of teachers and learners	2.43	LE	R	2.01	LE	R
22	Employing enough qualified teachers	1.30	VLE	R	1.00	VLE	R
23	Ability to take good decision on time.	2.33	LE	R	2.21	LE	R
24	Adequate motivation of teachers	2.52	LE	R	2.26	LE	R
25	Ability to communicate effectively to both teachers and learners	2.50	LE	R	2.42	LE	R
26	Ability to coordinate all the activities of both teachers and learners	2.56	LE	R	2.36	LE	R
27	Ability to give feedback to both government and parents	1.53	VLE	R	1.22	VLE	R
28	Adequate evaluation of the progress of the programme	1.44	VLE	R	1.06	VLE	R
29	Use of participating teaching techniques	2.22	LE	R	2.11	LE	R
30	Ability to detect individual differences on learners	2.43	LE	R	2.37	LE	R
31	Adequate supervision of instruction	2.46	LE	R	2.14	LE	R
32	Adequate decentralization of authority	2.51	LE	R	2.36	LE	R
33	Adequate specification of hierarchical order	3.01	ME	A	3.09	ME	A
34.	Adequate recognition of spirit of welfarism	3.05	ME	A	3.07	ME	A
	Grand Mean	2.41			2.23		

Research Question 3: What are the factors that hinder effective utilization of these strategies in CFS schools in Abia State?

Table 3 presents the responses of urban and rural headteachers on factors that hinder effective utilization of these strategies. Both urban and rural administrators agreed that all the 8 items are factors that hinder effective utilization of management strategies because they recorded mean above 2.50 and were accepted. The item that score the

highest by urban headteachers is item 37 “lack of proper funding” with mean of 3.92 while rural headteachers say that though their schools are not adequately funded, their major problems is item 41, “inadequate supervisory personnel from Ministry of Education” with mean of 3.95. The grand mean scores of 3.28 and 3.76 for urban and rural headteachers respectively also attest to the fact that these items hinder effective utilization of managerial strategies for quality management of CFS schools in Abia State.

Table 3: Mean responses of urban and rural administrators on the factors that hinder effective utilization of these strategies

S/No	Items	Urban		Rural	
		mean	Decision	mean	Decision
35	Lack of provision of adequate infrastructural facilities	3.22	A	3.51	A
36	Lack of in-service training for school heads	2.85	A	3.82	A
37	Lack of proper funding	3.92	A	3.93	A
38	Lack of adequate motivation	3.86	A	3.89	A
39	Lack of proper sensitization	3.15	A	3.68	A
40	Inability to accept innovation	3.26	A	3.45	A
41	Inadequate supervisory personnel from Ministry of Education	3.26	A	3.95	A
42	Lack of adequate knowledge of managerial skills	2.72	A	3.81	A
	Grand mean	3.28		3.76	

Ho1: The extent of utilization of managerial strategies for quality management of CFS in Abia State is not significantly dependent of school location.

Table 4: Z-test statistics of the extent of utilization of managerial strategies in effective management of CFS in Abia State

Location	N	mean	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-tab	Significance	Decision
Urban	200	2.41	0.38	696	1.22	1.96	0.05	Accept
Rural	498	2.23	0.31					

Z- cal < Z-tab = Accept

In table 4, the calculated value of Z of 1.22 at 696 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is less than the tabulated value 1.96; it means that the null hypothesis is

accepted. This therefore means that the extent of utilization of managerial strategies is not significantly dependent on school location.

Discussion of results

The importance of enhancement of appropriate strategies to the management of CFS cannot be over-emphasized, knowing the important of these schools to a child in this dispensation. In research question 1, on managerial strategies for effective management of CFS models, 16 out of 17 items were accepted as managerial strategies as shown in their mean scores above 2.50. This finding is in support of the view of Maduewesi (2005) who opines that proper planning of school curriculum will help reduce the people's maladjusted problems. Maduewesi also says that instilling discipline among staff and learners helped in effective management of schools. The finding is also in agreement with Ekemezie (2012), who opined that for principals to maintain quality instruction in schools, adequate supervision of instruction, delegation of duties to teachers, creating good enabling environment etc are imperative. Inadequate supervision and lack of proper control of teachers and students lead to non-challant attitude on their part. This is also in agreement with the work of Sharma (2006) who said that authority decentralization leads to improved line of communication as well as more skills for teachers and the administrator in the collective management of the school.

In research question 2, on the extent of utilization of these managerial strategies by both urban and rural headteachers, the responses revealed that they are utilizing these strategies to a low extent, except for items 18, 19, 33 and 34 that are moderate extent. There are proper planning of school curriculum, proper assigning of duties to teachers, adequate specification of hierarchical order and adequate recognition of spirit of welfarism. All these findings are in support of the findings of Dibor (1985), who said that principals of Nigerian schools lacked most attributes that will make them effective managers. Ayodele (1992) observed that headteachers do plan the curriculum according to the specification from the Ministry of Education and assign duties to teachers based on their areas of specialization and seniority, but that does not mean that they utilized all other skills. Most headteachers are ignorant of what it takes to manage CFS models. Also in table 4, it reveals that the null hypothesis was upheld that the extent of utilization of these managerial strategies was not significantly dependent on the location of schools. Ekemezie (2012) earlier found out that majority of schools in rural areas were badly affected in provision of maintenance of school facilities. Most school facilities in rural areas were grossly inadequate and few ones in existence were

dilapidated; it does not mean that location affect utilization of these managerial strategies, location is not a barrier.

In research question 3, on factors that hinder effective utilization, all the items recorded acceptable mean scores. This is in support of Aghadiuno (2006), who stated that school heads are not sufficiently engaged in instructional practices in their schools. Most headteachers have pre-requisite qualifications, but cannot defend them due to their training. Aghadiuno also added that unconducive physical environment, including infrastructural facilities, are among the problems that hinder the administration of schools. He also listed things like poor and lack of payment of salaries, poor and dilapidated buildings, and furniture, inadequate findings etc. All these are in agreement with the findings of this study.

Conclusion

Child Friendly Schools Model is a school model so arranged to put smiles on the faces of children from all walks of life not minding the impediments. It is a school model that accommodates the transmission of worthwhile knowledge to a child not minding the societal and cultural limitation. For quality education and positive learning to prevail in primary schools, education needs to be child friendly in order to produce the best out of the child. Not minding the impediments, the school heads should master all it takes to make sure that the aim of this model is achieved.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this work, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should ensure proper funding of CFS models.
2. Adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided.
3. Government should organize an enlightenment campaign for the public on the importance of CFS.
4. In-service training for both headteachers and teachers should be provided.
5. Adequate motivation of headteachers and teachers should be provided.
6. Intensive monitoring and supervision services by personnel from Ministry of Education should be embarked upon.

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