CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF PRINCIPALS FOR MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL UNITY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Mismanagement of school funds, dilapidated school facilities as well as lateness and absenteeism among personnel in Federal unity schools in South, East, Nigeria indicated unsatisfactory state of affairs which demands immediate response through determination of capacity building needs of principals. To this effect, the study examined thecapacity building needs of principals for management of federal unity schools in South East, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The research design employed for the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised 12 principals in the federal unity schools in South-East, Nigeria and all were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a researchers-developed questionnaire titled Capacity Building Needs of Principals Questionnaire (CBNPQ). Data collected were analyzed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The results of the study revealed among others that the capacity buildingneeds of principals for facilities management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria included; keeping accurate record of school facilities, regular inspection of available school plant, planning for procurement of school plant, renovation of school buildings, regular repair of school furniture and servicing of school machines to keep them in functioning states. On the basis of these findings, the researchers recommended among others that Government should increase reasonably the budgetary allocation for regular training of principals to enable them keep abreast with the knowledge of personnel management in school.

Keywords: Principal, capacity building, personnel management, facilities management and financial management.

Introduction

Education is a cornerstone for growth and development of any nation. This is because it is a powerful instrument that equips one with skills and knowledge for self-reliance. It also strengthens the institution of civil society, national capacity development as well as reduction of poverty, crime and unemployment. Society

changes have brought new challenges on educational institutions and those who manage them. Osuji (2014) asserted that educational changes are likely to accompany not only change in curriculum in terms of subject taught and syllabus but also school conditions such as environment, infrastructure, social changes, community restiveness, conflict and advancement of information communication technologies which affect the capacity of principals to cope and meet these challenges in order to implement educational policies. Despite, the changing nature of administrative jobs as a result of introduction of new technologies, curriculum reforms and increase in students' enrolment, some principals in unity schools operate with the knowledge and skills which they acquired during their school years. This may account for mismanagement of school funds, dilapidated school facilities as well as lateness and absenteeism among students and teachers in Federal unity schools in South-East, Nigeria. This makes it imperative for capacity building of school principals in order to cope with these changes and innovation. In the same vein, Okenjom, Akoloh, Ikurite and Ihekoronye (2017) posited that school principals in globalized world need capacity building programme that will keep them abreast with the educational challenges in the administration of schools and curriculum implementation in the schools.

The concept of capacity building has been defined by several scholars in varying ways. According to Uwakwe (2017), capacity building refers to the efforts, strategies and methodologies taken towards improving the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes possessed by the school principals for proficiency in their responsibilities of taking charge of all that happens in the school. These capacity building programmes usually take the form of conferences, workshops, seminars, refresher courses, symposium and orientation among others. Capacity building is a process of developing and strengthening teachers' skills, knowledge, attitude and abilities (Uchendu, 2015). In the views of Okenjom et al (2017), capacity building is deliberate programme planned for school administrators to acquire a wide range of competencies, skills and knowledge with which to effectively implement educational policies. Contextually, capacity building is any programme designed to help personnel acquire up-dated skills and knowledge to meet the contemporary demand of their profession. The programme may be in the area of financial management, personnel management and facilities management among others. The study however focused on the three mentioned above.

Finance is essential for procurement of facilities for effective school management. This made financial management indispensable in school settings. Financial management is the art of planning, sourcing, accounting and making judicious use of school funds for implementation of school programmes. Some principals in unity schools fall short of the skills to source alternative funds to augment the school finance. There have been cases of financial misappropriation and mismanagement of school funds due to poor auditing, budgeting and accounting practices. This in turn contributes to incomplete execution of approved

projects in unity schools in South-east, Nigeria. This tallies with the observation of Aliyu (2018) which revealed that some of the principals in Nigeria are accused of lacking the necessary training of financial managers, while other are accused of imposing illegal levies on the students, neglecting budgetary plans, delaying disbursement of funds for fraudulent purposes. In some cases, school budget are poorly planned and not strictly complied with during implementation stage.

