



The Adequacy and Relevance of Administrators' Preparatory Programmes: Perception of Secondary School Principals in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the adequacy and relevance of administrators' preparatory programmes' through the perceptions of secondary school principals in Rivers State. Three (3) research questions and Three (3) hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey, the population of the study was made up of 268 principals and sample drawn from it was 200 principals, simple random sampling was used to draw the sample from the three senatorial districts in Rivers State. The instrument used was questionnaire titled Adequacy and Relevance of Administrators' Preparatory Programmes Questionnaire (ARAPPQ) to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument was subjected for scrutiny to experts in the field of educational administration. A reliability index of 0.82 was gotten using split-half method. Mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses respectively. Based on the analysis, the following findings were made: principals of secondary schools in Rivers State rarely participate in administrators preparatory programmes, the course contents are adequate and relevant in preparing administrators for the task of school administration and there are inhibitions to effective development of school administrators. Based on the findings, the study recommended that government should make funds available for school administrators to undergo training and retraining in order to be fully equipped for the task before them. The trainings they receive should be relevant and adequate in preparing school administrators for the task of administration and as such the programmes should be designed by professionals in the field of education.

Keywords: Adequacy, Relevance, Administrators' Preparatory Programmes, Perception, and Inhibitions.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'administration' is an umbrella term used to describe what the man at the head of an organization does. Every organization has a leader, followers, aims and objectives and material resources, (Abraham 2002). Adam in (Abraham 2013) opined that administration is the capacity to coordinate many and often conflicting social energies in a single organization so perfectly that they function in unity. In every organization, there is the need to galvanize the actions of the human resource (Personnel) to achieve the predetermined goals, using material resources as tools.

Administration occurs in every organization, it therefore does not really differ in concept among organizations. In the school system, the process is referred to as educational administration or school administration, (Peretomode, 2001). It is the day to day running of educational institutions to achieve results by educational experts. Amadi-Eric (2008) opined that educational administration is the process of bringing men and materials together for effective and functional teaching and learning in the school, also that educational administration is a process through which the school administrator arrange and co-ordinate the resources available to education, for the purpose of achieving the goals of the educational system. "For effective school administration, the administrator needs to be knowledgeable in the theories, techniques and principles of school administration as a guide for action

when necessary”, Amade-Eric (2008). It is therefore necessary that administrators should be well groomed in leadership behaviours in order to function effectively.

Educational administrators implement educational policies and they are mainly head teachers and principals in various schools. In practice, educational administrators can also formulate certain policies at the school level as well. Also in the process of policy implementation, the administrator performs some functions of the manager namely, planning, organizing, evaluating, directing and coordinating. But this is done at the micro unit school level. The educational administrator is a professionally trained teacher with basic characteristics and leadership roles. He is a facilitator of all educational programmes; he communicates, participates in group decision processes and evaluates each staff for satisfactory job performance which in turn depends upon technical competence and personal behaviour. He stands as a link between the parents, teachers, students, the government and the community as a whole. Educational administrators who stick rigidly to outdated practices and continue to apply old rules to new situations – whether these situations concern managing people or programmes, or how to serve the customers and deliver services-will have the most difficulty functioning in this rapidly changing environment (Mansour, Vriesendorp and Elis, 2005).

Administrators in different respect and capacity undergo some special preparatory short term and long term programmes which enable them perform or acquire competence in their day-to-day activities, as Plato correctly said, ‘knowledge is virtue and ignorance’ is vice, the formal preparations include the regular administrators’ programmes run in the different institutions of higher learning. These programmes range from part-time, sandwich, seminars, workshops on effective leadership to diploma and bachelor of higher degrees on educational administration.

The formal programmes could as well be seen in two perspectives – part-time programmes and full time regular programmes. Asiabaka and Emenalo (2011) state thus, that in-service training is a form of personal development which teachers receive at various times in the course of their career and which provides opportunity for lifelong learning. This type of training has the singular advantage of equipping the administrator with new knowledge without interfering with the administrators’ normal school programme. Development of administrators in the education sector and the school context in particular refers to all the programmes designed for the continuous improvement of skills and job performance of staff. Part time programmes for school administrators include on-the-job short term training programmes. These type of programmes are common in industrial organizations where more skilled workers supervise the less skilled as they perform their respective routine functions. In the educational system, this could be conducted in form of week-end courses, evening courses, sandwich holiday courses, distant or correspondent courses, seminars/workshops, conferences and clinics. The part-time programmes could be seen as organized programmes for serving administrators whom as a result of the pressure of job and position could not go in for the full-time regular programmes.

