

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS IN NIGERIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

BY

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Abstract

Principals' administrative tasks are indispensable instruments that enhance educational objectives and goals. This paper is therefore designed to look into the challenges and way forward of principals' administrative tasks in Nigerian secondary schools. It focuses on theoretical framework, principals' administrative tasks in Nigerian public secondary schools, dimensions of principals' administrative tasks in schools and challenges facing principals' administrative tasks in Nigerian secondary schools. Based on this, it is suggested that, Federal and state governments should make and provide adequate infrastructural facilities and more instructional materials like laboratories, library chairs, table, desks, water, electricity, ICT facilities, classrooms, administrative offices, libraries, laboratories and whiteboard in Nigerian secondary schools for effective teaching to be improved as well as administration of the schools.

Introduction

Leadership is very important in any organization because without it, the goals of the organization may be difficult to attain. It is the school principal or the leader of an organization that mobilizes human and material resources and creates the necessary climate for productivity. (Arikewuyo, 2019) opined that educational leaders or school principal provides direction and advice on the development of learning, teaching and curriculum. He maintained that the school principal's diagnosis educational problems, and encourages professional development and teaching improvement. School leadership is very vital to the actualization of the school objectives by the school principals. Principals' administrative task is a major factor that determines the success and progress in Nigerian secondary schools. Principals' administrative tasks are the major keys to success in every school organization because it can either influence the climate and progress of the school positively or negatively (Ajayi, 2019). Without effective principals' administrative tasks, even a school full of talented teachers will surely drift without purpose. It is therefore the key to achieving collective excellence. It is the school principal who most greatly affects the school organisational progress and provides direction, motivation and inspiration for the school (Dubi, 2019). In other words, the success of any institution depends largely on the ability of the school principals to maintain a conducive environment for the development of its school members.

According to Lunenbury and Omestein (2018), principals are perceived effective and competent when they focus on both organizational goals and staff members' need. Davis (2018) stated that there are two important elements of a competent and effective school leadership. Firstly, establishing a school vision and fostering positive interpersonal relationship, secondly acknowledging that developing a school vision takes time and being capable of determining and identifying means of solving the problems for the improvement of the school system. Secondary school education is an organized education for children leaving junior secondary school. Secondary school education is the post-primary school education designed for preparing the students for career life. Secondary school education is the education that links the primary school and the higher education. Dubi (2019) viewed secondary school education as education that follows immediately after primary education and before tertiary education. It is also referred to as

post-primary school. It is the second stage in formal education. It is an education for the adolescent years, that is, about 12 to 18 years of age.

School administration according to Peretomode (2003) is the component part of the management concerned with facilitating accomplishment of the objectives of an organization like school through the systematic management of constraints and careful utilization of the available limited resources like human, material, finance and so on. Okeke (2014) stated that secondary school administration as involving the provision and maintenance of the necessary manpower to those who teach children with a view to bring about the desired change in the children's behaviour. The school principals face numerous administrative problems which militate against operative running of their schools. These include inadequate and low quality teachers, inadequate funding to maintain schools and paying teachers' salaries, intrusion by parents. Others are lack of accommodation for students, indiscipline behaviours on the part of teachers and students and uncooperative assertiveness of other school staff. Where the heads fail to arrest these situations and problems, the smooth running of secondary school is conceded.

Principals' administrative task is the responsibility for administering the education sector in Nigerian schools is shared among the Federal, State and local governments. Thus, in the country's constitution, education is on the concurrent list, but the Federal Government is empowered to regulate all its sectors, engage in policy formation and ensure quality control. Also, the provisions of the constitution allow each tier of government to focus its responsibilities mainly on a sector of education. The Federal Government is involved directly in tertiary education. The states take care of secondary education, while the local governments handle primary education. Public secondary schools in Nigeria are owned by the government. The Federal government colleges are owned by the federal government while the government secondary schools spread across the states are owned by the state government. The state-level education ministries are responsible for the development and implementation of educational policies, management and supervision of educational institutions in their respective states. Specifically, the responsibilities for maintaining all public elementary and secondary schools are vested in the education ministry through school principal. Such responsibilities include: determining the salaries of teachers; recruitment, appointment, promotion and discipline of staff; and provision of guidelines on the establishment of new schools and training and re-training of teaching and non-teaching staff.

