

## **PRINCIPALSHIP AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study sought to assess and investigate how the proficiency and creativity of principals affect the management of school facilities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The sample of the study included 36 secondary schools, with two drawn from each of the 18 Local Government Areas in the State. The primary data were collected from questionnaire and personal interview while the secondary data were collected from checklists, school records & documents, journals and internet. The data were given both qualitative and quantitative treatment. Pearson Product Moment Statistical Instrument was adopted in the analysis. The outcome of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between the principal's proficiency, creativity and the overall educational objectives in the management of school facilities. This shows that effective management of school facilities is necessary in creating the enabling conducive academic environment thereby enhancing a corresponding achievement and performance in the teaching – learning process. Based on the above, appropriate recommendations were made to include: Appointment of qualified and competent professionals as principals; Government should set up a Committee or Agency to oversee, supervise and monitor on school facilities while school principals, teachers and students should be encouraged to inculcate maintenance culture in the handling of school facilities across school organizations in the State in particular and Nigeria generally.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The management of academic and administrative affairs of schools traditionally falls within the purview of the principal. Unerringly, formal education in Nigeria is rapidly changing and technically tailored towards meeting certain set goals, such as “education for all” (Nwaogu, 2013). The requirements of these various goals from the school managers are centred on the advancement of teaching and learning through the implementation of performance-based management, which is led by a management team, with the principal at the fulcrum.

Given this onerous task, the principal, as a matter of fact, must understand the role of school managers to effectively manage not only staff but the facilities to meet the overall objectives of the school system. According to Ukeje (2000), the unsatisfactory performance often experienced in schools by students and educational programs is always attributed to lack of basic infrastructure, lack of adequate and accurate statistics, inadequate funding, embezzlement, bureaucratic bottleneck and poor attitude to work.

Generally, the principal's responsibility in the management of educational facilities entails bringing together individuals as a group that will control, coordinate and articulate activities to

achieve tangible and holistic learning for the overall benefit of the society (Omokorede, 2011). Buttressing this assertion, Ebong & Agabi in Nnabuo, Okorie and Agabi (2011), posit that school management by principals is the totality of efforts that are brought to bear in the provision and delivery of education to ensure that both human and material resources allocated to education are used to the best advantage in the pursuit of educational objectives and goals.

The school management team headed by the principal must develop, support and equip staff with knowledge and skills to respond positively to the ever changing phenomenon of education to meet contemporary societal challenges. Abdulkareem (2011), opined that to achieve this, there must be continuous increase and adequacy of educational facilities, because the existing ones are often overstretched, poorly maintained and cannot provide and foster desirable, creative and harmonious problem-solving skills.

Since education seeks to develop the minds and character of future citizens, their abilities, skills and potentials, in order to equip them for contemporary society, school facilities have to be supplied in adequate quantities, properly and effectively managed, controlled and supervised (Uko, 2001). According to her, it is prima-facie function of top management, down to the teaching and non-teaching staff.

In educational institutions, facilities constitute essential inputs, which create favourable learning environment, facilitate interaction and enhance achievement of educational objectives (Oyesola, 2007). In essence, the school curriculum would not be meaningful and functional if required facilities are not provided in adequate quality and quantity at appropriate times through the principal's administrative finesse (Uko & Ayuk, 2014).

The International Facilities Management Association (2003) described facilities management as the practice of co-ordinating the physical workplace with the people and the work of the organization by integrating the principles of business administration and architecture with the behavioural and engineering sciences. According to them, school facilities management is the application of scientific methods in the planning, organizing, decision-making, co-ordination and controlling of the physical environment of learning for the actualization of the educational goals and objectives. This culminates in the collective and participative decision making process towards the selection, establishment and installation of school plants; design of school grounds, halls and spaces; upgrading, innovation and purchase of new machineries and equipment; choice, design and implementation of programmes and projects; backup and review of management policies, practices, rules and regulations.

