



ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE PLANNING FOR THE PROVISION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The study investigated the planning of administrative space for secondary education delivery in Delta State. It adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the 891 public and private secondary schools in the state. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 225 schools (public-115, private-110). Document analysis through the use of checklist was used to obtain the data for the study. The data generated were analysed using percentage. The study revealed that administrative space was planned in both public and private secondary schools. However, the study showed that the level at which the planning was carried out was higher in public schools than in privately owned schools. The study therefore recommended among other things that private school owners should always employ the services of educational planners when planning schools. This is to ensure compliance with recommended planning standards in all areas.*

Introduction

Education, the world over has been recognized and appreciated as a critical instrument for socio- economic and political development. This is why Nigeria stated in her National Policy on Education that education is the “instrument par excellence” for national development. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2014). It equips individuals with relevant skills, capacities, knowledge and attitudes to be productive in life, thereby contributing to the development of the society. This is at the heart of the human capital thesis which argues that education and training are critical in improving the productive capacity of an individual, improves his earning capacity and at the same time contributes to national development. Education is a complex task process that requires a lot of planning and input to make it worthwhile. It cuts across the three levels with their distinctive peculiarities, demands and implications. Their interconnectivity must always be taken into consideration in the planning and implementation process for the integral development of the human person. All the three levels of education therefore, require proper attention to ensure that their specific goals and objectives are realized. However, the focus of this study is the secondary level.

Secondary education is the intermediary between primary and tertiary education. It is designed to equip the students to either transit to the tertiary level or to exit into the world of work with some basic skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes. This obviously makes secondary education very critical in the entire education process since its basic objective is double barreled. The main reason why the acquisition of secondary education in Nigeria is very important is because, the curriculum of primary education is not sufficient enough to help a child to acquire certain educational qualities such as lasting literacy, communication skills, language fluency, and numeracy skills (Chinelo, 2011). In other words, it is at this educational stage that the additional knowledge and skills needed to help the child function effectively at the tertiary level are inculcated into him/her. This however, cannot be achieved without the school plant.

The school plant is seen as everything that makes up the school environment. These include physical and material facilities such as buildings, furniture, laboratories and the entire environment of the school. Discussing school plant in their various works, Irele (2003), Dimmock (2004) and Adegoke (2003) agreed that school plant referred to school site, the buildings, equipment, school libraries, laboratories, and workshops, among others. In the same vein, Yusuf and Akinnioranye (2011) stated that

school plant includes the site, the buildings, and the equipment used during the process of teaching and learning, permanent and semi – permanent structures and other items such as machines, the black board or white board and laboratories. Asiabaka (2008) asserted that the curriculum finds its physical expression in the design and construction of school plant. Subscribing to the views of Asiabaka, Agabi (2002) posited that school plant forms the hardware through which the educational curriculum (the software) is transmitted to the groups being educated. By implication, therefore, all facilities, that is, all the material resources in the school are school plant. He equally maintained that school plant are the physical structure, the furniture, the equipment, and other material resources that directly or indirectly aid the teaching and learning process. School plant, according to Abraham (2013), implies all facilities and equipment within the school which are used by members of the school community; and all the physical structures in the school are within this category. Enahwo and Eferekeya, as cited by Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006:14) asserted that “school plant is the entire scope of the infrastructural facilities provided in the school for the purpose of educating the child”. School plant therefore is the life wire of teaching and learning as well as other non-teaching activities carried out within the process. However, for the effective and efficient utilization of these facilities, and to guarantee their relevance, they must be adequately planned. School plant planning is the first and the most critical stage in the process of providing them. They are planned based on the curriculum to be implemented and the level of education to be provided, which is basically tied to the curriculum

Planning is an indispensable tool for achieving any meaningful progress in any aspect of human endeavor. Soraj (2017) conceived planning as preparing for a goal oriented action through the most advantageous means. In other words, it is the exercise of intelligence to deal with situations as they are, and finding means to solve them optimally. Planning is a continuous exercise that must be regularly carried out in response to the dynamic behavior of the environment. It is a proactive management strategy that significantly guarantees relevance, functionality, effectiveness and economy. Planning education therefore, remains sacrosanct if educational goals and objectives, at all levels are to be realistic, rational and relevant.

Educational planning entails the process of collecting, tabulating and interpreting appropriate data to show how well the educational system has performed, what are its current strengths and weaknesses, and on the basis of this understanding, to prescribe solutions for its healthier growth.



Fabumi (2005) therefore described educational planning as a continuous process of obtaining and analyzing facts, and from empirical base of providing information for decision makers on how best the educational system is to accomplish its goals and how best to achieve cost effectiveness of educational programmes. In other words, educational planning is the method for obtaining educational statistics, which when analyzed, reveals the true position of the education system so that the necessary steps can be taken to correct any anomaly and make it more effective and efficient.