School administrators also known as principals are appointed by the ministries of education to head the public secondary schools across the country. Appointment of principals or school administrators is based on the seniority in service. In Nigeria, the position of principal-ship is based on experience and promotion. This is because the Nigerian civil service relies mostly on years of experience and promotion to elevate people from one cadre to the other, especially from the classroom to the management levels (Dubi 2019). School administrators or principals are appointed to help in the realization of the objectives of the schools. The administrative task of the school principals include: administration of teachers, coordination of student programme, resources allocation and physical resources application, and school community relationship management. Ornstein (2018) viewed the administrative tasks of the principal as setting instructional directions, sensitive, result-oriented, team work, judgement, organizational ability, effective communication, development of others and developing self. Dubi (2019) submitted that all the administrative tasks of school principal discharges daily are geared towards the fulfillment of the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria. Secondary education occupies a very strategic position in any nation's educational system.

Theoretical Framework

Administrative Management Theories

Whereas scientific management focuses on jobs of individual workers, administrative management concentrates on the management of an entire organization. The primary contributors to the field of administrative management were Henri Fayol, Fayol claimed that all managers perform five basic functions: planning, organizing, commanding,

coordinating, and controlling. The 14 principles of Henri Fayol which was propounded in (1916) a French mining engineer and industrialist outlined a number of principles that go far toward during the essence of administrative theory movement. These are:

1. **Division of Labour:** The principle prescribes to division of work or specialisation leads to higher productivity because it would enable one to work at activities in which he is comparatively highly skilled.
2. **Authority and Responsibility:** Authority is the right to give orders. A member of an organisation is responsible for the accomplishment of the organisation's goal of his position. Appropriate sanctions are required to encourage good and to discourage poor performance.
3. **Discipline:** There must be discipline among organisation members to ensure stability and hence enhanced productivity. This however requires:
 - a) that there be good superiors at all levels:
 - b) that agreements are as clear and tire as possible:
 - c) that sanctions are judiciously applied.
4. **Unity of Command:** In order to reduce confusion and conflict in an organisation. each member should receive orders from one and be responsible to only one superior.
4. **Unity of Direction:** All members of an organisation should have unity of direction. That is, they should all work towards the achievement of the organisation's goals.
6. **Remuneration of Personnel:** Fayol believes that workers should be given pay for their work, and that wages or salary should be fair and utilised as a reward for good performance rather than exploitation.
7. **Subordination of Individual Interest to the General Interest:** In an organisation the interest of one worker or group of workers should not take precedence over that of the enterprises. Reconciliation of interest can be achieved in three ways: (1) "Firmness and good example on the part of superiors, (2) agreements as fair as possible and (3) constant, supervision" (Fayol, 1949)
8. **Centralization and Decentralization:** This principle prescribes that there should be a good between centralization and decentralization. The management should know when to centralise and when to decentralise authority and power to ensure increased productivity.
9. **Scalar Chain:** There is a scalar-chain or hierarchy dictated by the principle of unity of command linking all members of the organisation. However, in large organisations, following this path is often laborious.
10. **Order:** Fayol suggested that there should be a place for everything and everything in its place. Order brings about stability and hence increased productivity in organisation.
11. **Equity;** Justice and fairness should prevail in the organisation.
12. **Stability of Tenure:** The organisation should provide security of tenure for its members. This is required for an employee to get used to new work and succeed in doing it well. Job security should therefore reward good performance.
13. **Initiative:** Members in an organisation should not be treated like robots. They should be free to use their initiative to think out and execute plans at all levels. The manager who can do this and get others to do it is far superior to one without this ability.
14. **Espirit-de-corps:** This principle emphasizes harmony, unity and togetherness in organisation. This is based on the principle that unity is strength - superior performance comes from pride, loyalty and a sense of belonging.

Relevance of this theory to this paper is that, the school principals represent as the head and director of all teaching, learning and administrative activities in schools. If these managerial functions mentioned in theory above are highly and adequately implemented in the principals' administrative tasks, educational objectives and goals will be attained at the end of the day.

Administrative Functions

They coined the acronym POSDCORB, which identified seven functions of management: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting:

Planning involves developing an outline of the things that must be accomplished and the methods of accomplishing them. It attempts to forecast future actions and directions of the organization.

Organising - in order to efficiency and increased performance in an organisation, the management should organise both men and materials in appropriate proportions. The organisation of humans fall into a hierarchical order whereby superiors with authority sits at the top and each level below with less authority sits below the hierarchy.

Staffing - This is an all important activity in the organisation, i.e. organising labour to perform the duties laid down for them. Staffing therefore refers to the recruitment and training of staff and maintaining very favourable working conditions.

Directing - This is the continuous task of leading the organisation. Workers must be directed to ensure efficiency in organisation.