Research in education has revealed that it is only through sandwich programmes that the gulf between advancing knowledge and practice can be bridged (Okobia, 2013). This programme is designed to add to the knowledge and skills already possessed by serving administrators (Ikediegwu, 2001; Okojie, 2009). The most popular sandwich programme in Nigeria is the one being organized by most universities where administrators have opportunity to attend during long vacation. It is usually a four/five year’s long vacation programme. But the beauty of it is that, it is arranged when schools are on holidays. It promotes life-long professional development of administrators. These programmes are common in our universities.

Arikewuyo (2009) have drawn the attention of all to the estimable value of administrators’ preparatory programmes by agreeing that it is an avenue to acquire more and new knowledge and to further develop the skills and techniques to function effectively within any organization. Principals’ development is obviously indispensable not only in the development of the individuals but also in the productive capacity of the principal. It is not persuading people to do what is wanted but rather a process of making people willingly do what the organization wants.

Ogunsaju (2000) stated the relevance of administrators’ development to include increased productivity, improved quality of work, improve skills, knowledge, understanding and attitude. He asserts further that it enhances the use of methods and techniques to reduce waste, accidents, turnover, lateness, absenteeism and overhead cost, and eliminates obsolescence in skills, technologies, methods, products, capital management and so on. Administrator’s preparatory programme brings incumbents to that level of performance which needs the performance of the job, enhances the implementation of new policies and regulations, prepares people for achievement, improve man-power development and ensure the survival and growth of the enterprise. Sparks and Loucks-horsley in Okorie, Igwe,

Asodike, Onyeike and Anyaogo (2014) state that staff development programmes have positive effect on performance of administrators. They further explained that those educators with years of experience tend to fall into rot. It is therefore natural that many tend to stagnate. For this reason refresher courses or learning something new can benefit administrators whether their focus is the refinement of content area, teaching skills, or moving from one area of study to another.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the effort of government, parents, philanthropists and other organizations to improve on the effectiveness of school administration, there is a continuous outcry on administrative ineffectiveness of the school system. Such ineffectiveness has always been regarded as the root cause of student unrest, indiscipline, laxity on the side of workers and poor academic performance of students. Some blame the students and their parents; some blame the government and its ever changing policies, while others blame the teachers and school administrators of inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

School administrators cannot be effective if they do not possess the required skills and knowledge necessary to carry out their basic administrative functions. Such knowledge and skills require regular updating so that the school administrator would remain functional overtime, given the fast changing nature of the society. It is precisely for this reason that administrators' preparatory programmes are organized. How far is the school system providing these retraining programmes for school administrators? And how adequate and relevant are such retraining programmes in meeting their professional needs, are there fundamental problems inhibiting school administrators from participating and benefiting from these administrators' preparatory programmes? These are the issues bothering the researcher and hence, form the problem of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary school principals' perceptions of the relevance and adequacy of administrators' preparatory programmes. Specifically to

1. Determine principals' perception of regularity of participation in administrators' preparatory programmes;
2. Assess principals' perceptions about the adequacy and relevance of the content of administrators' preparatory programmes;
3. Determine the inhibitions to the effective development of school administrators through administrators' preparatory programmes.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide the study

1. How regular do urban and rural school principals participate in administrators' preparatory programmes in Rivers state?
2. What are the perceptions of urban and rural school principals about the adequacy and relevance of the content of administrators' preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective and specific administrative functions of school administration?
3. To what extent are the inhibitions, to the effective development of school administrators through administrators' preparatory programmes?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis will guide this study

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their extent of participation in administrators' preparatory programmes.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their perceptions about the adequacy and relevance of administrators' preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective and specific administrative functions of school administration.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their perceptions of the inhibitions to effective development of school administrators through preparatory programmes