The position of the personnel as the human resources in educational production process is very important for the attainment of set objectives. Ofojebe and Nnebedum (2016) stressed that the distinguished characteristics of personnel stem from the fact that other resources cannot control itself without human effort. The principal is the personnel manager at secondary school level. Effective management of personnel could stimulate them to develop positive attitude toward their job. However, negative attitude of personnel such as lateness, absenteeism and other form of professional misconducts in secondary schools including unity schools in South-East, Nigeria, may put in serious doubt the capacity of principals to manage them. This situation thus calls for the determination of capacity building needs of principals for personnel management.

School facilities create conducive learning environment. School facilities include playground, buildings, furniture, tools, sport equipment, laboratory apparatus and machinery among others. Management of these facilities helps not only to keep them in optimum condition but minimize the dilapidation of the school facilities. This situation is worrisome to the researchers. Takwate (2018) observed that public outcries about the dilapidated nature and poor planning of school facilities in Nigeria have yield little or no result. This unpleasant state of affairs demands immediate response through determination of capacity building needs of principals to reverse the situation. Okenjom et al (2017) pointed out that the major way through which viability and effectiveness in school administration can be achieved is through regular participation in capacity building programmes like in-service training, workshops, conferences, seminars and professional meetings that are organized for principals. Thus, an investigation into the capacity buildingneeds of principals for management of federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria is necessary to ascertain the areas, these school administrators need training.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study is to ascertain the capacity buildingneeds of principals for effective management of federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. capacity buildingneeds of principals for personnel management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria.
2. capacity buildingneeds of principals for facilities management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria.

3. capacity buildingneeds of principals for financial management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the capacity buildingneeds of principals for personnel management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria?
2. What are the capacity buildingneeds of principals for facilities management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria?
3. What are the capacity buildingneeds of principals for financial management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is the design which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristic features or facts about a given population. The descriptive survey design fits into this study because the researchers collected data from the given population of the study to describe in a systematic manner the capacity buildingneeds of principals for management of federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria. The study was carried out in Federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 12 principals of the 12 Federal unity schools in South-East, Nigeria. There was no sampling due to the relatively small and manageable size of the population of the study. All the 12 principals in the Federal unity schools in, south-east, Nigeria were used for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a researchers'-developed questionnaire titled ''Capacity Building Needs of Principals Questionnaire (CBNPQ)''.The instrument was developed from related literature reviewed, personal observation of the researchers and interaction with experts in the education industry. CBNPQ was divided into three parts namely; A, B and C. In order to ensure face validation of the instrument, the title, purpose of the study, research questions and drafted copy of the instrument were presented to three experts who are lecturers in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Two of the experts were from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and the other a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations. Based on their comments and suggestions, the instrument was modified to suit the purpose of the study.

The reliability of CBNPQ was determined after administering the copies of the instrument to six principals in Federal unity schools in South-South, Nigeria. The data collected were subjected to measure of internal consistency using Cronbach alpha which yielded the reliability index of 0.68, 0.71 and 0.68 for parts A, B and C of CBNPQ respectively. Data were collected through face-to-face

method by the researchers together with three research assistants who were briefed on the purpose of the study and their roles in ensuring collection of valid data. Out of 12 copies of questionnaire distributed, 11 were duly filled and retrieved indicating 92% return rate. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any item with mean score of 2.50 and above was adjudged agreement; while any item with mean score below 2.50 was considered disagreement.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the capacity buildingneeds of principals for personnel management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings ofthe Capacity BuildingNeeds of Principals for Personnel Management

	ITEMS*:*	**Principal (N =11)**		
		Mean	SD	Remark
1	Supervision of staff activities	2.67	1.07	Agree
2	Orientation of personnel in school	2.43	0.87	Disagree
3	Preparation of staff duty schedules	2.45	1.12	Disagree
4	Keeping accurate record of personnel	2.54	1.18	Agree
5	Discipline of misbehaved personnel	2.60	0.96	Agree
6	Staff performance appraisal as a mean of monitoring their tasks executed	2.87	1.14	Agree
7	Communication networks for timely dissemination of information	2.82	1.17	Agree
8	Formulation of rules and regulation to guide the conduct of personnel	2.52	1.12	Agree
9	Guidance and counseling services to help them overcome their professional challenges	2.65	1.10	Agree
11	Coordination of co-curricular activities	2.50	1.15	Agree
12	Controlling of work force diversity	2.90	1.10	Agree
13	Delegation of duties based on staff competency	2.41	1.09	Disagree
14	Motivation of personnel to stimulate their performance	2.53	1.14	Agree
15	Conflict management in school	2.58	0.92	Agree
16	Rendering of health services to personnel	2.66	1.15	Agree