Coordinating - Management should be involved in the coordination of the activities of all the various departments to ensure efficiency and stability in the organisation. To coordinate activities implies the fostering of cooperation between different departments in the organisation.

Reporting - Here, one has to keep the superiors informed of the amount of work done through reports and records. This is necessary in order to know areas of weaknesses and strength.

Budgeting - This refers to the preparation of estimates of the proposed incomes and expenditure of the organisation, usually over a period of one year.

Qualities of Principal as a School Administrator

Principals have difficult jobs. As the face and head of the school, they are responsible for the education each student under their care receives, and they set the tone of the school. They decide on staffing decisions and student discipline issues. Therefore, effective qualities of principal as an administrator are as follows;

Provides Support: Good teachers need to feel supported. They need to believe that when they have an issue in their classroom, they will get the help they need. This situation has not changed much in the past two decades. This is not to say that principals should blindly back teachers without using their judgment. Teachers are human beings who make mistakes, too. Nonetheless, the overall feeling from the principal should be one of belief and support.

Highly Visible: A good principal must be seen. They must be out in the hallways, interacting with students, participating in pep rallies, and attending sports matches. Their presence must be such that students know who they are and also feel comfortable approaching and interacting with them.

Effective Listener: Much of a principal's time is spent listening to others: assistant principals, teachers, students, parents, and staff. Therefore, they need to learn and practice active listening skills every single day. They need to be present in each conversation despite the other hundred or so things that are calling for their attention. They also need to hear what is being said to them before coming up with their response.

Problem-Solver: Problem-solving is the core of the principal's job. In many cases, new principals are brought into a school because it is facing tough issues. It might be that the school's test scores are low, that it has a high number of discipline issues, or that it is facing financial issues due to poor leadership by the previous administrator. New or established, any principal will be asked to help with many difficult and challenging situations. Therefore, they need to hone their problem-solving skills by learning to prioritize and provide concrete steps to solve the issues at hand.

Empowers Others: A good principal, just like a good CEO or another executive, should want to give their employees a sense of empowerment. Teachers are typically in charge of their individual classrooms, many feel powerless to affect the ethos of the entire school. Principals need to be open and responsive to teacher suggestions for school improvement.

Has a Clear Vision: A principal is the leader of the school. Ultimately, they have the responsibility for everything that goes on there. Their attitude and vision need to be loud and clear. They might find it useful to create their own

vision statement which they post for all to see and must consistently enforce their own educational philosophy into the school setting.

Fair and Consistent: Just like an effective teacher, principals must be fair and consistent. They need to have the same rules and procedures for all staff and students. They cannot show favoritism. They cannot allow their personal feelings or loyalties to cloud their judgment.

Discreet: Administrators must be discreet. They deal with sensitive issues each day including:

- Health issues of students and staff
- Difficult home situations for students
- Hiring and firing decisions
- Teacher evaluations
- Disciplinary issues with staff

Dedicated: A good administrator must be dedicated to the school and the belief that all decisions must be made in terms of the best interests of the students. A principal needs to embody school spirit. Just like being highly visible, it needs to be obvious to students that the principal loves the school and has their best interests at heart. Principals should normally be the first to arrive and the last to leave the school. This type of dedication can be difficult to maintain but pays enormous dividends with staff, students, and society at large.

Standard Bearer for the School Mission: Championing the school mission is an important quality of an effective principal as they should work with the school community to create, refine, and articulate a vision and mission of excellence for all. The principal is responsible for modeling the behavior necessary to achieve the mission, demonstrating integrity and perseverance through challenges and humility in success. They should keep the vision at the forefront of the work, continually elevating it and insisting on continued work toward its fulfillment.

Equity Crusader: The school is not a place only for those students that easily find success within the traditional setting. An effective principal understands that all means all and is unrelenting in the pursuit of behaviors and practices that support each student's success. Effective principals should not shy away from confronting policies and practices that obstruct the success of individual students or student groups. In fact, they should actively seek out and disrupt structures and practices that have historically limited the success of particular student groups.

Instructionally Focused: An institution of learning, the effective principal should have a deep understanding of quality instruction and assessment practices. Effective principals should use their understanding to create a relentless focus on teaching and learning, holding themselves and the teachers accountable for providing high-quality instruction for students every day.

Communicator: Effective principals should also be excellent communicators. They need to be able to clearly communicate thoughts verbally and through writing as well as telling stories to illustrate the successes and challenges of the school in order to build support and create energy for continuous improvement.