School plant planning, which is an aspect of educational planning, entails the rational distribution of educational facilities within an institution. Oyesola (2007) stated that the objectives of school plant planning are to satisfy educational objectives, since it is concerned mainly with the future of education systems. It aims at setting up a school plant which will ensure in the most efficient and equitable way, the effective delivery of education.

Eresimadu (1996) highlighted the importance of school plant planning, by stating that it improves the aesthetic beauty of a school, protects the school occupants from rain, sunshine and other hazards, and also helps to avoid catastrophic loss of lives of occupants when buildings are re-planned, re-enforced or replaced. He added that school plant planning improves the quality of the programmes offered and also provides effective delivery of school curriculum.

A very important aspect of school plant planning is administrative space planning which is concerned with spaces and buildings specifically designed for administrative purposes. They include the Principals, vice Principals offices, other administrative offices, staff rooms, guidance councilors' office, security office and health clinics etc. The fundamental function of the administrative space is to serve the administrative needs of the school (Strincherz, 2000). It is planned to feature openness and easy access for students, teachers, non-teaching staff and the public. The administrative offices shall be pleasant and attractive in design, reflecting the spirit of friendly and helpful atmosphere. The operation of administrative offices shall provide for children, teachers and parents opportunities for active participation in the democratic process. These facilities are to be centrally located where they will be easily accessible to the public. While the offices need not be too elaborate, their general appearance should impress the visitors. Ideally, the main office should be divided into two areas, one of which should be large enough for conferences with teachers, or other groups. The outer office should provide adequate space for clerical personnel and equipment. In a large school, a separate office should be provided for the Vice Principals

This is in consonance with the position of Fillion (2006). The scholar highlighted that central office should be equipped with adequate filing facilities, intercommunication system, suitable furniture, safe electrical equipment and air-conditioning systems. He added that adequate security should be provided for school funds and financial records.

Administrative space is also required for the food service director, head custodian and any other staff member with administrative duties. The space needs to be properly designed and furnished to reflect the specific administrative function. It should not be simply a desk placed in the corner of a storage room or similar type of space.

The planning of guardian counselors' office should be done in such a way that it should be located near the library / media centre, to encourage greater students use.

Furthermore, Fillion (2006:224) emphasized these specifications for school facilities: (i) One counselor's office for every 300 students of high school. (ii) Each councilor's office should be at least 100 square feet in size. (iii) One conference room large enough to seat twelve people comfortably.

Also, facilities, such as conference room facilities, clinics, auditoriums, etc, should be properly planned and equipped so as to make them meaningful, relevant and functional in schools. For instance, teachers require a properly furnished room to prepare lessons, review students work, and meet with individual students and parents. There should also be a place for teachers to relax and socialize during break. A teacher lounge can be durable as a meeting facility.

On the aspect of school health facilities, a qualified health personnel should be consulted when planning the health facility. It should be located near the guardians' office and the administrative office and should be easily accessible to students, parents and staff as possible

Similarly, in the area of security, keeping a school secure and safe is a very important task that should not be taken lightly. There are many ways to increase the safety level of a school and minimize risks so as to have a safe and secure environment for the academic development of students. Kemi (2011) further emphasized the need to keep Nigerian schools safe from the ever increasing menace sweeping across the country. He remarked that if we fail as parents, government and as a society in general to protect the learning environment for the Nigerian child, then I'm afraid, there is no future for this country.

He further stated that security is a fundamental human right, in this sense that security is a basic human need. Abraham Maslow (1963) supported this view in his theory of hierarchy of needs. He stated that the basic need of man include physiological needs such as food, shelter and safety. The upper level needs include the need to make student feel safe and secure. Depriving students of a safe and secure learning environment is simply denying them of their fundamental human right. For instance, the menace of Boko Haram is the fastest spreading news in the country. Today they are bombing churches and other public places such as schools. This is a very scary situation which cannot be treated with kid gloves, but requires strict and adequate proactive measures to deal with it. It is very crucial for schools to start planning for such an event, regardless of its perceived likelihood. Kemi (2011) therefore concluded that the need for security in schools should no longer be a subject of debate but of priority.

School leadership indirectly contributes to providing conducive conditions for learning, and teacher professional development (Mulford 2005). A school where all the necessary components of administrative spaces such as staff room, guidance counselor's office, health clinics, security post, etc, are not adequately provided for and planned, might affect the effective coordination of the school.

Asiyai, (2012) acknowledge that some secondary schools in Delta state are highly rated in terms of administrative space; moreover, good number of them are rated poorly. This has been blamed on poor compliance with the guidelines for secondary education – a situation that has eroded quality secondary education delivery in the state (Ezeanya, 2016). The question therefore is, are the secondary schools complying with the standards governing secondary education in the state? Preliminary observations denote that most of the set guidelines were largely flouted by many secondary schools in the state.

