

Financial Resources as Correlates of 21st Century Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study adopted correlational design to assess financial resources as correlates of 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population and sample of this study were 96 and 48 principals respectively across public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River, Nigeria. "Financial Resources and Principals Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (FRPAEQ)" was the instrument used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha method, the reliability index ranged from 0.76 to 0.85 and this was regarded as high enough to justify the use of the instrument for data collection. Data gathered were coded and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result of the analysis indicated that financial resources in terms of government funding, school fee charges and Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) levy significantly related to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness. From the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that the State Government should ensure that there is improvement in the allocation of fund to public secondary schools to facilitate principals' administrative effectiveness.

Keywords: financial resources, government funding, school fee charges, parent teachers association, administrative effectiveness

Introduction

Secondary school principals are the administrative heads who are expected to execute their administrative responsibilities effectively in a bid to accomplish the goals of secondary education. In this 21st century, it is obvious that there are changes in the school administration with respect to communication and record keeping. The 21st century secondary school principals are expected to possess technological and digital literacy skills in such areas as

communication and record keeping in the school system. By implication, in the 21st century, principals' administrative effectiveness may be manifested in their ability, competency, and willingness to explore the integration of digital technologies in their communication and record keeping processes. Effective communication by secondary school principals is a prerequisite tool in school community relations. Secondary school principals need to communicate effectively with students, staff members as well as parents regarding school programmes, activities, challenges, strength, weakness, opportunities and threats. In the contemporary educational system, communication has gone beyond traditional methods of face-to-face approach as well as paper and pen. This is because the world is a global village connected by electronic communication system in the midst of emerging technologies (Asuquo et al., 2024). Electronic communication is any type of communication through electronic medium which includes email, phone calls, video conferencing, short message services (SMS) and instant messaging.

Also, from the global perspective, modern record keeping in the school system has gone beyond the traditional method of using filing cabinet for keeping of school records (Maluleka et al., 2018; Bonfield et al., 2020). Ambrocio (2024) noted that effective record-keeping in the school system tracks students' achievement, enables stakeholder communication, and guides evidence-based decision-making. Record keeping in schools is crucial for administrative activities, historical purposes, academic programmes and for reference purpose. Again, effective school administration can only be achieved through appropriate record keeping (Olalere et al., 2021). However, Ambrocio further stressed that inadequate financial resource is a major factor militating against effective record keeping in the secondary school system

Financial resources are the funds available to facilitate all educational programmes, activities, operations and administrative activities on daily basis in the school system. In this context, these resources include government's funding, school fees and Parent Teachers' Association levy. Government's funding has to do with allocation of funds to educational sector by the government (Local government, State government and Federal government). School fees are the payments made by the students through their guardians. Parent Teachers' Association is another financial resource from members of the school community particularly the parents. Simasiku (2022) noted that despite government's effort such as the introduction of Free Primary Education made in Zambia with a view to ensure community's direct involvement and ownership of development projects in their locality in education, the extent of parents' input in pupil achievement through PTA remains obscure in many primary schools. As such, the government emphasizes that to ensure the effectiveness of Free Primary Education,

community support for school community relationships, competence and professionalism, infrastructure and discipline of pupils are necessary.

The Ministry of Education stresses community involvement and participation in form of financial resources and in kind to support the government's allocation. There is no doubt that inadequate financial resource is one of the greatest challenges in educational system. Nevertheless, in educational organizations, just like other organizations that are not educationally oriented, finance has been seen as the major factor in the provision of educational services and products all over the world (Asuquo et al. 2024). Finance remains the lifeblood and crucial resource in all educational institutions (Ekpoh & Asuquo, 2021). This is because, availability and adequacy of other resources in educational system is dependent on the provision of adequate finance, hence the need for administration of school finance (Asuquo et al., 2024). Ekpoh and Asuquo (2021) stressed that financial resources are indispensable in the provision of quality for sustainable development. Financial resources in educational system is meant to ensure that the necessary school projects are executed, programmes and activities are effectively implemented, human and material resources are made available.

Empirically, Farayibi and Folarin (2021) in a study on "does government education expenditure affect educational outcomes," found that the effect of government spending on education outcomes was driven by the measure of educational outcome and that government spending in Africa had focused mainly on primary and secondary education. The authors also stressed that government funding in education is the most important responsibility of government in the educational sector. This is to ensure promotion of educational quality provision. Educational expenditures are considered as investment which forms one of the tangible inputs. Proper ratio of expenditures can be maintained by keeping a balance between spending on teachers and instructional processes as well as expenditures on management and pupils (Yusuf et al., 2024). In a comparative review of education funding across geopolitical zones in Nigeria, Agbai and Okafor (2021) drew a nexus between Nigeria's budgetary allocation to education and some selected African countries. Education funding in Nigeria was found to be below the UNESCO's advised 15%-20% of the government's annual budget to education. The study also identified low funding of education as the primary driver of poverty and inequality in Nigeria.