Change Agent: Like the surface of an ocean, a school is an ever-changing environment. An effective principal should be a change agent, elevating and leveraging the moral purpose of the school to create an environment of inquiry and continuous improvement. An effective principal embraces challenges and understands that problems are opportunities for substantial growth and lasting improvement. As a change agent, an effective principal is adept at taking on challenges and forging coherence out of ambiguity, creating and sharing knowledge that will support the learning for teachers and students

Strategic Thinkers: Effective principals should also thoughtfully work to predict and understand future circumstances and context. They seek to understand the connections between initiatives and the numerous ways, both intended and unintended, that considered actions will impact individuals and the organization as a whole. Effective principals proactively arrange people and plan school actions to support the achievement of the mission in the most efficient and effective manner.

Process Oriented, Effective Manager: The importance of being a good manager is not always elevated to the level it deserves. In addition to being a strong instructional leader, an effective school principal should be process oriented and an effective manager. Effective principals understand that order and structure create stability and predictability within the school. This includes student behavior expectations that maintain a safe and orderly environment as well as processes and practices for emergency response, staff absences, and general workplace expectations.

Collaborator: The effective principal, while possessing expertise in teaching, learning, assessment, and school operations, understands that collaboration is key to organizational effectiveness. By creating structures and support for systemic collaboration and professional learning, effective principals share leadership and foster the growth of leaders within the school.

Reflective Learner: Effective principals also understand that they are always in the process of becoming the next, improved version of themselves. They are continually exploring and learning about new instructional practices, educational research, and leadership. They should also be perpetually curious about students and staff, school practices and their own actions.

Relationship Builder: Of course, none of the qualities above are effective without relationships. Therefore, relationship building is one of the most important effective principal qualities. Building relationships requires establishing trust and exhibiting positive regard for others. Relationship building requires a genuine interest in the lives of others.

Principals' Administrative Tasks in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools

The school administrator/principal is an individual appointed to head educational institutions. The principal is known for heading the secondary schools in Nigeria. School administrator or principal is that professional individual saddled with the functions of planning, organizing, controlling and supervision human and materials resources of the school with the objective of using the resources to actualize the objectives of the school through effective principals' administrative tasks. Ikgbusi and Iheanacho, (2021) observed that Heads of secondary schools are tasked with the administrative tasks in order to attain the educational objectives. The success of secondary school education rests on a good administration involving the local communities, adequate and well qualified teachers, adequate funds for infrastructural facilities, together with interested parents supplying children's material needs and bringing home training to supplement the efforts of the teachers at school. For heads of secondary schools to succeed in the administrative tasks of secondary schools, they need the collaboration and sustenance of the parents, teachers, the post-primary schools service commission and the ministry of education. School administrators are strong member of the educational institutions that can that either make or develop and mar academic progress of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Administrative tasks of principals set the academic tone and work actively with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, formulate mission statements and establish performance goals and objectives. School principals evaluate teachers, visit classrooms, observe teaching methods, review instructional objectives and examines learning materials (Olachukwu, 2018). Dare (2019) enumerated the following as the administrative tasks of principals in Nigerian secondary schools, cause things to happen and know what he wants to happen, exercise responsible stewardship over resources and turn them into purposeful account; promote effectiveness and search for continual improvement, be accountable for the performance of the unit he is managing and set a climate conducive to enable people give their best. Etuk (2017) outlined the following under listed administrative tasks of school principals such as school administration as staff personnel administration, student personnel administration, finance and physical resources, and school community relationship management.

Udoh and Akpa (2018) summarized the administrative tasks of school principal as follows to

- prepare annual budget of the school
- liaison between the school and educational agencies and organizations.
- coordinate Parents-Teachers Association's activities.

- initiate and encourage innovations.
- supervise the activities of all school staff and students.
- design the physical plant for the school.
- organize the curriculum and its contents.
- select the school textbooks, materials and equipment.
- determine the services to aid teaching and learning activities.
- maintain effective lines of communication within the school and with outside agencies.
- maintain a high level of discipline and policy formulation governing curricular and co-curricular
- activities and report school defects either in terms of infrastructures or personnel to the appropriate authorities for rectification.