According to Uko (2001), effective management of school facilities requires knowledge, skill and expertise in handling different facets of the school system. This to her calls on the ability of the principal to set required objectives, supervise facilities usage, formulate plans for procurement and ensure actual management and supervision of available facilities to attain set goals of the school system. The principal as the manager of the school organization therefore has the onerous task of mobilizing available human resource to ensure a proper running of the school. Complimenting, Mbipom (2002) opined that school facilities comprise the physical expression of the school curriculum in the construction, internal and external arrangements of the buildings, equipment, grounds, surroundings, general appearance which include the flower beds,

paths, orchards, shrubs, playgrounds, classrooms, assembly hall, dining hall, desks and school farms. Uko (2001) further stated that when school facilities are considered from the point of the school plant, then one will be considering a gamut of facilities such as: school furniture, science laboratories, school library, technical workshops. Under school equipment, she listed the following:

- i) Administrative: Filing Cabinets, Typing machines, Duplicating Machines, Photocopying machines, Telephones, etc.
- ii) Teaching equipment: – Projectors, cameras, monitors, transparencies, etc.
- iii) Games/Sports Equipment:– Boots, Footballs, Tennis Balls, Jerseys, Rackets, etc.
- iv) General Services Equipment:– Grass Mower, Grass Cutters, Catering, First Aid, Fire Extinguishers. Also mentioned: sanitary, water supply, refuse disposal, catering services and health care delivery facilities. According to her, effective management of school facilities calls on the ingenuity of the principal to mobilize and facilitate the teachers, non-teaching/custodial staff and students to ensure proper management and maintenance of existing facilities.

### **The Need for Effective Facilities Management in Secondary Schools**

Asiabaka (2008), maintained that school facilities management play a pivotal role in the actualization of educational goals and objectives by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of the staff and students. According to her, physical needs are met through the provision of safe structures, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual and thermal environment, sufficient shelter space for work and play; while emotional needs are met by creating a pleasant surroundings, friendly atmosphere and an inspiring environment. Supporting the need for effective management of facilities in schools, Fenker (2004) stated that it involves a planned process to ensure that the buildings and other technical systems support the proper discharge of operations and services within the school organization. Mbipom (2002), stated that school plant is a major component of school facilities. She further stated that since teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum, school facilities give meaning to the planned curricular and extra-curricular activities. To her, any discussion on the school plant starts with the conceptualization of the educational programmes to be offered in the school. Thus, the nature and type of educational programmes will determine the nature and type of school plants to be provided.

Asiabaka (2008) further stated that the provision and management of school facilities must take into cognizance modern views of the teaching-learning process which have moved beyond memorizing to involvement of teachers and students in applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating to stress the need for flexibility in time and space. Thus, the complexity of the learning environment requires flexibility in the design of facilities to meet present day school needs- that is, the facilities should be designed to meet diverse academic needs of the school system. According to her, in today's parlance, multipurpose facilities used for academic activities during school hours may also be available for use by the community during and after school hours. Such programmes may be used for continuing education programmes, social activities and recreation. This requires proper scheduling of such facilities to allow for accessibility to the community or other public users during school hours without interfering with academic programmes. This will eliminate the burden of duplication of such facilities as

conference halls, gymnasium, library, theatre, football pitch, tennis court, swimming pool and other sporting facilities, thereby integrating the collective effort towards cost effectiveness and enhancing healthy school-community harmonious relationship.

The need for effective management of school facilities according to Hargreaves, Earl, Moore & Manning (2011), leads to a shift in the conception of principalship from the managerial and administrative perspective to that of instructional leadership whereby the principal acts as a leader in all aspects of the school curricula, imparting and enforcing on the intellectual and emotional development of the teachers, changing the instructional climate of the school and affecting and transforming the students learning and achievement behavior and attitude.

In Latin America, a study conducted by Willms (2000) showed that children whose schools lacked adequate classroom materials and library services were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped. The American Association of School Administrators (1999) reported that students were more likely to perform better when their environment was conducive to learning; that is, environmentally responsive heating, air conditioning, proper ventilating systems, new or renovated school buildings and halls, adequacy of teaching equipment and other educational facilities in a more comfortable learning environment.

