

# ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES ON SCHOOL PLANT MAINTENANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE

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## **Abstract**

This study examined assessment of principals' administrative strategies on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State. The study adopted a survey research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of this study consists of 309 principals of public secondary schools in Benue State. The entire population was used as the sample size for the study; this was because the population was not too large. A 21-item structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Principals' Administrative Strategies on the School Plant Maintenance (APASSPM)" was used and it was in two sections. Section A was on the Planning Strategies while B was on Coordinating strategies employed by the principals in the maintenance of school plant. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts, two in Educational Administration and Planning, and one in Test and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula in which co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained which made the instrument reliable for use. The research questions were answered with Mean and Standard Deviation, while hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that planning influences school plant maintenance in public secondary schools in Benue State. It was therefore recommended that secondary school principals should adopt and implement the administrative strategies processes in this study to achieve quality school plant maintenance.

**Keywords: Principal, Administrative strategies, School plant, Secondary schools**

## **Introduction**

Education has remained a veritable tool for development. Oyekan (2018) sees education as vibrant instrument and strength of change. This explains why individuals, as well as nations emphasize the acquisition of functional education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). Secondary school education is an important level of education in Nigeria where solid foundation for higher education and useful living are laid. The objective of secondary schools outlined among others was to give students the opportunity for quality higher education irrespective of sex, or social, religious and ethnic background. The FRN in her National policy on education stipulated among others things that secondary education in Nigeria should provide such as high-quality training and equip students to live in the society. An effective educational system would be hard to achieve without proper administrative strategies being put in place by the school manager, who is the principal. The principal is in charge of the management and administration of secondary schools.

The roles of the principals of secondary schools cannot be undermined; they are tantamount to the success of that school. A principal is a school leader who occupies a unique

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position in the secondary school administrative structure. Igoni (2020) posited that principal is the fulcrum upon which the success or failure of school administration revolves around. Maduabum (2012) noted that the principal of a school is a/an planner, coordinator, organizer, director, controller, adviser and problem solver. The researcher however views the principal as a planner and coordinator who uses strategies to maintain the school plant. Thompson (2019) sees principal as one that steers secondary education successfully into the future using strategy.

Strategy is an action that managers take to attain one or more of the organisation's goals. Juneja (2015) defined strategies as general directions set for organisation to achieve a desired state in the future. Strategies are management's compass for shaping the organisation, that is the school. and maintaining school plants.

School plants have been conceptualized in different ways by different authors. School plant refers to all non-consumable and durable physical and infrastructural facilities available in the school for teachers and students' use in order to make teaching and learning effective. They include lighting, security, transportation, furniture, toilet, storage facilities, parking lot, ICT, food, services, cleaning materials and special facilities for the physically challenged. Asiabaka, (2008) views school plant as physical facilities which include all types of buildings and equipment for teaching and non-teaching activities, areas for sports and games, farms and gardens, landscape, trees, roads and paths. School plants are educational facilities which include permanent and semi-permanent structures such as machinery, school buildings (classrooms, assembly halls, laboratory, black board), teachers' tools, workshops, libraries, teaching aids and other equipment, as well as consumable (Oyesola, 2018). Ibrahim (2018) considers school plant as the totality that makes up a school system. The main aims of principals adopting administrative strategies in the maintenance of school plant were to be able meet educational requirements and also to be able to compete favourably. Obi (2019) was of the views that school plant maintenance should be part of regular administration of the school and to achieve this, administrative strategies have to be put in place.

Aloga (2014) and Ezeocha (2015) report that the state of school plant in Nigeria was unsatisfactory, and that the facilities were inadequate. Similarly, Ekpoh (2018) maintains that school plant incorporates operational resources in the school system. It comprises buildings, ground, facilities and equipment which are essential in the implementation of educational programmes, as well as attainment of school goals.

School plant maintenance is a process which ensures that buildings and other facilities are put in proper shape for the operation of an organization, especially to assist in actualizing educational goals. School plant maintenance involves the keeping of the building, equipment and other resources at their best condition of completeness and efficiency, either through repairs or replacement (Bawai, 2013). School plant maintenance has been influenced by some factors, these factors include planning strategies and coordinating strategies.

Administrative function of the principal is to oversee all activities in the school, and in doing this, the principal provides the enabling school environment to make the teaching and non-teaching staff committed towards the achievement of the school goals. Uko (2015) asserts that effective administration of school plant is important in creating the enabling environment. It was suggested that qualified and competent professionals should be appointed as principals.

In the views of Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015), administration of school plants requires good leadership, effective monitoring, preventive and predictive maintenance; and the problems of administration were viewed to include lack of proper planning and poor coordination of the school plant facilities.