The principal is the administrative head of the secondary school in Nigeria. As a leader has several administrative tasks to perform. Okoobo, in Achuonye and Nwiyi, (2018) identified the administrative tasks of school principals irrespective of the background to include supervision of instruction, administration of staff, administration of finance resources, administration of a healthy relationship between the school and community and provision of guidance and counseling services. Arikewuyo (2019) summarized the administrative tasks of the school principal as providing leadership for curriculum development, providing leadership for instruction development, creating an environment conducive for the realization of human potentials, influencing the behaviour of staff members and supervising instructional activities in the school system. Oranus (2021) identified some administrative tasks of a principal to perform if he is to be effective as a curriculum and instruction leader These include; developing curriculum; providing facilities and materials, evaluating teaching and learning outcome (continuous assessment), orienting new staff members especially teachers, arranging in-service education; organizing for instruction; helping beginning teachers; studying and providing for students needs; improving teaching and learning situations; improving experiences for children; guiding professional growth of teachers; classroom visitation; experimenting with new teaching materials and procedures; encouraging teachers to read and use educational research; arranging a service of demonstration lessons by different teachers; organizing groups on curriculum and teaching; providing for stimulation and helpful staff meeting and doing some regular teaching activities.

In this regard, principals are expected to carry the ultimate responsibilities for the entire academic, social, and corporate life of a school. They will be held responsible for the success of the school in all areas. They will receive parents and visitors to school and will execute appropriate measures to promote a good image of the school qualities that would contribute to their excelling in the performance of these duties according to Agun (2017) include; familiarity with trends in educational issues and administration, personal attributes as a listener; ability to adopt and adjust rapidly to a new situation; good temperament balance; general comportment and ability to withstand stress; and love for the job.

Dimensions of Principals' Administrative Tasks in Schools

In this paper, the dimensions of principals' administrative tasks in schools include; principals' supervisory task, principals' time management task, principals' interpersonal relationship task and principals' communication task.

Principals' Supervisory Task

Principals' supervisory task also involves "the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers. The purpose of principals' supervisory task is to ensure to 'the stimulation of professional growth of the teachers and the entire school system and to motivate teachers, it equally ensures that the teachers do what is expected of them so that the students learn. It is geared towards ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the school system (Undie, 2018). In any elementary or secondary school, where democracy is art of daily living, the beginning teacher will find his principal source of inspiration and practical assistance in the cooperative work that he does with the supervisor. This

is generally the case because the supervisor in such a school is there purposely to advise the teacher, to instruct, to stimulate, and to guide him to the solution of his problems. In this respect, the relationship between the supervisor and the teacher is a friendly and constructive one based on a mutual concern for all aspects of the instructional programme.

Educational planning as a continuous process of providing information to decision makers on how well the education system is accomplishing its goals and how the cost effectiveness of such accomplishment can be improved (Nanjwan & Plang 2015). Principals' supervisory task is a process provided by the school principal for improving programme and for helping teachers in the improvement to do effective job of teaching and guiding the learning activities of students. Nanjwan and Asanye (2018) emphasized that principals' supervisory task in the school as an administrative principles of principal focuses primarily upon the achievement of the appropriate instructional expectation of teachers in the educational system. Good principals' supervisory task is to direct the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of learning instruction in the school. Principals' supervisory task is therefore a vital process and a combination of activities which is concerned with the teaching and improvement of teaching and learning environment in order to promote effective teacher performance and learning in the school system. Principals' supervisory task is also a constant and continuous process of personal guidance based on frequent visits to a school to give concrete and constructive advice and encouragement to teachers in order to improve the teaching and learning situation in the school. On such visits, attention is paid to certain aspects of the school (Adeniyi, 2021).

Ogunsaju (2013) enumerated eight reasons for principals' supervisory task which include to; know the performance of the teacher recruited to teach in the school system; determine whether a teacher should be transferred, promoted, retained or dismissed; improve the incompetent teachers; discover special abilities or qualities possessed by teachers in the schools; provide a guide or staff development; know the effectiveness of classroom management by the teacher; know the directions of the school; and assess the 'tone' of the school and identify some of its most urgent needs. Principals' supervisory task of instructions is improvement of teaching and learning process for the utmost benefit of the child who is regarded as the centre of education. Attempts will now be made to highlight the relationships between supervision and teachers' job commitment. On the issue of supervision functions of the manager, all officers designated to perform administrative functions are somehow concerned with supervision in one form or another, depending on the location of their duty post, the type of responsibilities assigned to them, as well as the size and structure of the school system in which they work (Okeniyi, 2019).

Principals' Time Management Task

Principals' time management task has to do with planning and scheduling activities, organizing tasks in a prioritized order and allocating time to the tasks according to their order of importance and helping one achieve educational objectives. Principals' time management task is the ability to manage and control time. The use of planners, calendars and the like are effective tools in managing time. Principals' time management task is the art of arranging organizing, scheduling and budgeting one's time for the purpose of generating more effective work and school productivity. Principals' time management task is very important for teachers, while time management books and seminars often focus on school leaders and corporations, time management is also crucial for students, teachers, professionals and home makers.