An evaluation by Morgan (2000) showed that the condition, adequacy and effective management of educational facilities had a stronger effect on the overall performance of students than the combined influences of the family background, socio-economic status, school attendance and behavior. A major need of maintaining an effective management of educational facilities is that the school environment and the activities that take place therein must be considered healthy and productive, otherwise it will expose the untidy, careless and non-challant attitude of the principal, teachers, custodial staff, students and their educational programmes (Agoguke, 2011).

### **Principalship and Effective Management of School Facilities**

This is a phenomenon where planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling the processes of supply, utilization, maintenance and improving educational facilities in secondary schools is superintended by the principal to fulfill the set educational objectives. Abdulkareem (2011), maintained that, in order to fulfill educational objectives, educational facilities are required and should be central to the extent that teachers, students and other personnel will enjoy their stay and perform their duties effectively, made possible by the principal's leadership ingenuity and proficiency. The school curriculum would be meaningful and functional if the required facilities are provided in adequate quantities at appropriate times and maintained properly.

The realization of the importance of educational facilities has informed the demand in the choice of secondary schools that parents/guardians send their children/wards to in Nigeria. This commitment is demonstrated by government in the provision and establishment of Universal Basic Education (UBE), to bring all categories of citizens into the school system and ensure retention till graduation (Ukeje, 2000). However, this can only be achieved if the existing facilities are properly managed especially as greater demands would be mounted by the users (Nwadiani, 2001). In a related study, Adeboyeje (2000) stated that the utilization of facilities is

of various degrees depending on the extent to which an item has been put into effective use. This includes non-utilization, underutilization, maximum utilization, optimum utilization and over-utilization. Non-utilization occurs when a facility is not put into use at all; when a facility is not used to its fullest capacity, underutilization occurs. There is over-utilization, when a facility is used more than its capacity. All of these require the ingenuity of the principal to balance the usage and maintenance of available facilities.

### **Stages of School Facilities Management**

In managing educational facilities, there are certain stages involved. These include:

**a) Provision of Educational Programmes**

Execution of educational programmes demands that facilities are provided if success is to be achieved. Government, school proprietors, parents and other stakeholders are expected to provide for their schools and be involved in every aspect of school management facilitated by the principal. Olagboye (2004), observed that this aspect is the most neglected in school management and has led to disparity in provision of facilities from one school to another. Khan and Igbal (2012) maintained that excellent school facilities are basic ingredients for good education programmes and basic to achieving set targets and achieving the literacy rate of a country. They stated further that the phenomenon that some schools have surplus facilities while others lack are an indicator of poor educational planning in schools.

**b) Utilization of Educational Facilities**

The degree to which an item is used determines its sustainability or degenerative consequences on the expertise of the school head (Adeboyeje, 2002). In managing facilities, and for them to meet the objectives, caution must be taken in the usage, that is, facilities must not be underutilized nor over-utilized, but optimally used. That is, maximum utilization occurs when facilities are put into effective use in line with the primary objectives – otherwise, it would be counter-productive.

**c) Maintenance of Educational Facilities**

A major problem facing schools today is that facilities are not properly managed and maintained. The physical appearance of most schools proves and speaks volumes. Isaach & Musibau (2010) asserted that poorly maintained buildings, untidy walls, leaking roofs, over grown compounds may suggest that education within the buildings follow the same pattern. Facilities tend to depreciate, wear and tear as soon as they are put into use. Hence, there is need for maintenance through repairs and servicing of the components and sustaining their working conditions and capacity. According to Adeboyeje (2002), maintenance enhances performance and durability; prevents wastage, corrects breakdown and shutdown services.

Here, the principal's responsibility is to regularly check and recheck the available facilities and take necessary measures to prevent mal-functioning or non-functioning of a particular facility. Uko (2001); Ngoka (2003); Eze (2006), Ihuoma (2008) and Agenyi (2012), had identified six types of maintenance of school facilities, namely preventive; corrective, routine; emergency; structural and predictive.

