
Overcoming Economic Recession through Principals' Effective Management of School Facilities for Quality Education Delivery

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Abstract: *This research examined the ways of overcoming economic recession through principals' effective management of school facilities for quality education delivery. Secondary school facilities seem to be ill managed due to non-challant attitude of principals in rehabilitation and request for old and new ones respectively resulting to graduates not finding their feet in the labour market. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population of this study comprised 244 principals in the public secondary schools in Abia State. There are 244 (two hundred and forty-four public school principals in Abia State. A sample size of 61 principals was selected through Stratified proportionate random sampling technique which constituted 25% of the population. Two research questions guided the study. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire consisting of 23 items structured alongside four point's scale. The data collected were analysed using mean. Findings include; lack of data base, overuse and inadequate qualified manpower among others as challenges facing principals effective management of facilities and identified Planning-Programming-Budgeting system (PPBS), Management by Objectives (MBO), Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT)/Critical Path Method and Delphi techniques as the modern managerial techniques for functional competencies required by principals to overcome economic recession for quality education delivery. Based on the findings, the paper recommended among others that principals should imbibe maintenance culture and utilize modern management techniques to overcome economic recession for quality education delivery in schools.*

Keywords: *Principals, Effective Management, School Facilities, Quality Education and Economic Recession.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning in 21st century secondary schools requires effective management of modern school facilities to achieve educational goals. So many research scholars have really pointed-out in their works that school facilities grossly promote effective and efficient teaching and learning outcome. Asiabaka (2008) says "A direct relationship exists between the quality of school facilities provided and the quality of the products of the school. The physical environment of a school is a major determining factor in the attainment of its objectives". Schools with inadequate facilities suffer a great setback to serve large numbers of children with complex needs. School facilities holistically have an impact on students' health, behaviour, engagement, learning, and growth in general. Also provision of adequate school facilities more or less affects teachers' recruitment, retention, commitment and effort (CEEPA, 2015 & Tanner, 2006).

School facility is also known as school plant and is often used interchangeably. School facilities are the whole physical things that a school is expected to have ranging from different buildings, equipment, textbooks and surroundings where teaching and learning takes place. Udosen (2012) stated that School plant has been consistently proven to have a positive relationship with quality of education. It is an integral part of educational planning which secures a positive teaching-learning environment via the provision of adequately constructed buildings and equipment. In affirmation to the aforementioned ideas Mark (2002) and Ajayi (2007) posited that high levels of students' academic performance may not be guaranteed where instructional space such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops and laboratories are insufficient.

In Nigeria secondary school system, the principals are the executive heads charged with the day to day running of secondary schools affairs (Akpan, 2003). Secondary school principals are inclined into numerous roles which are referred as the functional operations and concerns of educational administration. Adeboyeje (2000) posited that principals are the hub on which the success of secondary school education revolves, because they help to translate the policies on education into action. He further identified six roles of the principals which are; school-community

relationship, management of curriculum and instruction, student personnel management, staff personnel management, management of physical facilities and equipment and school management.

Principals are the first among equals in the school management. Thus, the onus responsibility of managing school facilities lie with the principal who is the head of the school managers. Buttressing this point Ihuoma (2008) asserted that school plant management is a major responsibility of school managers. Mathew (2013) pointed out that successful operation of secondary schools requires competent principals who have considerable knowledge of administrative principles and practice.

Nigeria as a country is plagued into economic recession owing to the anomalies of fund mismanagement and lack of good-will in prioritization of achieving the set objectives in the National Policy of Education. The concept economic recession denotes a heavy negative undertone in the writings of many concerned academicians, well-meaning Nigerians and corporate bodies. The cause and solution of economic recession has been a great topic in their research works and discussions. Noko (2016) defines economic recession as a "negative real GDP growth rate for two consecutive quarters". The National Bureau of Economic Research (2008) defines recession as " a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in a rural gross domestic (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales". Thus a recession is seen as a collapse in real GDP - it is envisage as a general downturn in any economy. The major causes to economic recession are seen as poor economic planning, high inflation rate, high-interest rate, policy conflict and high taxation.

Education is the vehicle through which both qualitative and quantitative change can be introduced to sharpen the economy of the nation to flourish and blossom. No nation can be self-reliance as long as it consistently consciously or unconsciously fails to actualize the objectives inherent in its national policy of education (NPE). Below is an excerpt of some of vital parts of the current policy of education;

- Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by education.
- Education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded in response to social needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice.
- Educational activities shall be centred on the learner for maximum self-development and self-fulfilment.
- Efforts should be made to relate education to overall community needs.
- Modern education techniques shall be increasingly used and improved upon at all levels of the education system.
- Physical and health education shall be emphasized at all levels of the education system.