Principals' time management task is mostly about self-management. One may be right to say that time management task is the ability of an individual or group of individuals to make proper use of their time in order to achieve set educational goals. Principals' time management task has not increased ahead deck to school managers in different angles on finding alternatives that can improve job performance of teachers in the school organisation, although different techniques have been developed to utilise time better for instance, enacting of laws and regulations to shape the behaviour of individuals at workplace and motivating employees but time management task is the only alternative for the aims of achieving high productivity within a given time frame. Moreover, the perception of time

management task as an important phenomenon at workplace has increased due to the fact that many organisations have realised a cost of losing time.

According to Lufunyo (2013), principals' improper time management task in Nigerian public secondary schools encourages stress, lack of school productivity which could not help to organize aspects of one's life, therefore allowing one's time to incomplete all the tasks necessary in the educational level. The researcher observed that students in public secondary schools do spend their time on irrelevant things such as playing around the school premises, watching videos from their phones as well as gossiping among themselves instead of concentrating on their studies for good academic performance as a result of poor time management task in schools.

Principals' Interpersonal Relationship Task

The tasks ahead of school principals are so enormous such that it requires a lot of approaches in order to "live-up-to-expectations." The approaches apart from their personal qualities include, having good rapport with their members of staff, delegating part of their responsibilities with authorities to their staff members. This delegation enhances cordiality between school managers and staff, it also enhances the development of staff. There is a great impact on the need to revolutionise the school principal's perception on the need to maintain cordial principals' interpersonal relationship task with the subordinates as it has been found that rapport between staff and administration is positively related to the students' achievement (Ikenyiri, 2017). The issue of principals' interpersonal relationship task and staff relationship for a leadership to occur there must be a dynamic interaction and existence of (1) persons (2) position and (3) situation. When teachers are not informed whether they are doing poorly or doing well, uncertainty will surround their performance. This will contribute to negative outcomes such as reduced satisfaction, increase in office politics and lack of commitment. School principal plays a pivotal role in managing teachers' job performance by providing the proper response. Hinklin and Schriesheim (2014) agreed that teachers need performance related feedback and good interpersonal relationship but the school principals might be unwilling or lack of ability to satisfy those needs. The absence of principals' interpersonal relationship task, response or feedback will possibly reinforce undesired behaviour and affects teachers' feeling and result in confusion and dissatisfaction (Orubuloye, 2016).

Principals' Communication Task

Principals' communication task is the ability of the school principals to communicate effectively with teachers, students and other members of the school community. This involves passing of information to them, listening to them, directing, instructing and motivating them for goal realisation. It is the means by which principals could effectively carry out administrative tasks in schools to check examination malpractice (Davis, 2018). Nwachukwu (2016) averred that communication task is of paramount importance to the corporate welfare of the school system. This is because poor communication task can give rise to misunderstanding and the inability of a leader to express himself or herself clearly could lead to poor school management and its attendant ills among which is examination misconduct. It can be seen from the foregoing that communication is necessary for effective management of school personnel, particularly teachers for the achievement of school goals and objectives. A school principal cannot do without communicating with his teachers and students. School personnel management is therefore based on effective communication. Ijaiya (2000) observed that in schools, effective teaching implies effective communication between the teacher and his students. When communication breaks down, either in the home, school, town or country, the consequences can sometimes be disastrous. Communication enables the school as a group to think together, to reach agreement and to act together. In other words, communication task is the coordinating weapon or vehicle for the activities of the school. The importance of effective communication in the management of school personnel, particularly teachers, cannot be too much stressed.

Principals' communication task achieves the following in schools:

- It enhances students learning through effective communication of curriculum matters e.g. school scheduling of subjects, time table, school assembly, reporting to parents about students' progress, opening and closing of school, etc.
- It helps to improve relationship and the general tone of the school. Where there is effective communication with staff and students, the school become one huge family working cooperatively to attain educational objectives;
- It prevents rumour mongering which is inimical to healthy relationship in the school;
- Communication is an effective tool for staff participation in decision making. Through such methods as suggestion boxes, departmental meetings, seminars, staff motivation, creativity and commitment are all enhanced.
- It is an instrument for maintaining staff discipline and asserting authority over subordinate staff and students. This is achieved through the issuance of queries warnings, orders and instructions;
- It is an aid for management control. This is because when achievements and problems of subordinates staff are communicated to the higher authority, advice and corrections can be quickly offered in order to keep the staff in line with the objectives of the school (Khawanja, 2012).