The findings of the study carried out by Odufowokan (2011) showed that significant relationship exists between administrative space planning and student's academic performance. This further confirms that better administrative space planning would enhance students' academic performance. The importance of administrative space planning cannot be over-emphasized, considering the fact that all school activities are coordinated from the administrative blocks. A very important aspect of administrative space is the internal structure and organization; the structure of the blocks should be designed such that there will be smooth operations



of administrative activities. For instance, the Principals’ offices should not be far from the Vice- Principal and vice- versa. This will enhance free flow of work and promote efficiency among the staff.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are established for the realization of specific educational goals and objectives. They are meant to serve the students through the teaching and learning process. This is the basic and most fundamental activity in the school. In order to guarantee this objective, school administration must be effectively carried. The administrative function requires some basic facilities that must be put in place in every school which requires what is technically known as the administrative space and it must be properly planned. It is not just enough to provide the facilities. Their planning is essential to ensure that they are maximally utilized for effectiveness and efficiency. However, it has been observed in some schools, cases of ineffective and inefficient administration, poor coordination of administrative activities. Also, incidences of security concern such as student abduction, physical assault of staff and students from outside school community, encroachment by the public and some serious safety challenges have been on the increase. This sometimes leads to frustration among the staff resulting to ineffectiveness and inefficiency, abrupt closure of schools, fear among students for their safety. This is indeed the worry of the researchers. The researchers are therefore concerned about the level of administrative space planning in secondary schools in Delta State.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which administrative space is planned in secondary schools in Delta State.

Research Question

To what extent is administrative space planned in secondary schools in Delta State?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design.

The population of the study comprised all the public and private secondary schools in Delta state. They were eight hundred and ninety one number (public =453; private =438). The sample size for the study was 225 secondary schools (public =115; private =110). This was 25% of the population. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to draw the sample. Each of the zones in the state serve as a stratum. They were twelve educational zones in the states. From each of the strata the simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size. The instrument was a checklist used to ascertain the rate at which administrative spaces were planned in both public and private secondary schools. Facilities or spaces that had planning ratings of $X \geq 60\%$ were considered satisfactory whereas those that were below 60% were rated unsatisfactory. Data generated were analysed using percentage.

Data Presentation

Research Question

What is the level of administrative space planning in secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 1: The result of a checklist on the extent to which administrative space is planned in public and private secondary schools in Delta state.

3	School clinic	59	7	Unsatisfactory	58	7	Unsatisfactory
4	Security post	66	4	Satisfactory	61	6	Satisfactory
5	Counselor’s office	62	6	Satisfactory	64	3	Satisfactory
6	Conference room	63	5	Satisfactory	62	5	Satisfactory
7	Account office	67	3	Satisfactory	63	4	Satisfactory

The table above shows that with the exception of item 2 for both public and secondary schools which has planning ratings of 59 and 58 respectively which are below the benchmark, all the other items were considered satisfactorily planned since their ratings are up to 60 and above.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis shows that administrative space is planned in both public and private secondary schools. However, the level of planning in public schools is higher than the private schools. The result revealed that in public schools, principal’s offices, security offices, conference rooms, account offices, staff rooms, etc. were better planned in public schools than in private schools. The result is in agreement with a study conducted by Odufowokin (2011) In Ekiti State, Nigeria. In his study, administrative spaces were planned in both public and private secondary schools, though the degree to which they were planned was higher in public than in private schools. The need for the proper planning of administrative spaces was emphasized by Fillion (2006) who pointed out that the main purpose of administrative space is to serve the school community and members of the public such as parents. In the same vein, the United States Department of Defense Education Activity (2012) remarked that the administration area will provide the organizational and instructional leadership needed to create an atmosphere that is conducive for the teaching and learning. The administration area will assist in coordinating overall instruction and interaction with parents and community.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that administrative space is planned in both public and private secondary schools, though the level of planning is higher in public schools.

Recommendations

On the strength of the findings, the study therefore made the following recommendations:

- The government and the relevant agencies should make policy provisions to guide the planning of administration space in all school and also ensure that such policies are strictly adhered to.
- The services of qualified educational planners should be used when new schools are to be established, whether public or private so that statutory standards are maintained.
- There should be periodic review of the school plant to ensure that the necessary adjustments and modifications are effected in line with educational changes that are implemented.

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S/ n	Descripti on items	Public schools			Private schools		
		Planning rating %	Rank	Remarks	Planning rating %	Rank	Remarks
1	Principal office	71	1	Satisfactory	68	1	Satisfactory
2	Staff room	68	2	Satisfactory	65	2	Satisfactory



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