The secondary school principals, been the primus inter alia has the onus responsibility to manage the scarce fund which is been invested in procuring modern school facilities to achieve the education objectives vividly mapped out in the national policy of education; for a sustainable quality education delivery. This ought to make the student self-reliance upon their graduation to be useful to self and functional to the society at large. This research paper therefore seeks to explore ways of overcoming economic recession through principals' effective management of school facilities for quality education delivery.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria is a country with abundant human and natural resources. Education remains the only viable means by which the abundant human and material resources can be harnessed, managed and utilized. Secondary school students in Nigeria are expected to have acquired the necessary educational skills to be self-reliance and functional to the society upon their graduation. It is the responsibility of the school principals to ensure that the objectives of education in the National Policy of Education are achieved. The effective management of school facilities by the principals promotes secured teaching-learning environment and outcome.

It is an abysmal fact that Nigeria economy is now into a quagmire conundrum. The secondary schools seem to be ill-managed with dilapidated school facilities. Secondary school graduates can no longer be absolved in the labour market due to the hoax education system in which they are schooled. Most school principals seem not to perturb whether the school facilities in their schools are adequate or not in achieving the desired objectives of education. Some of them seem to put on lackadaisical attitude in supervising the state of affairs of school facilities and the recommendation of worn-out facilities to the government via the ministry of education for rehabilitation and procurement.

For Nigerians to overcome economic recession, school principals have lots of work to do. They must ensure that teaching and learning experiences reflect the objectives of education enshrined in N.P.E. It is as a result of this background that this research work seeks to explore ways of overcoming economic recession through principals' effective management of school facilities in Abia State. Thus, put in a question form what are the modern management techniques required by principals for effective management of school facilities to overcome economic recession in Abia State?

In addition, Oluchukwu in Olagboye, A. A., & Fadipe, J.O. (1998) emphasized that in view of the huge cost of procurement of new material, maintenance culture should be upheld in schools or be made a priority. When school plant is taken care of, they last long thereby saving costs for the government. All hands must be on deck in maintaining school plant which involves keeping of grounds, buildings and equipment in their original condition of completeness or efficiency. Ajayi (2007) opined that school plant maintenance is all activities embarked upon with a view to sustaining initial use value of the school plant. This involves sweeping of the floors, surroundings, dusting, mopping, scrubbing and so on. Kenezovich (1975) was of the view that the time it takes for a structure to become obsolete and archaic is a function of the quality of the original construction and material as well as the quality of housekeeping and maintenance.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The major purpose of this study was to determine the ways of overcoming economic recession through principals' effective management of school facilities. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. Examine the managerial challenges of principals on effective management of school facilities in Abia state secondary schools.
2. Identify modern managerial techniques required by principals for effective management of school facilities to overcome economic recession in Abia State Secondary Schools.

Research questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the managerial challenges of principals on effective management of school facilities in Abia state secondary schools?
2. What are modern managerial techniques required by principals for effective management of school facilities to overcome economic recession in Abia State Secondary Schools?

4. METHODOLOGY

Design of the study

The study will adopt a descriptive research survey design. The descriptive research design is aimed at determining the state of affairs as it exists at present (Korthari, 2004). The survey design will be used because; the data will be collected from the sample to show the challenges already facing the principals in the management of school facilities and the modern management techniques for the maintenance of school facilities for overcoming economic recession in Abia State Secondary schools.

Area of Study

The area of study is Abia State, its capital is Umuahia. It has 17 Local Government Areas. Abia State, which occupies about 6,320 square kilometres, is bounded on the north and northeast by Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi. To the west

is Imo State, and to the east and southeast is Cross River State and Akwa Ibom State. And to the south is Rivers State. They engage in various fields of life endeavour and also lovers of education.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of 4,904 teachers in 244 public secondary schools in Abia State. (SEMB 2015). The researcher selection of teachers as the population of study is based on the popular view that the quality and viewpoint of any invention and innovation in the education sector depends a lot on teachers' own assessment.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of the study was 1,226 teachers constituting 25% of the population. The sample was selected through a stratified proportionate random sampling technique. This is for full representation of all the public secondary schools in Abia state.