Result on Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of principals which are above 2.50 for items 1, 4-12 and 14-16 indicated agreement on these items as their capacity building needs for personnel management. However, with mean scores below 2.50

for items 2, 3 and 13, the respondents indicated disagreement with the items as their personnel management capacity building needs. The standard deviation scores for the items listed which range between 0.87 and 1.18 shows that their responses are close and this indicate homogeneity in their responses. The results therefore indicated that the capacity buildingneeds of principals for personnel management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria include; supervision of staff activities, accurate record keeping, discipline of misbehaved personnel, communication networks for timely dissemination of information, formulation of rules and regulation to guide the conduct of personnel, guidance and counseling services to help them overcome their professional challenges, coordination of co-curricular activities, controlling of work force diversity, motivation of personnel to stimulate their performance, conflict management in school and rendering of health services to personnel.

Research Question 2: What are the capacity buildingneeds of principals for facilities management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings ofthe Capacity BuildingNeeds of Principals for Facilities Management

	ITEMS*:*	**Principal (N =11)**		
		Mean	SD	Remark
17	Keeping accurate record of school facilities	2.78	1.04	Agree
18	Regular inspection of available plant in school	2.56	0.88	Agree
19	Planning for procurement of school plant	2.80	1.13	Agree
20	Renovation of school buildings	2.65	1.09	Agree
21	Regular of school furniture	2.65	1.02	Agree
22	Ensuring school environment is kept clean	2.34	1.13	Disagree
23	Regular servicing of school machines to keep them in functioning states	2.69	1.17	Agree
24	Constitution of committer for school plant management	2.42	1.16	Disagree

Table 2 shows that the principals are of the views that most of the items portray their capacity building needs for facilities management. This is evident in the mean values of all items which are above cut off mean of 250, with exception of items 22 and 24. The standard deviation scores range from 0.88-1.17 indicating that the respondents' responses are homogeneous. Thus, the capacity buildingneeds of principals for facilities management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria included; keeping accurate record of school facilities, regular inspection of available plant in school, planning for procurement of school plant, renovation of

school buildings, regular of school furniture and regular servicing of school machines to keep them in functioning states.

Research Question 3: What are the capacity buildingneeds of principals for financial management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings ofthe Capacity BuildingNeeds of Principals for Financial Management

S/N	**ITEMS**	**Principal (N =11)**		
		Mean	SD	Remark
25	Preparing the school budget to ensure prudence in spending	2.65	1.24	Agree
26	Making entries for purchase of facilities in the school	2.46	1.20	Disagree
27	Regular auditing to minimize fraud in school	2.56	1.14	Agree
28	Checking compliance with established accounting practices	2.59	0.87	Agree
29	Preparation of school annual financial statement	2.75	0.98	Agree
30	Setting up committee for monitoring school budget implementation	2.30	0.84	Disagree
31	Disbursement of fund to various department	2.45	0.83	Disagree
32	Assessing adherence to budgetary operational guidelines	2.41	1.12	Disagree
33	Financial investment opportunities for school alternative source of income	2.90	1.09	Agree
34	Quarterly account of school income and expenditure	2.56	1.10	Agree
35	Inspection of receipts for proper recording	2.70	1.12	Agree
36	Supervision of Bursary activities to minimize fraud	2.85	1.10	Agree
37	Thoroughly inspection of vouchers before endorsement	2.56	1.16	Agree
38	Estimation od the cost of implementation of school budgetary plan	2.60	1.00	Agree
39	Presentation of financial report to the Ministry of Education	2.62	1.00	Agree

Result of data analysis presented on Table 3 shows that principals mean scores for eleven items with serial numbers 25, 27, 28, 29 and 33-39 are higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50 and this indicates agreement with the items as the

capacity buildingneeds of principals for financial management. The standard deviation scores of principals which are between 0.83 and 1.24 indicate homogeneity in their ratings. Thus, the capacity buildingneeds of principals for financial management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria included; school budget preparation, auditing, accounting, preparation of school annual financial statement, financial investment opportunities for school alternative source of income, quarterly account of school income and expenditure, inspection of receipts for proper recording, supervision of bursary activities, thoroughly inspection of vouchers before endorsement, estimation of the cost of implementation of school budgetary plan and presentation of financial report to the ministry of education.