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was used. A simple random sampling technique was used in choosing a sample of 200 public senior secondary school principals from 268 which is about 75 percent of the population as posited by Nwana (2008) that for few hundred, 40 percent or more should be used as sample, out of which 155 are rural school principals and 45 urban school principals as respondents. Adequacy and Relevance of Administrators Preparatory Programmes Questionnaire (ARAPPQ) was the instrument used to gather data and the instrument was scored on a 4 – 1 scale as follows:

Regularly Or Very Relevant Or Very Adequate Or Great Extent 3.50 – 4.00 points, Occasionally or Moderately relevant or Moderately adequate or Moderate extent 2.50 – 3.49 points, Rarely or Minimally relevant or Minimally adequate or Minimal extent 1.50 – 2.49 points, Not at all or Not relevant or Not adequate 1.00 – 1.49 points. The instrument was validated experts in educational management and planning. The reliability of the instrument was established using 10 respondents outside the study sample, a coefficient of 0.82 was obtained using split half method, Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient and spearman Brown’s prophesy formular. Mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1: *How regular do principals participate in administrators’ preparatory programmes in Rivers state?*

Table 1: Mean responses of Rural and Urban Secondary School Principals on How regular principals participate in administrators preparatory programmes in Rivers State?

S/N	Items	Weighed Mean		Average weighed mean
		Urban	Rural	
9	Induction courses and workshops or orientation programmes for new administrators	3.51	3.71	3.61
10	Administrative seminars and workshops	3.46	3.34	3.40
11	Citizenship and leadership training courses like those organized by Man O’ War	1.95	1.86	1.91
12	Part-time, weekends or sandwich post graduate programmes organized by universities	2.68	2.44	2.56
13	Long distance or correspondence training programmes by NTI	1.88	1.96	1.92
14	Full time post graduate training programme in educational management	2.39	2.15	2.27
15	Professional conferences and symposia like those organized by ICAN, NIM, IPM for their members	3.02	2.93	2.98
16	Leadership and management training programmes organized by voluntary agencies like boys scout, red cross, philanthropic clubs etc.	1.62	1.51	1.57
17	Leadership training courses organized by religious and church organizations	1.53	2.04	1.74
Aggregate mean				2.45

Data on table 1 shows that 9, 10,12,and 15 had weighed mean scores above the criterion means of 2.50 agreeing that principals attend such preparatory programmes while 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 had responses below the criterion mean which indicates that principals do not attend such preparatory programmes. The aggregate mean of 2.45 indicates that principals rarely participate in administrators’ preparatory programmes.

Research Question 2: *What are the perceptions of urban and rural school principals about the adequacy and relevance of the content of administrators' preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective and specific administrative functions of school administration?*

Table 2: Mean responses of Rural and Urban Secondary School Principals on the adequacy and relevance of the content of administrators; preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective school administration

S/N	Items	Weighed Mean		Average weighed mean
		Urban	Rural	
18	Taking appropriate decisions on school administration	3.53	3.49	3.51
19	Carrying out effective instructional supervision	3.55	3.32	3.44
20	Understanding and implementing school programmes policies, and rules	3.61	3.35	3.48
21	Carrying out effective school leadership in pursuing and achieving the goals of the school system	3.57	3.29	3.43
22	Maintenance of healthy and functional human relations	3.75	3.43	3.59
23	Maintenance of effective school discipline	3.35	3.42	3.39
24	Handling school organizational changes and innovations	3.51	3.48	3.50
25	Carrying out effective crisis management in schools	3.37	3.23	3.30
26	Achieving effective financial resource management	3.22	3.20	3.21
27	Achieving high level of resourcefulness in the harnessing and use of school facilities and other resources	3.41	3.33	3.37
28	Motivating staff for enhanced staff productivity	3.45	3.40	3.43
29	Maintaining a high welfare standard for booth staff and students	3.30	3.31	3.31
30	Achieving a healthy school-community relations for the benefits of both the school and the community	3.31	3.25	3.28
Aggregate mean				3.40

Looking at the responses of principals from the weighed mean on table 2, it shows that 18 - 30 are above the criterion mean of 2.50 which means they have relevant and adequate content in preparing them for effective school administration. The aggregate mean of 3.40 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicates that the programmes have adequate and relevant content in preparing them for effective school administration.