Instrument for Data Collection

The researchers structured a questionnaire titled; Overcoming Economic Recession through Principals' Effective Management of School Facilities (OERPMSFQ) for data collection. The instrument was arranged on a four- point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) -4 points Agree (A) -3 points, Disagree (D) -2 points and strongly disagree (S D) 1 point.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument for data collection was validated by three validates, two from Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

Reliability of Instrument

Reliability of the instrument realized was using a test-re-test after two weeks interval using 30 teachers from Imo state which is outside the target population and sample. Pearson's product moment correlational coefficient statistic was used and a coefficient of 0.80 was ascertained showing that the instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of four research assistants who were properly trained on how to administer and collect the instrument. The collection of the data for the study from the respondents was also by hand and on the spot. The on-the-spot collection ensures the complete return of the entire questionnaire meant for the study.

5. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analysed using mean. Any response up to 2.50 or above shall be agreed and accepted while below 2.50 shall be taken as having disagreed and rejected. The data was analysed in tables according to research questions.

Research question 1: *What are the managerial challenges of principals for effective management of school facilities in Abia state secondary schools?*

Mean response on managerial challenges of principals on effective management of school facilities.

S/N	Item Statements	No.	Mean	Decision
1.	Over-use of facilities.	1226	2.50	Accepted
2.	Lack of data base.	1226	2.52	Rejected
3.	Lack of qualified manpower.	1226	2.51	Accepted
4.	Inadequate qualified manpower.	1226	2.55	Accepted
5.	Justifications of facility's needs.	1226	2.53	Accepted
6.	Lack of maintenance culture.	1226	3.34	Accepted
7.	Inadequate manpower development	1226	2.61	Accepted
	Pooled mean		3.03	Accepted

From the responses above, the seven items were identified as challenges facing principals in the management of facilities. This could be proved from the pooled mean of 3.03 which is above the bench mark of 2.50.

Research question 2: *What are modern managerial techniques required by principals for effective management of school facilities to overcome economic recession in Abia State public Secondary Schools?*

Mean response on modern management techniques of principals for effective management of school facilities in overcoming economic recession in Abia state public secondary school.

S/N	Item Statements	No.	Mean	Decision
8.	Management By Objective (MBO) helps principals to state clear definition of goals centrally for required efforts and effective utilization of facilities.	1226	2.54	Accepted
9.	MBO helps principals to recognize that management of information is key to providing a basis for effective control of facilities management.	1226	2.62	Accepted
10.	MBO as a cyclical group of interrelated administrative activities at its resourcing stage, jointly examine available facilities and allocate them according to the needs and purposes of the individual worker and overall organizational objectives.	1226	2.50	Accepted
11.	Planning Programming and Budgetary System (PPBS) empower principals to establish a budget covering short term needs and best value over the long term.	1226	3.12	Accepted
12.	PPBS help principals to recognize that management of information is key to providing a basis for effective control of facilities management.	1226	2.32	Accepted
13.	PPBS hampers the reduction of the cost of programmes and activities by intensive use of educational facilities.	1226	2.45	Rejected
14.	PERT/Critical Path Method enables the principals to consider the needs for the organizing and differentiating between core and non-core business activities.	1226	2.51	Accepted
15.	PERT/Critical Path Method helps principals identify the source or the means to finance the strategy and its practical implications for facility maintenance	1226	2.76	Accepted
16.	Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) helps the principals to establish the appropriate facility needed for providing services, whether obtained internally or externally.	1226	3.45	Accepted
17.	The Delphi technique or Think-Tank helps principals to make use of expertise in the management of facilities when all others fail to overcome economic recession.	1226	3.01	Accepted
Pooled mean			2.75	Accepted

The responses from the above ten items were identified as modern managerial techniques required by principals for effective management of school facilities to overcome economic recession. This could be proved from the pooled mean of 2.75 which is above the bench mark of 2.50.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were given.

1. Principals should use Management by Objective (MBO) as a managerial technique: for clear definition of goals centrally which enhances required efforts and effective utilization of facilities.
2. Principals should realize that PPBS help them to recognize that management of information is the key to providing a basis for effective control of facilities management.
3. PERT/Critical Path Method helps principals identify the source or the means to finance the strategy and its practical implications for facility maintenance.
4. The Delphi technique or Think-Tank helps principals to make use of expertise in the management of facilities when all others fail to overcome economic recession.
5. Principals should imbibe maintenance culture and utilize modern management techniques to overcome economic recession for quality education delivery in schools.
6. Government should also train and re-train qualified manpower needed for the use maintenances of the available facilities.

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