Discussions

The finding of this study revealed that the capacity buildingneeds of principals for personnel management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria included; supervision of staff activities, accurate record keeping, discipline of misbehaved personnel, communication networks for timely dissemination of information, formulation of rules and regulation to guide the conduct of personnel, guidance and counseling services to help them overcome their professional challenges, coordination of co-curricular activities, controlling of work force diversity and conflict management in school. This corroborated the finding of Onu (2012) who reported that training needs of principals for personnel resource management include; staff discipline, provision of school needs, delegation of duties, orientation of new members of staff, information management and conflict resolution. The agreement in the two findings could be as a result of the fact that the two studies were conducted in south-east, Nigeria in which similar practices of personnel management are applied in secondary schools across the zone. The attainment of capacity building needs of principals for personnel management could help to motivate and control staff activities. This in turn is likely to lead to greater efficiency and job performance among staff.

The result of the study also revealed that the capacity buildingneeds of principals for facilities management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria included; keeping accurate record of school facilities, regular inspection of available plant in school, planning for procurement of school plant, renovation of school buildings, regular of school furniture and regular servicing of school machines to keep them in functioning states. This is in line with the finding of Agusiobo and Nwobodo (2017) who found out that the facilities management capacity building needs of principals include; producing and development of materials and equipment, caring for all school property and ensuring that all school records are properly kept. When the principals' capacity building needs of principals for facilities management are met, the school plant is likely to be well-

utilized. This will create conducive, comfortable and safe learning environment in school.

It was found out that the capacity buildingneeds of principals for financial management in federal unity schools in South-east, Nigeria include; school budget preparation, auditing, accounting, preparation of school annual financial statement, financial investment opportunities for school alternative source of income, quarterly account of school income and expenditure, inspection of receipts for proper recording, supervision of bursary activities, thoroughly inspection of vouchers before endorsement, estimation od the cost of implementation of school budgetary plan and presentation of financial report to the ministry of education. This concurred with the finding of Justus (2014) which reported that financial management need of principals included; auditing, accounting, record management, procurement approaches, school budgeting, short-term financial management among others. This equally agreed with the result of Agusiobo and Nwobodo (2017) who reported that the financial management capacity building needs of principals include; financial accounting duties keeping and reporting of fiscal records, the collection and accounting for any fees and such other funds as may be made available to him for the purposes of running the school and the preparation of the school budgets, receiving advice from the Bursar on all financial matters including the correct procedure in dealing with the provision of the financial institution, ensuring that school fees are collected from students and that appropriate receipts are issued and ensuring that all weekly or monthly returns required by Ministry of Finance or Post Primary School Management Board are prepared promptly and submitted. The similarity in the two findings may be as a result of the fact that the two studies were conducted in south-east, Nigeria and principals are likely to manage secondary school funds in a related way. The attainment of capacity building needs of principals for financial management could help minimize financial misappropriation and mismanagement. Consequently, the school funds will be judiciously utilized.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals need capacity building for effective management of unity schools. The principals need the capacity building in the areas of personnel management, facilities management and financial management. The attainment of capacity building needs of principals in these areas could result to prudent use of the available resources to attain set goals and objectives.

Recommendations

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

1. Government should increase reasonably the budgetary allocation for regular training of principals to enable them keep abreast with the knowledge of personnel management in school.
2. Federal Ministry of Education should conduct quarterly orientation programmes for principals to enlighten and equip them with knowledge to meet the contemporary demands of school facilities management.
3. The Government and every other stakeholder in education sector should collaborate to organize seminars for principals in the areas of financial management.

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