Preventive maintenance includes regular inspection of the buildings and immediate repair of minor damages and deterioration (Uko, 2001). This is done to avoid breakdown and to ensure optimal performance of plants and equipment and saves cost and time (Ngoka, 2003). Corrective maintenance includes remodeling, renovating and updating of existing facilities, avoiding obsolescence and making the facilities adaptable to current educational needs (Uko, 2001). Routine maintenance requires periodic servicing of machines and equipments – monthly, quarterly, yearly as per the requirements provided in the manufacturer's guide (Agenyi, 2012). Emergency maintenance may take place due to unforeseen occurrences which may be as a result of lack of maintenance culture (Ihuoma, 2008). Structural maintenance is carried out due to the structural needs of some plants and equipment such as refurbishing, refabricating or reshaping due to current requirements or new designs (Agenyi, 2012). Predictive maintenance is seen to be the most vital and relevant as it involves the use of modern day computer softwares to predict equipment age, manufacturing fault, user demands, quality control and performance indices (Agenyi, 2012).

**d) Improvement of Educational Facilities**

Apart from depreciation, facilities tend to be outdated because of changing needs of the society, which necessitates changes in school curricula. In this respect, facilities need to be improved upon from time to time. In other words, facilities improvement is the alteration or modification of facilities to suit a new demand, new situation or new programmes. Wherever there are changes in any part of the education system, the existing facilities need modification, improvement or change. Improvement of educational facilities helps to meet the needs of specific individuals and groups within the school system. This calls for availability of accurate information collected through facilities audit.

**e) Facilities Audit:**

According to the Planning Guide for Maintaining School facilities (2003), facilities audit is a comprehensive inventory of a school's facilities that provides a standard method for establishing baseline information about the components, policies and procedures of a new or existing facility. It provides information on the status of school facilities. It is carried out by assessing buildings, grounds and equipment, documenting the findings and recommending appropriate service options to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and save money. According to the guide, facilities audits are important to the educational system because they:

- Help educational planners, managers and staff to know available facilities, their conditions, service history, maintenance needs, cost involvement and locations.
- Provide facts, action plans for maintenance and improvement of school facilities.
- Establish a baseline for measuring facilities maintenance progress.
- Allow for in-depth analysis of product lifecycles to occur on a routine basis, that is, measuring actual life versus expected life.

### **Implication of Ineffective School Facilities Management**

The quality of school facilities and environment shape attitude not only of the students, but that of the teachers and other support staff. However, many school facilities throughout Nigeria face

general mismanagement and social turmoil. Michael (2002) observed that, a successful management of school facilities is a necessary and essential investment that would increase quality of schools and educational performance and future outcomes. An academically successful school must radiate a sense of well-being of its facilities which in turn generate information for positive results. This will lead to effective restoration achieved through good design that addresses educational needs of the students. Apart from the grossly inadequate facilities in most secondary schools in Nigeria, the classrooms are usually overcrowded with up to sixty or more students in classrooms designed for only thirty or forty students, the chairs and desks are not enough, students therefore engage in sharing chairs, standing up, or sitting on windows or broken desks, a situation that generally stalls the teaching-learning process, disrupts the students mental activity, and militates against the intellectual development of the children (Akomolafe, 2013).

Lyons (2012) documented that learning is a complex activity that supremely tests students motivation, physical conditions, teaching resources, methods and skills of teaching and the school curricula. All these play vital roles in the children's development. He further stated that there was an explicit relationship between the physical characteristics of school facilities and educational outcomes. While good maintenance, modern systems and flexible designs are clearly required; linkages between different subject areas are growing and teachers continually are enhancing their multi-disciplinary capabilities. The implication is that effective management of school facilities must of necessity take cognizance of the changes in teaching methods, the grounds and school environment, school curricula, designs and systems, ages and numerical strength of the children, personnel and expected outcomes (Fuller & Dellagnelo (1999)).