Challenges facing Principals' Administrative Tasks in Nigerian Secondary Schools

The following are the challenges facing principals' administrative tasks in Nigerian secondary schools:

1. **Unavailability of ICT Materials in Secondary Schools:** Achuonye and Nwiyi (2010) opined that poor state of the school facilities and unavailability of ICT materials in secondary schools; impede principal's effectiveness in carrying out their roles. One major setback in achieving the educational objectives of secondary education is inefficiency of the principals in keeping records. Good record keeping is made easy with the use of computers, internet. Digital libraries, e-mail for efficient and effective administration of the schools. Again, most secondary school buildings are dilapidated and are regarded as death trap to both the students and staff.
2. **Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities:** School facilities are, the material resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. Material resources also help in the effective administration of the schools if adequately provided. Mbayuar (2012) posited that educational facilities are those things which enable a skilled teacher or administrator to achieve a reasonable level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided Facilities include all the buildings and equipment in schools that aid teaching and learning. Administration of secondary school is becoming difficult due to inadequate infrastructural facilities (Alagbu, 2018). According to him, large number of secondary schools suffers an immense deprivation of facilities that aid teaching and learning. It has been observed that teachers' ineffectiveness in delivering their duties is attributed to inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities for effective teaching and learning.
3. **Political Factors:** Most states in Nigeria only appoint the indigenes of their state as principals even when non indigenes are most qualified and professionally trained in school administration According to Ololube (2013), mediocrity in education is unacceptable and it is not in the interest of both students and the larger society. School principals have to be academically qualified as well as professionally trained to be competent enough in order to perform their prescribed roles. When principals are trained in leadership skills, they will be competent enough to carry out their duties effectively. But when they are not qualified to manage a school, it becomes a problem or challenge to effectively administer or manage the schools for the achievement of the goals of secondary education.
4. **Unstable National Electric Power Supply:** The National Policy on Education that incorporated computer education in the curriculum of the secondary education did not take cognizance of the unstable situation of the National Electric Power supply especially in the rural areas. A good computer education programme is aimed not only at teaching Nigerians how to use the computer effectively for national development but

- also, at preparing them to master computer technology with a view of ensuring the maintenance, and eventually the production of computers (Akporme, 2017) The good intention of the government is also affected by the unstable electricity supply. as school principals cannot effectively implement the school curriculum due to lack of power supply, and power is a critical infrastructure for sustainable economic growth and development This is because most economic activities are dependent on affordable and adequate energy for effective operation, but the administrators are being faced with this challenge. The sorry state of our public power infrastructure has greatly compounded the problems associated with computer operations and utilization in Nigerian secondary schools, as computers and their associated peripheral equipment are totally dependent on electrical power for operations.
5. **Cultism in Schools:** Effects of secret cult activities on the learning of students secondary schools cannot be overemphasized as both the intra and inter-cult activities negatively affect students and staff as they live in fear and insecurity within and outside the school premises cult clashes have led to outbreak of violence in schools having many students either wounded, killed, or maimed (Gabriel & Odeh 2019). This situation has resulted to insecurity, lawlessness, moral decadence, drug abuse, indiscipline among others. Principals of schools with these problems cannot effectively perform their duties, as they attempt to curb the cult activities.
 6. **Inadequate Staffing:** Staffing is another part of administration. According to Obi (2018), staffing is the process of ensuring that competent employees are selected, developed and rewarded for accomplishing the organization objective. He went further to say that human resources are the lifeblood of an institution. Odiya and Omofonmwan (2017) argued intensely that acute shortage of teachers can result in poor outcome in teaching and learning. They also called for a revitalisation of the education programmes in Nigeria through research, manpower training and development. Staffing is seen by many researchers as a vital part of the functioning of any organization, including a school. Nel (2016) posited that staffing is a technique used by an organisation to place the right person in the right position. According to Ikegbusi (2014), the success of secondary school administration depends on the availability of teachers. This implies that for proper running of a secondary school, quality and efficiency of staff determine to a great extent the successful achievement of its educational objectives.
 7. **Finance:** According to Ogba and Igu (2021), one of the biggest challenges of secondary school management and administration is poor funding. They stress further that the extent to which adequate educational programmes are achieved depends largely on the economic provisions supporting the programme. Insufficient funds often leads to large classes for teachers, skimpy libraries, very limited instructional materials, low-priced building construction and poorly trained teachers. Keller (2017) posited that insufficient funds to maintain schools and pay teachers' salaries are among other factors that militate against the smooth administration of secondary schools. The lack of adequate funds puts enormous pressure on school administrators, because as Anderson and Lamby (2015) pointed out that there is a high degree of pressure on school heads to raise funds so that their schools are fully efficient.
 8. **Over Population:** Etuk (2017) observed that there has been expansion in the school system and students' population now in Nigeria without corresponding growth in the number of essential facilities to match the change. Oni (2019) recounts the appalling state of over-population through the experience of a one-time federal minister of education in Nigeria thus: This perchance meant that as a result of over-population, school children could not be accommodated in the classroom, but study outside classroom location. In Nigeria, free primary education is indicated in the universal primary education review of 1985 (Amaghionyeodiwe & Osinubi, 2016). The sad development experienced from the free primary education is that both federal and local government has constantly failed to reflect the effect of an increase in enrolment in the school's physical facilities. The above assertion according to Ogba and Igu (2014) suggested when facilities are in short supply in schools; increase in students' enrolment will be futile and disadvantageous.
 9. **Indiscipline:** School discipline is an essential element in school administration. The indiscipline problems in schools are ranked as a major problem among students of secondary schools in Nigeria (Olaitan, 2019). In fact, one of the reasons for the introduction of the universal basic education in Nigeria was the sharp