Administration is essential in every human organisation ranging from industrial firms, hospital organisations, business enterprises, churches and educational institutions for the achievement of stated objectives. A school as an organisation may find it uneasy to achieve its goals without the proper and effective administration of its human and material resources Akpakwu (2012). Agoha (2008) sees administration as a component part of management concerned with facilitating the accomplishment of the objectives of an organization through systematic management of constraints and careful utilisation of the available limited resources. Principals perform the administrative functions and the day-to-day activities of the schools. These administrative functions or activities depend on the principals' administrative, supervisory, and organisational strategies, since he bears the general responsibility of clarifying the school purpose and philosophy.

Administrative strategies can be described as well-planned series of actions or ways through which the available resources are managed and utilized for the achievement of stated objectives (Amanchukwu & Ololube, 2015). Administrative strategies can also be seen as those procedures adopted by administrators or heads of organisation for managing and reorganising human and material resources to attain the stated goals of the organisation. Enyi in Ogbonnaya, Oboegbulem, Onwura, and Enyi (2013) assert that administrative strategies can therefore be regarded as the sum total of the various processes of planning, organising, stimulating, coordinating, staffing, budgeting, communicating and evaluating. These processes can be described as the basic elements for administrative strategies adopted by school principals in school plant maintenance. These strategies or principles according to Ochai (2012) are represented in an acronym called POSDCORB (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting). Administration is seen as the everyday job of a secondary school and for the principals' administration to be effective and efficient, the maintenance of school plant is very crucial. The strategies to be investigated are planning and coordinating.

Planning, according to Abah and Odeh (2012) is the process of deciding in advance the method and process which an individual, group or an organisation intends to follow in order to accomplish its outlined objectives. Planning is a very crucial stage for the success or failure of organisational goals, and proper planning leads to a very good decision. Planning is the most significant management device for performance and for organisations to perform well, resources must be well utilised and customers well served. To achieve such ends, all organisation's human and materials resources must be well utilised in the right way and at the right time to create high quality products at minimal cost.

Another vital component of principals' administrative strategy of school plant is coordination. Coordination refers to the process of bringing related activities together and it entails the careful arrangement of activities in order to obtain a smooth flow of work in the organization. The school administration requires some top-level coordination for the school plant maintenance (Kumar, 2007). For effective management of school plant, these administrative strategies need to be applied for proper maintenance of school plant. From the foregoing, the importance of administrative strategies is of utmost importance if educational objectives would

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be actualised. This study therefore, intends to investigate the influence of principals' administrative strategies on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Secondary schools' administration is expected to provide education in an environment that will enhance effective teaching and learning. It is the expectation of the government, parents and even students that quality education is received by students in Nigerian secondary schools through the adoption of appropriate administrative strategies by the principals, to ensure that the available school plant is kept in its original state of utility as much as possible.

However, observations have shown that there seems to be poor principals' administrative strategies which have led to poor school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State. This can be seen in the areas of inadequate funding, poor maintenance facilities, poor school environment, dilapidated building, lack of infrastructural facilities. It is based on this that the researchers intend to assess principals' administrative strategies on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does principals' planning strategy influence the school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State?
2. How does principals' coordinating strategy influence the school plant maintenance in secondary school in Benue State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Principals' planning strategy has no significant influence on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.
2. Principals' coordinating strategy has no significant influence on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted survey research design aimed at assessing the influence of principals' administrative strategies on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State. The population of this study consists of all 309 principals in public secondary schools in Benue State. The choice of using principals was because they are the ones on whom the running of the schools rests upon. The entire population was taken as the sample size for the study, this is because the size was not too large and the researcher could manage it. A 21-item structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Principals' Administrative Strategies on the School plant Maintenance (APASSPM)" was used and it was in two sections. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged "Influence of Principals' Administrative Strategies on School Plant Maintenance Questionnaire" (IPASSPMQ)". The questionnaire was arranged in 2 sections

with Section 1 having 11 items and Section 2 having 10 items. Section 1 sought information on Planning, while section 2 was on Principals’ Coordination on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. The response to the items in the questionnaire was scored on a four-point rating scale. The rating scale is as follows: Very High Influence (VHI)-4, High Influence (HI)-3, Low Influence (LI)-2 and No Influence (NI)-1. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. The reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question One:** How does principals’ planning strategy influence the school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Influence of Principals’ Planning strategy on School Plant maintenance**

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Effective planning has a significant influence on the state of school buildings.	3.19	.54	HI
2	Planning plays a crucial role in maintaining school IT facilities.	3.38	1.56	HI
3	Planning encourages maintenance culture in staff	3.50	0.36	HI
4	Planning helps in maintenance of school furniture.	2.63	0.75	I
5	Planning aids in maintaining school laboratory facilities.	3.30	0.86	HI
6	Planning is essential for the upkeep of properties in the school surroundings.	3.08	1.87	HI
7	Adequate planning ensures timely renovation of school infrastructure.	3.30	0.69	HI
8	Planning is pivotal in implementing preventive and predictive maintenance.	3.52	1.84	HI
9	Planning is critical for the execution of running maintenance tasks.	3.50	0.61	HI
10	Effective planning is essential for addressing breakdown maintenance promptly.	3.06	0.71	HI
11	Planning is instrumental in carrying out corrective maintenance.	3.54	0.40	HI
	Grand mean	3.27	0.92	HI

