



ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPALS' INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed principals' involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 4,883 comprising 257 principals and 4,626 stakeholders in the education sector. A sample size of 294 respondents was drawn using a multi-stage sampling technique. An instrument developed by the researchers titled "School Improvement Plan Questionnaire" (SIPQ) which was structured in two versions to suit the two sets of respondents (principals and stakeholders) was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts and an internal consistency reliability test was carried out using Cronbach's alpha method which yielded a coefficient of 0.84. Mean was used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs and developing school plan outline to a high extent. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs and developing school plan outline in state public secondary schools in Anambra state. Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals should continuously involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs and developing school plan outline. This will avail principals the opportunity to organize school needs in order of importance so that a more demanding needs are met before the less demanding ones.

KEYWORDS: *Stakeholders, Planning, School Improvement Planning.*



INTRODUCTION

The basic framework of a quality educational system is one that succeeds in meeting the individual school desired goals and outcomes; one that is relevant to the needs of students, communities and the society; and also one that fosters the ability of students to acquire knowledge and the needed 21st-century skills. In a bid to actualize quality education in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in 2006, introduced School Improvement Plan (SIP). School improvement is the process of improving the way a school organizes, promotes and supports learning (Hopkins, 1994). It includes changing aims, expectations of organizations, ways of learning; method of teaching and organizational culture. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2010), school improvement plan is that plan that shows the main things that the school wants to improve on and how those improvements are to be achieved. School improvement is an appropriate response to the current pressures for educational reform that focuses both on the learning needs of students and on establishing the appropriate organizational conditions within the school.

The aim of the school improvement plan is to improve the actualization of quality education at the secondary school level through the development of improvement plan by individual schools at the local level. According to Anambra State Ministry of Education (2013), the purpose of school improvement plan is to provide a sort of roadmap to guide schools and bring together the views of a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in education on how the school can improve, establishing common and agreed goals for the school, as well as setting a framework for monitoring progress and evaluating the impact of everyone's efforts. In line with this, Anambra State Ministry of Education in 2013, empowered her education sector by initiating school improvement plan at the state level, comprising of the six pillars such as the vision or long term goal of the school, analyzing the schools' current situation, prioritizing the needs of the school, developing or designing the plan, monitoring the progress and evaluation of the plan. The focus of this study is on the two most crucial pillars which are prioritizing the needs of the school and developing the school plan.

Prioritizing the needs of the school has to do with determining what area of need to tackle first owing to the fact that schools' resources of personnel, expertise, energy, time and money are limited. The needs and possibilities must be prioritized in terms of importance to the development of the school, in the

light of factors such as the current capacity of the school to address them and the current commitment of the school in dealing with them. In prioritizing the needs of the school, there is a need to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is expected that the school looks at its resources, how they can be used and the impact on students.

Having agreed on the priorities, the next important stage is to develop an outline plan. As indicated in School Development Plan Initiative (SDPI, 1999), developing a school plan encompasses designing the structure of the overall school plan, devising action plans to address the stated priorities, drafting and compiling the component sections of the plan so that it can easily be communicated to the whole staff and presented to the management for approval; having identified in a systematic manner, the school's strengths, areas for improvement, challenges and opportunities. The school at this stage must not only keep in mind how their plan will improve students' learning, they must also ensure that their plans are not only manageable but also realistic in terms of cost. According to SDPI (1999), the priorities identified in the review are translated into specific objectives or targets and action plans are subsequently designed to achieve those stated objectives.

To ensure a quality school improvement plan, Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2010) recommended that principals should involve stakeholders in school improvement planning processes in order to enhance the quality of such a plan as well as its effective monitoring and implementation. The principal as the administrator and chief executive of the school, should lead the process of school improvement planning in close co-operation with the various stakeholders as recommended by the Federal Ministry of Education (2010).

According to Gross and Godwin (2005), stakeholders are individuals or entities who stand to gain or lose from the success or failure of a system or an organization. The stakeholders to be involved in the school improvement plan as recommended by the FME (2010) include teachers, the students, community and parents/guardians. Principals' involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning process according to Anambra state ministry of education (2013) and FME (2010) will; help to set out the school's vision for its future and how it intends to tackle its weaknesses with the aim of bringing about improvement to areas where it is mostly needed. This will in turn, help the school in successfully introducing positive changes in the school for improved teaching



and learning. Stakeholders' involvement will also enable the wider community to have a voice in the improvement of education. However, non-involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning can result in poor infrastructural development, lack of community participation in school activities, and overall delay in school development.