Research Question 3: *To what extent are the inhibitions, to the effective development of school administrators through administrators' preparatory programmes?*

Table 3: Mean responses of Rural and Urban Secondary School Principals on the extent of inhibitions to effective development of school administrators through administrators' preparatory programmes

S/N	Items	Weighed Mean		Average weighed mean
		Urban	Rural	
31	Irregular nature of administrators' preparatory programmes	3.39	3.17	3.28
32	Poor information dissemination on available preparatory programmes for school administrators	3.56	3.43	3.50
33	Lack of funds to support active participation in administrators' preparatory programmes	3.76	3.53	3.65
34	Poor content coverage of most administrators' preparatory programmes	2.57	2.19	2.78
35	The too general nature of most administrators' preparatory programmes	2.25	2.17	2.21
36	Lack of evaluation content in most administrators' preparatory programmes available to school administrators'	3.00	2.93	2.97
37	Lack of follow up training component or programme continuity in most administrators preparatory programmes	2.46	2.33	2.40
38	Administrators preparatory programmes organized by different bodies have different focus and approach	3.47	3.26	3.37
39	Lack of facilities and enabling environment to implement the skills and knowledge acquired from preparatory programmes	3.52	3.27	3.40
40	Wide gap between the theory and practice of skills acquired from administrators' preparatory programmes	3.25	3.54	3.40
Aggregate mean				3.10

Data on table 3 shows that items 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39 and 40 inhibits effective development of principals through administrator's preparatory programmes. This is according to the responses received from the questionnaires because their weighed mean score fall above criterion mean. The inhibitions according to the responses are irregular nature of administrator's preparatory programmes, poor information dissemination, lack of funds for support, poor content coverage, lack of evaluation content, different focus and approach from different programmes, lack of facilities and wide gap between theory and practice. Items 35 and 37 have mean weighting falling below the criterion mean which means they are not seen as inhibitions. However, the aggregate mean which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates that these inhibitions moderately affect successful development of principals through preparatory programmes.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their extent of participation in administrators' preparatory programmes.

Table 4: comparison of the opinions of rural and urban school principals on the extent of participation in administrator's preparatory programmes

Subjects	No	Scores	Mean	S.D	DF	t CAL	t-CRI	Result
Urban secondary school principals	45	991	22.04	1.83	198	0.22	1.96	Accept
Rural secondary school principals	155	3399	21.94	2.93				

The result in table 4 reveals that t-cal (0.22) is less than the critical t value of 1.98. it implies that There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their extent of participation in administrators’ preparatory programmes.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their perception about the adequacy and relevance of administrators’ preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective and specific administrative functions of school administration.

Table 5: Comparison of the opinions of rural and urban secondary school principals on the adequacy and relevance of administrator’s preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective and specific administrative functions of school administration.

Subjects	No	Scores	Mean	S.D	DF	t CAL	t CRI	Result
Urban secondary school principals	45	2022	44.93	4.89	198	1.79	1.96	Accept
Rural secondary school principals	155	6742	43.50	4.73				

Result from table 5 shows that t-cal (1.79) is less than t-cri (1.96). Hence, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of rural and urban secondary school principals on the adequacy of administrators’ preparatory programmes in preparing them for specific administrative functions.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals in their perception of the inhibitions to effective development of school administrators through preparatory programmes

Table 6: Comparison of the opinions of rural and urban secondary school principals in their perception of the inhibitions to effective development of school administrators through preparatory programmes

Subjects	No	Scores	Mean	S.D	DF	t-CAL	t-CRI	Result
Urban secondary school principals	45	1405	31.23	3.88	198	2.96	1.96	Reject
Rural secondary school principals	155	4622	29.82	2.48				

The result in table 6 reveals that t-cal (2.96) is greater than the t-cri (1.96). Hence, the researcher was constrained to reject the hypothesis in favour of the alternative that there is a significant difference between the responses of rural and urban secondary school principals in their perceptions of the inhibitions of effective development of administrators’ through preparatory programmes in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the data analyses above reveal the adequacy and relevance of administrators preparatory programmes: perceptions of secondary school principals in Rivers State.