### **The Problem**

There are serious negative consequences to students when school facilities are not properly managed. First in the ranking is poor academic performance. There is a nexus between learning and facilities, as availability and good condition will exude academic excellence (Danesty, 2004). Oftentimes, in Nigeria, parents' preference of schools for their wards are informed by the quality of facilities. Schools run the risk of losing students to other well-equipped institutions when their schools lack the required facilities or available facilities are not properly managed (Dike, 2005).

Also, if facilities are poorly maintained, this could lead to health and sanitary condition problems. For instance, if the toilets are broken down and students defecate indiscriminately, epidemics and other contagious diseases may occur to endanger not only the lives of the students, but also of the staff, the immediate neighbourhood and the nation at large (Oladipo & Oni, 2010).

In all, the general state of affairs of school facilities is a pointer or essential determinant of the versatility of the principal and his team and the attendant academic prowess of the students (Okoroma, 2002). Equally true is that poor performance and non-grasp of practicals in science courses had been attributed to debilitated facilities or near-absence of laboratory infrastructural facilities. According to Onyeike, et. al (2013), in many cases the laboratories do not exist or are in advanced states of disrepair, resulting in the poor performance of students in West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO), hence the resultant

poor quality output from Nigerian secondary schools, especially the public schools. Okeke (2007) maintained that the quality of educational output to a large extent depends on the scale of equipment and facilities such as laboratory, workshops, libraries, books, teaching aids etcetera and how best they are being put to use, vi-a-vis the resultant outcomes from the students as inputs for tertiary education. It is therefore the aim of this study to explore the extent to which effective management of school facilities by the school principals affect the performance of students and the teaching-learning outcomes generally.

### Objectives of the Study

The main thrust of this work is to examine the role of principals in the effective management of secondary school facilities. Specifically, it seeks to:

- a. Assess the best ways a principal can properly manage secondary school facilities.
- b. Investigate how the proficiency or otherwise of a principal affects the management of school facilities.
- c. Examine the implications if school facilities are not managed properly or are not readily available.

### Hypothesis

To guide this paper, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>0</sub>: The principal's proficiency, tact and creativity have no connection with overall educational objectives in the management of secondary school facilities.

### Research Methodology

It was a descriptive study that investigated the role of principals in the management of educational facilities in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study included 36 secondary schools drawn from the 18 Local Government Areas in Cross River State, with two (2) secondary schools per Local Government Area. The schools are as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: List of Schools Drawn From 18 Local Government Areas in Cross River State, Nigeria**

S/No	Local Government Area	Selected Schools	
1	Abi	Edanafa Comm. Sec. School	Usumutong Comm. Sec Sch.
2	Akamkpa	Govt. Day Science School	Govt. Secondary School
3	Akpabuyo	Comm. Sec. Sch, Ikot Edem Odo	Comm. Sch. Ikot Ewa
4	Bakassi	Donduke High School	Govt. Junior Sec. Sch, Ikang
5	Bekwarra	Comm. Sec. Sch, Ugboro	Bekwara Sec. Sch, Obuchiche

6	Biase	Comm. Sec. Sch, Iwuru	Comm. Sec. Sch., Adim
7	Boki	Comm. Sec. Sch, Oriemkpang	Bushua Trinity Sec. Sch
8	Cal. Municipality	Hope Waddell Training Institute	West African Peoples Institute
9	Calabar South	Emilis Sec. Comm. School	Edgerly Memorial Girls Sec. Sch.
10	Etung	Etung Comp. Sec. School	Crown Model School
11	Ikom	Holy Child Sec. School	Govt. Sec. School
12	Obanliku	Comm. Sec. School, Ketung	Cornerstone Sch, Busatong
13	Obubra	St. Brendan, Iyamayong	Comm. Sec. Sch, Adun
14	Obudu	Govt. Sec. School	Andoya Foundation College
15	Odukpani	Comm. Sec. Sch, Ikot Ewa	Comp. Sec. School
16	Ogoja	Govt. Girls Sec. School	Army Day School
17	Yakurr	Comm. Sec. Sch, Ugep	Girls Sec. School.
18	Yala	Mary Knoll College	Govt. Grammar Sch, Wassakom

### Sources of Data Collection

The primary data were collected through questionnaire and personal interview of respondents. The secondary data were collected from checklists, school records, review of literature, documents, books, magazines, journals and internet.