The observable situation in public secondary schools in Anambra state appears to show that cases of examination malpractice, special centers, and other types of examination fraud are prevalent in most secondary schools in the state. There are also reported cases of poor academic achievement and performance as well as cases of indiscipline, lack of effective evaluation, monitoring and supervision in the areas of human relationships, personnel, facilities, equipment, and infrastructure in public secondary schools in Anambra state (Modebelu & Onyali, 2014; Mbonu, 2015). The overall consequence of this is that the educational system in the state appears to have ceased to be responsive to meeting the need of learners and the collective task of promoting national development. These situations, therefore brings to light a gloomy scenario that suggests principals' non- involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning in secondary schools in Anambra state.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

School improvement planning is one of the pillars that can be used to improve the quality of education in schools. However, there appears to be an insufficient exploration of the requirements which must be met such as; involvement of major stakeholders in school development planning processes. Non-involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning can result in poor infrastructural development, lack of community participation in school activities and overall delay in school development. This seems to be the reason for the poor state of infrastructural development and undue delay in school improvement experienced in most of the public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Studies have continued to report falling standards in students' academic achievement and discipline, lack of effective evaluation, monitoring, and supervision in the areas of human relationships, personnel, facilities, equipment, and infrastructure in public secondary schools in Anambra state. These situations make one wonder if principals of public secondary schools in Anambra state involve stakeholders in school improvement planning. The problem of this study therefore is to assess principals'

involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning in secondary schools in Anambra state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to assess principals' involvement of stakeholders in school improvement planning in public secondary schools in Anambra state. Specifically, the study assessed:

1. Principals' involvement of stakeholders in prioritizing school needs in state public secondary schools in Anambra state.
1. Principals' involvement of stakeholders in developing school plan outline in state public secondary schools in Anambra state.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do principals' involvement of stakeholders in prioritizing school needs in state public secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. To what extent do principals' involvement of stakeholders in developing school plan outline in state public secondary schools in Anambra state.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs in state public secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline in state public secondary schools in Anambra state.

METHOD

The study utilized the descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study and two corresponding null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study sample was made up of 294 respondents. The sample was drawn using a multi-stage sampling procedure. A researchers' developed instrument titled "School Improvement Plan



Questionnaire" (SIPQ) which was structured in two versions to suit the two sets of respondents (principals and stakeholders) was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three experts.

Reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained for the questionnaire using Cronbach Alpha method. Data obtained from the field were analysed using mean for the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean Ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs

	Principals (N=94)			Stakeholders (N=191)			Total (N=285)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Articulating the needs of the school	3.37	.67	HE	3.40	.63	HE	3.39	.64	HE
2. Taking decisions on what the school need to do to improve	3.37	.67	HE	3.35	.62	HE	3.35	.64	HE
3. Drawing up the list of priorities of the school	3.28	.63	HE	3.21	.60	HE	3.23	.61	HE
4. Communicating the agreed priority as widely as possible to solicit widespread interest	3.20	.67	HE	3.10	.60	HE	3.14	.62	HE
5. Communicating the agreed priority as widely as possible to solicit widespread support	3.21	.64	HE	3.03	.66	HE	3.09	.65	HE
6. Screening the priority areas in the light of resources available in the school	3.22	.62	HE	3.12	.58	HE	3.15	.60	HE
7. Final adoption of the school priority areas	3.11	.63	HE	3.10	.53	HE	3.11	.57	HE
Mean of means	3.25	.64	HE	3.19	.60	HE	3.21	.61	HE

Table 1 shows the aggregated mean of means and standard deviation of 3.21 and .61 which indicates that principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs to a high extent. The mean of means and standard deviation for principals (3.25 and .64) and stakeholders (3.19 and .60) show that principals and stakeholders perceived the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs to be high. The analysis of the individual items shows that

principals and stakeholders rated the principals' involvement of stakeholders on the seven listed items to be high with their mean ratings ranging from 3.11 to 3.37 for principals and 3.03 to 3.40 for stakeholders.