**Key: HI = High Influence, I = Influence, M = Moderate Influence, NI = No Influence**

Table 1 reveals that all the eleven (11) items presented have influence on school plant maintenance with grand mean of 3.27 and standard deviation of 0.92. This result implies that principals’ planning strategy influences school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State

**Research questions two:** How do principals’ coordinating strategies influence school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Influence of Principals’ Coordinating strategy on School Plant maintenance in Secondary Schools in Benue State.**

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
12	Effective coordination is influences organisation of school plant maintenance.	3.27	0.97	HI
13	Coordination plays a pivotal role in ensuring that school plant maintenance is carried out promptly.	3.39	1.64	HI
14	Coordination influences the availability of necessary resources for school plant maintenance	2.72	0.92	I
15	Coordination has an impact on how school buildings are arranged and prepared for maintenance.	2.82	0.81	I
16	Coordination also affects the arrangement of physical facilities.	3.58	0.93	HI
17	Effective coordination is essential for maintenance of the school plant.	3.47	0.95	HI
18	Coordination influences the execution of running maintenance for the school plant.	3.56	1.58	HI
19	Coordinating helps in addressing breakdown in maintenance of the school plant.	3.67	1.00	HI
20	Coordination contributes to the scheduling of maintenance school physical facilities	3.64	0.80	HI
21	Coordination helps in managing corrective maintenance of the school plant.	3.54	0.65	HI
	Cluster Mean	3.36	1.02	HI

**Key: HI = High Influence, I = Influence, M = Moderate Influence, NI = No Influence**

Table 2 reveals that all the 10 items, from 12 - 21 have mean ranging from 2.72-3.67 and SD 0.65-1.64 with a grand mean of 3.36 and SD 1.02. This result implies that principals’ coordinating strategy has high influence on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.

**Hypothesis one:** Principals’ planning strategy has no significant influence on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.

**Table 3: Chi-square table of Influence of Planning on School Plant Maintenance in Secondary Schools in Benue State**

	Df	$\chi^2$	P	Sig level	Decision
Chi-square	3	211.165	0.00	0.05	Rejected
No valid Cases	309				

P<0.05

**Result on table 3** shows that the P-(sig) value, 0.00 is less than alpha-value of 0.05 (P<0.05) at df =3. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that Principals’ Planning strategy has no significant influence on School plant maintenance in secondary school in Benue State is rejected

**Hypothesis two:** Principal’s Coordinating strategy has no significant influence on School plant Maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State.

**Table 4: Chi-square table of Influence of Coordination on School plant Maintenance in Secondary schools in Benue State**

	Df	$\chi^2$	P	Sig level	Decision
Chi-square	3	280.41	0.00	0.05	Rejected
No valid Cases	309				

(P>0.05)

**Result on table 4** shows that the P-(sig) value, 0.00 is less than alpha-value of 0.05 (P<0.05) at df =3. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that Principals’ Coordinating strategy has no significant influence on School plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State is rejected

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study on table one revealed high influence of principals planning strategy on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State. This is in accordance with Maduabum (2012), who noted that the principal of a school is a planner, coordinator, organizer, director, controller, adviser and problem solver. This indicated that much would be achieved by the principals when the right planning strategy is adopted in school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State. This result corroborates Uko’s (2015) study which states that effective administration of school plant is important in creating the enabling environment, since planning influences maintenance of school building, ICT facilities, maintenance of school furniture, school laboratory and all non-consumable and durable physical and infrastructural facilities that would enhance effective teaching and learning. This further agrees with Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015) which stated that school plant requires good leadership.

The findings on table two revealed that principals’ coordinating strategy is in agreement with Kumar’s work (2007) which states that coordination in school administration requires some top-levels for the school plant maintenance to be achieved. Coordination is the process of thinking through and making explicit the strategic actions and relationship necessary to accomplish an overall objective.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that there is significant influence of principal's administrative strategies on school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Benue State. The administrative strategies employed have influence on school plant maintenance. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It was recommended that secondary school principals should adopt and implement the administrative process strategies illustrated in this study to achieve quality school plant maintenance in their schools.
2. Principals should regularly utilise the coordination strategies in order to enhance commitment from the teachers towards the maintenance of the teaching-learning facilities.
3. Regular workshops should be organised for principals on school plant maintenance in order to be effective in administrative processes.

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