### Research Tools

The study developed appropriate tools for the collection and analysis of necessary data. The questionnaire had two sections (A&B). Section A contained information on personal and demographic data of the respondents while Section B had data on principalship and effective management of secondary school facilities. The respondents scoring of the instrument was on Likert scale with options as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

### Procedure for Data Analysis

**Hypothesis:** The principal's proficiency, tact and creativity have no connection with overall objectives and management of secondary school facilities.

**Independent Variable:** Principal's Proficiency and Creativity.

**Dependent Variable:** Educational objectives and management of facilities.

**Statistical Instrument:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics.

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Principal's Proficiency, Creativity and the Overall Educational Objectives and Management of Secondary School Facilities (n = 36)**

Variable	$\sum Y$	$\sum x$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value
Principal's proficiency and creativity		6404	16237	161981	0.697
Educational objectives and management of secondary school facilities		6911	18455		

Significant at 0.05 level of significance and  $df = 698$ ,  $r = 0.62$

Table 2 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.69 was greater than the critical value of 0.62 required for significance at 0.05 level with 698 degrees of freedom; suggesting that there was a relationship between principal's proficiency, creativity and the overall educational objectives and management of secondary school facilities.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis, it was revealed that there was a strong relationship between the principal's proficiency, creativity and the overall attainment of educational objectives through effective management of secondary school facilities. This confirms Michael (2002) assertion that successful management of facilities is a necessary and essential investment that would increase quality of the school performance. From the findings, it was shown that ineptitude, lack of creativity and knowledge, mismanagement traceable to unqualified persons as heads and general lack of will on the part of government or neglect by respective Authorities resulted in the poor or degenerated state of secondary school facilities in Cross River State.

The findings further revealed that in about 80% (eighty percent) of the schools under study, facilities like laboratories, libraries, classrooms, assembly halls, furniture, technical workshops among others were in a complete state of despair. In about 60% (sixty percent) of the schools, the facilities for sanitation, water supply and refuse disposal were either not available or in very poor conditions. Out of the 36 (thirty six) secondary school under study, only 10 (ten) or 28% had custodial staff to oversee some of the school facilities. On the whole, the findings showed that educational facilities were grossly inadequate in about 92% (Ninety two percent) of the schools covered, a development which was much more compounded by obvious lack of maintenance culture in almost all the schools.

Fundamentally, it would be presumed that people will be disenchanted with government's unseriousness in running public schools. Because of this, parents are forced to borrow money or collect loans to send their wards to private schools, even though they do not present the best of facilities, but relatively they were better than those of public schools under study.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded as follows: The relationship that exists between a principal's proficiency, creativity and management of school facilities for overall academic performance is mutually reinforcing. To this end, effective management is a precursor to facilities sustainability, utilization and maintenance as it enhances effective productivity by the teachers and overall performance of the students. There is the dire need for an integrated effort by all stakeholders to ensure that good, adequate and necessary facilities are available, properly managed and maintained in consonance with the goals and objectives of the education system. This will facilitate and enhance a successful attainment of the teaching-learning outcomes in secondary schools within the State and Nigeria, generally.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- a) Only qualified and competent professionals should be appointed to head secondary schools as principals, that is, appointment to principalship should be on merit.
- b) Government should as a matter of urgency set up a committee or appoint persons saddled with the responsibility of monitoring school facilities selection, procurement, installation, utilization, management and maintenance.
- c) School principals, teachers and students should be trained to inculcate maintenance culture in their curricula.
- d) Principals and teachers should be exposed to periodic workshops on procurement, management and maintenance of school facilities.
- e) All secondary schools should have custodial staff trained to handle specific school facilities and such staff should report directly to the vice – principal/principal.
- f) Government and school authorities should make adequate annual budgetary provisions for school facilities to allow for periodic replacement, continuity and availability.

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