In another study, Jacob and Samuel (2020) examined the challenges facing the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Among other challenges was inadequate funding that was identified as a crucial factor militating against implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. This culminates into inadequate infrastructural facilities and inadequate

professional teachers. The authors also identified institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenge, lack of continuity in commitment to policy implementation, political instability, poor policy formulation, poor relationship between policy designer and policy implementer as challenges preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. To address these challenges, Jacob and Samuel (2020) stressed the need for adequate funding of education to enhance adequate provision of infrastructural facilities. Ahmodu and Egbewole (2022) also examined educational budget allocation and economic growth in Nigeria and found that the government's capital expenditure has optimistic weight on economic growth in Nigeria as well as government recurrent expenditure having a low significant association with economic growth in Nigeria.

With respect to Parent Teachers' Association levy, Omolade-Adedara and Abiodun-Oyebanji, (2023) noted that Parent-Teacher Association is a formal organization made up of parents, teachers and staff which intends to facilitate parents' participation in school activities to facilitate effectiveness in the administration of public secondary schools. Omolade-Adedara and Abiodun-Oyebanji (2023) investigated Parent-Teacher Association factors in the administration of public secondary schools in Ondo Central Senatorial District of Ondo State. The findings showed that the level of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ondo Central Senatorial District was low, and that there was insignificant relationship between PTA roles, PTA functionality and administration of public secondary schools. However, the result indicated significant relationship between PTA leadership and administration of public secondary schools. In another study by Simasiku (2022) *to examine parent-teacher association intervention strategies and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Irepodun Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria*, it was found that the level of parent-teacher association intervention strategies was high. Again, *Simasiku's study indicated* a significant relationship between parent-teacher association intervention strategies and administrative effectiveness. The result of a study by Simasiku (2022) to investigate the effectiveness of Parent Teacher Association in the management of Free Primary Education found that in spite of PTA doing many activities towards development of school facilities, very little was done on effective management of free primary education.

Olaifa et al. (2024) noted that mismanagement of school funds by the principals could give rise to poor students' performance, since it might slow down the acquisition of essential materials for teaching and learning. Mestry (2020) noted that School Government Bodies (SGBs) are compelled to charge parents school fees as a means of supplementing subsidies from the State Government. Mestry stressed that if school fees are effectively and efficiently managed, the consequence will be in high learner achievement. By implication, school

principals have to ensure prudence in financial management. The importance of principals has made scholars to stressed that the role of principals in the secondary school system is inevitable (Akeke et al., 2015; Osim et al., 2012).

In a study to analyze the relationship between principals' fund management strategies and school administrative effectiveness, Olaifa et al. (2024) discovered that principals who kept accurate records of expenditure, had an average level of effectiveness, and had a significant influence on fund management in secondary schools. Amirize and Ololube (2018) investigated fund management strategies for effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State and found that, there was significant relationships between principals fund management strategies, accountability and effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. Although studies have been conducted in the areas of government funding, PTA levy and school fee charges by previous scholars, studies that specifically focused on financial resources as correlates of 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria, seem to be scarce in the literature, hence, the need for this study to be conducted.

Statement of the problem

The 21st century principals are expected to be administratively effective in such areas as communication and record keeping in line with global best practices as evidenced in application of digital tools. Principals are expected to maintain effective line of communication within and outside the school community as well as ensuring that school records are effectively and adequately kept for easy retrieval when the need arises.

Nevertheless, some public secondary school principals seem to be ineffective with regards to utilization of digital tools for timely communication of school programmes and activities. Principals' poor communication manifests when teachers, students, parents, education agencies and organizations are not well informed on time about school programmes and activities. In most cases, teachers' poor attitude to instructional programmes has always been attributed to principals' poor communication pattern and administrative ineffectiveness.

Also, cases of some secondary school principals not digitalizing record keeping methods in the 21st century is obvious in public secondary schools. Some of them are still in the habit of relying on traditional method of using filing cabinet for record keeping as opposed to application of digital tools. The traditional method of record keeping has been observed as one of the factors that bring about delayed decision making in the school system. Could these problems be attributed to inadequate financial resources? It is on this basis that the researchers investigated the relationship between financial resources and 21st century principals'

administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine financial resources and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the relationship between:

1. Government's funding and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.
2. Parent Teachers' Association levy and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.
3. School fees charges and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Research questions

1. To what extent does government's funding relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness?
2. What is the relationship between Parent Teachers' Association levy and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness?
3. To what extent do school fees charges relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

Ho1: Government's funding does not significantly relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Parent Teachers' Association levy and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Ho3: School fees charges do not significantly relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is correlational research design. This design was considered appropriate because it is suitable in establishing the relationship between variables of a study. The population of this study was 96 principals across all the public secondary schools in the study area while the sample was 48 principals randomly selected from the population of the study.