decline in the morality of primary school children (Edho, 2019). The enforcement of discipline through corporal means is now criticized around the world. When teachers are not able to impose discipline as a result of conflicting values, they feel unconfident (Nakpodia, 2010). However, Ayeni (2010) found two major causes of students' indiscipline. First was the constant negative labelling of students followed by teachers' lateness, absenteeism, poor school environment and poor teaching. No doubt that discipline and students control is never easy to maintain, it demands co-operation, wisdom, diplomacies, courage, fairness and firmness (Ogba & Igu, 2018). According to them, much of these seem to pose serious challenges to the school heads, hence, decline in academic standards and a lack of authority to provide discipline.

Way forward on Addressing Challenges facing Principals' Administrative Tasks in Nigerian Secondary Schools

The way forward to the challenges facing principals' administrative tasks in Nigerian secondary schools are as follows;

1. Federal and state governments should ensure that ICT materials are provided adequately in all Nigerian secondary schools in order to enhance the effectiveness of the principal and teachers.
2. Federal and state governments should make and provide adequate infrastructural facilities and more instructional materials like laboratories, library chairs, table, desks, water, electricity, ICT facilities, classrooms, administrative offices, libraries, laboratories and whiteboard in Nigerian secondary schools for effective teaching to be improved as well as administration of the schools.
3. Federal and state governments should sponsor school principals on a regular basis for in-service training, seminars, workshops and conferences to update their knowledge as this will help them in their administrative tasks and human relationship with teachers and students without any political affiliation.
4. Federal and state governments should be able to provide stable electricity supply in Nigerian secondary schools to increase principals' competencies in carrying out their prescribed administrative tasks.
5. Federal and state governments should ensure that cultism should be highly discouraged in the school as it impedes principals' administrative competency and the realization of the objective of secondary education in Nigerian secondary schools
6. Federal and state governments should employ more professional, competent and qualified teachers. This will help to reduce the high students-teacher ratio in the classes in Nigerian secondary schools.
7. Federal and state governments should increase the budgetary allocation to education in order to fund immensely Nigerian secondary schools.. This will enable the school principals with funds to carry out their administrative tasks effectively and efficiently.
8. Federal and state governments should ensure adequately and effectively that students' population explosion should commensurate with the number of available facilities as well as the number of teachers in Nigerian secondary schools. This will improve the implementation of National Policy of Education on students-teacher ratio of 1: 40.
9. Federal and state governments should use ICT and effective monitoring and evaluation system to fight all forms of institution corruption and indiscipline activities in the agencies of education and specifically in in Nigerian secondary schools across the country.

Conclusion

Educational administrators are major players in the realization of the objectives of secondary education, therefore, qualified and professionally trained principals should be used to head the schools in order to achieve the goals of secondary schools as indicated in Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). It has been observed that many public secondary schools in Nigeria are facing challenges on administrative tasks and these challenges is frustrating their efforts of realizing the objectives and goals of secondary school. This paper identified some challenges facing the administrative tasks of public secondary school principals such as unavailability of ICT materials in secondary schools inadequate infrastructural facilities political factors among others. This paper has suggested the way forward that will improve administrative tasks of public secondary school principals in Nigerian secondary schools in the areas of adequate provision of ICT materials, ensuring adequately and effectively facilities that will go with students' population explosion and provision of stable electricity supply in Nigerian secondary schools among others.

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