**Table 2: Mean Ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline**

	Principals (N=94)			Stakeholders (N=191)			Total (N=285)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Drawing up the strategies for each of the agreed priorities	3.31	.72	HE	3.21	.64	HE	3.24	.67	HE
2. Articulating the range of possible activities	3.14	.67	HE	3.19	.70	HE	3.17	.69	HE
3. Disseminating the decisions to the wider community	3.03	.75	HE	3.08	.84	HE	3.07	.81	HE
4. Allocating resources for each priority areas	3.11	.77	HE	2.91	.73	HE	2.98	.75	HE
5. Assigning responsibilities for each activity	3.01	.66	HE	2.93	.81	HE	2.96	.76	HE
6. Determining when each of the activity would be carried out	3.04	.72	HE	3.10	.76	HE	3.08	.74	HE
Mean of means	3.11	.71	HE	3.07	.74	HE	3.08	.73	HE

As displayed in Table 2, the overall mean of means and standard deviation of 3.08 and .73 indicates that principals involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline to a high extent. The mean of means and standard deviation for principals is 3.11 and .71 and that of stakeholders is 3.07 and .74 indicating that principals and stakeholders perceived the extent to

which principals involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline to be high. The item-by-items analysis shows that principals and stakeholders rated principals' involvement of stakeholders in the six listed items to be high. Their mean ratings ranged from 3.10 to 3.31 for principals and 2.91 to 3.21 for stakeholders.

Table 3: t-test comparison of principals and stakeholders' mean ratings on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	94	22.77	3.40	283	1.01	1.96	Not Significant
Stakeholders	191	22.32	3.40				

The result in Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value (1.01) is less than the critical value (1.96) at the alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom (df) 283. This is an indication that the difference in the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to

which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs was not significant. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 4: t-test comparison of the principals and Stakeholders' mean ratings on the extent to which principals involve Stakeholders in developing school plan outline.**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	94	18.64	3.52	283	.45	1.96	Not Significant
Stakeholders	191	18.42	3.68				

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value (.45) is less than the critical value (1.96) at alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom (df) 283. This indicates that the difference in the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline was not significant. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study revealed that principals and stakeholders perceived that principals to a high extent involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs by involving them in; articulating the needs of the school, taking a decision on what the school needs to do to improve, drawing up the list of priorities of the school, screening the priority areas in the light of resources available in the school and final adoption of the school priority areas.

The finding of this study is in line with the findings of Nemes (2013) who found that the school committees are involved in the whole school development planning. Contrary to the findings of this study, Chukwuma (2014) found out that there is insufficient involvement of relevant stakeholders, lack of experienced personnel and financial constraints were identified as problems encountered during strategic planning development. The findings of this study are not in line with the findings of Anin, Asuo, and Harreit in (2013), who found out that the stakeholders were never involved in the school development planning and implementation process. The reason for this difference in findings could be as a result of the existing gap in timing of both studies.

Prioritizing the needs of the school involves deciding what to tackle first, this decision would be better made when stakeholders are involved in this process. Principals should however, continue to involve the relevant stakeholders in drawing up school priorities for a quality plan development. The findings of the hypothesis indicated no significant difference in

the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders regarding the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs. The reason for this could be that principals and the stakeholders have the same perception of the extent principals involve them in prioritizing school needs.

Another finding of this study indicates that principals and stakeholders' perception on the extent to which principals involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline is high. This implies that public secondary schools in Anambra State involve the stakeholders in; drawing up the strategies for each of the agreed priorities, articulating the range of possible activities, disseminating the decisions to the wider community, assigning responsibilities for each activity, allocating resources for each priority areas, and determining when each of the activity in the school would be carried out.

The finding of this study is consistent with the findings of Kaylor and Gichinga (2014) whose results showed that effective communication is a key requirement for an effective strategic planning process. This simply means that for effective planning to take place, the people involved should be communicated from time to time. The result of this study is also in line with findings of Teresa (2014) that the extent to which schools were set goals and priorities focused on the whole issues that school development planning deals with, such as the extent to which schools organized necessary resources such as human power for school development plan implementation, and the degree to which principals and department heads are involved in plan preparation was found to be good.

However, the findings of this study did not agree with the findings of Jackson (2011) who found out that effective communication did not take place during the strategic planning process; hence the majority of the employees who participated in his study felt excluded in the whole process and contributed less toward the implementation of the plan. Also contrary to the findings of this study, the findings of Anin, Asuo, and Harreit (2013) showed that the stakeholders were



never involved in the school development planning and implementation process. The findings of the hypothesis indicated no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and stakeholders on the extent to which principals involve them in developing school plan outline.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals of secondary schools in Anambra State highly involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs and developing school plan outline to address identified development needs of the school.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should continuously involve stakeholders in prioritizing school needs. The involvement of stakeholders in prioritizing school needs will avail principals the opportunity to organize school needs in order of importance so that a more demanding need is met before the less demanding ones.
2. Principals also should continue to involve stakeholders in developing school plan outline. Principals' continuous involvement of stakeholders in this area will help principals in arriving at a detailed and clear school plan outline that will help in the achievement of school development plan.

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