To collect data for the study, an instrument was developed by the researchers and was entitled: "Financial Resources and Principals Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (FRPAEQ).

The instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A of the instrument measured Financial Resources in terms government funding, PTA levy and school fees charges. Section B was designed to measure 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in such areas as communication and record keeping, but measured holistically. The questionnaire was designed such that the respondents were required to tick Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) against each item. For the positively worded items, the scores for Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively while for the negatively worded items, the scores for Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management and another one expert in Test and Measurement from the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar. Section A of the instrument was responded to by the principals while Section B was responded to by the teachers.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the researchers administered both sections of the instrument on 50 respondents who were not involved in the study. Using Cronbach Alpha method, the reliability index ranged from 0.76 to 0.85. This range was regarded as being high enough to justify the use of the instrument for data collection. The instrument was administered, by the researchers and two research assistants, to the respondents in their various schools after due permission from their principals. Data gathered were coded and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics.

Presentation of results

Ho1: Government's funding does not significantly relate to the 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between government's funding and the 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness (N = 48)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig.
Government's funding	48	13.64	2.50		
Principals' administrative effectiveness	48	22.76	12.47	.78*	.001

*p<.05

The result as presented in Table 1 reveals that government's funding significantly related to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross

River State. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, government's funding does significantly relate to the 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Ho2: Parent Teachers' Association levy does not significantly relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) levy and 21st century principals' administrative (N=48)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig.
PTA levy	48	14.08	2.38		
				.80*	.000
Principals' administrative effectiveness	48	20.76	12.47		

*p<.05

The result as presented in Table 2 reveals that PTA levy significantly related to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that Parent Teachers' Association levy significantly relates to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Ho3: School fees charges do not significantly relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between school fees charges and 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness (N=48)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig.
School fees charges	48	13.31	2.83		
				.82*	.002
Principals' administrative effectiveness	48	20.76	12.47		

*p<.05

The result as presented in Table 3 reveals that school fees charges significantly relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected; indicating that school fees charges significantly relate to 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Discussion of the findings

The first finding of this study is that government's funding significantly related to the 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This means that the more the State government funds secondary school, the more the 21st century principals will become effective in their administrative roles such as communication, record keeping and instructional leadership. This means that with adequate funding of secondary school, the school principals in the 21st century will be provided with the necessary digital tools to facilitate their administrative effectiveness in such areas as communication and record keeping in line with global best practices. This finding is in line with Farayibi and Folarin (2021) who stressed that government's funding of education is to improve and facilitate educational outcome and effective school administration.

The second finding of this study is that Parents Teachers' Association levy significantly related to the 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This means that when secondary school principals are able to manage PTA' levy in their respective schools, this might help the in raising additional funds to run their administration effectively. The result of this finding supports Omolade-Adedara and Abiodun-Oyebanji (2023) who found a relationship between PTA functionality and administration, leadership and administrative effectiveness of public secondary schools in Ondo Central Senatorial District. The finding is also in line with Simasiku (2022) who found that the administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State was high due to the effort of PTA.

The result arising from the third hypothesis is that school fee charges significantly related to the 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This means that for secondary school principals to improve upon their administrative responsibilities in the 21st century and to ensure administrative effectiveness in the school system, principals have to ensure prudent management of school fee charges in their respective schools. The result of the current study is also in line with Amirize and Ololube (2018) who found a significant relationship between principals' fund management strategies, accountability and effective administration of secondary schools.

Conclusion

Financial resources are very important in educational organizations, particularly in the area of school administration. It is expected that for 21st century school principals to be effective in their administrative role performance, financial resources are inevitable. Financial resources are the funds available to facilitate all administrative role performance, specific educational programmes, activities and operations on daily basis in the school system to align

with global best practice that is dominated by digital tools as opposed to the traditional approaches in communication and in record keeping in the secondary school. These resources as used in this study are government's funding, Parent Teachers' Association levy and school fees charges.

Recommendations

1. The State Government should ensure that there is improvement in the allocation of funds to secondary school system to facilitate 21st century principals' administrative effectiveness.
2. Secondary school principals in conjunction with community members should ensure that PTA levy is effectively utilized to accomplish the purpose for which it was formed to perform without interference of any kind.
3. Secondary school principals should ensure school fee charges are effectively used for school administration. In doing this, there must be transparency and accountability.

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