The study reveals that principals of secondary schools rarely participate in administrators’ preparatory programmes such as citizenship and leadership training courses, long distance training programmes, professional conferences, leadership and management training programmes and leadership training programmes organized by leadership bodies.

The various administrators’ preparatory programmes available to rural and urban principals are relevant in preparing them for effective school administration. The contents of administrators’ preparatory programmes are adequate in preparing school administrators for various administrative task areas.

The study is in support of Emechebe (2009), Arizor (2003), who have all made impressive comments on administrator’s development programmes and its benefits, but yet they are hardly patronized by school administrators because of the issue of sponsorship. The authors are of the opinion that these programmes will help the administrator to deal effectively with basic administrative tasks as regards

knowledge, skill, attitudes and behaviours while on the job, also decision making and changes in the organization.

The findings as regards the relevance of various administrators' preparatory programmes in preparing them for effective school administration revealed that the course content of these programmes are relevant. These findings are in agreement with Asodike and Ebong (2012) administrators' professional development programmes in Nigeria, Nwogwugu(2009), Yaya(2010), Okobia (2013), Okojie (2009), Emechebe (2009), Asiabaka and Emenalo (2011) and Ngwu (2006) who all agreed to the relevance of the contents of various administrators' preparatory programmes ranging from induction courses to leadership and management training programmes organized by voluntary agencies while the corresponding fifth finding is that there is no significant difference between urban and rural secondary school principals perceptions of the relevance of the content of administrators' preparatory programmes. A possible explanation for these responses is that principals are aware of these programmes and what the programmes entail but corresponding actions are not taking by these principals.

The study has revealed that the contents of these programmes are adequate in preparing principals for specific administrative functions in the school system and a corresponding response by both rural and urban principals indicating that there is no significant difference in their perceptions about the adequacy of the content of these programmes and it is in support of Okobia(2013), Asodike and Ebong(2012), Asiabaka and Emenalo (2011), Yaya (2010), Okojie (2009), Emechebe (2009), Nwogwugu (2009) and Ngwu (2006). Though there are some other programmes that clearly reveal inadequacy.

Ogunsanjo (2000) has commented on the importance of these programmes. According to him, administrators need help in moving ahead in developing new understanding, in trying out new ideas and skill. The educational administrator should be concerned with the challenging problems of excellence and quality. The results has revealed that irregular preparatory programmes, poor information dissemination on available programmes, lack of funds, lack of follow-up training, poor content coverage for urban principals, lack of content evaluation, different focus and approach for different programmes, lack of facilities and wide gap between theory and practice are basic inhibitions to effective development of school principals through administrators preparatory programmes are basic inhibitions to development of school principals through administrators preparatory programmes. While the corrected eighth (8th) finding states that there is a significant difference between urban and rural secondary school principals perception of the inhibitions to effective development of school of school administrators especially in the area of poor content coverage of most of these programmes. These findings agree with Ejiogu in Okorie et al(2014), Asiabaka and Emenalo (2011) in their write ups as regards development of administrators. Non availability of funds remains a strong inhibition to staff development, including training for school administrators. These revelations are not surprising. It is very obvious that most training is organized without a thorough competency assessment to earlier trainings. Consequently follow up is nonexistent. The major problem is that those whose responsibility it is to organize such programmes do not tailor most of these programmes strictly to meet specific administrative needs.

CONCLUSION

Following from the findings of the study, the discussion of the findings and their implication in the education system, it is concluded that administrators' preparatory programmes has contents that are relevant and adequate in preparing administrators for the task ahead but that participation among principals is rear due to some inhibitions which if looked into can be overcome

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the plight of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. First Government should provide budget or funds for administrators' preparatory programmes as part of their expenditure sub-heads. This will ensure that school heads as part of the managers of our education system undergo training and retraining in order to be fully equipped for the task before them and training should be carried out every two years.
2. To ensure that the trainings they receive are relevant in preparing them for school administration, specific programmes should be designed to cover these task areas they are to carry out in the school system, such programmes should be organized by private consultants, ministry of education who are professionals in education to develop these

- programmes. Administrators who attend such programmes must submit participation report to the ministry.
3. The education ministry should evaluate the content of such programmes to determine its adequacy, to be sure that the programme is capable in preparing school administrators for specific administrative functions in the school system.

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