Principals’ Status And Factors That Enhance Plant Maintenance Culture In Public Secondary School In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
The study investigated principal’s status and factors that enhance plant maintenance culture in public secondary school in rivers state. The objective of the study was to investigate factors likely to enhance status of schools plant maintenance among public secondary school principals in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of 247 principals was used for the study. A questionnaire titled principals status and factors that enhance plant maintenance culture in public secondary school (PSFEPMCPS) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by the researcher and some expert in the field. The researcher questions were analysis using the mean and standard deviation. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance using z-test statistics, from the findings, the mean items were accepted by the respondents base on the findings, the following recommendation were made: Principals should ensure that they work hand in hand with the maintenance department and also adopt appropriate leadership style as it is done now by both principals in urban and those of rural schools to maintain the high status of school plant, Principals should be given adequate incentives to motivate them to put in more effort and be committed to the training of the students to maintain the present progressive status of school plant maintenance, Government should establish policy guidelines on minimum standard in relation to school plant maintenance; provision should be made in Federal and State budgets for the maintenance of school plant.

Keywords: principals, plant, factors, secondary school, status, public

INTRODUCTION
Principal is the person with the highest authority in the secondary school. A person who takes a leading part in secondary education he/she is the teacher with the greatest responsibility for the management, organizing, directing, controlling, guiding the school to better teaching and learning. A Principal is someone who is the leader of an entire community within the school. He/she is responsible for managing the major administrative tasks and supervising all students and teachers. The various activities in the school are usually planned and executed by the principal.

The principal is confronted with the challenge of addressing all issues that is relevant to the school where he oversees. He reports the various activities that take place in the school and also receive instruction on how the school should be managed. The principal is responsible for the various programmes of the government in the school. Despite the importance of the individual activities that occur in the school and how experienced the principal is, lack of school plant maintenance has always proved to be one thing that obstructs the achievement of educational goals and objectives.
Quality education cannot be achieved without effective maintenance of school plant. In order to achieve educational goals and objectives, it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that educational facilities are effectively maintained. In most cases, the school plants are overused and are always breaking down. All effort should be geared toward effective maintenance of school plant for quality education in Rivers State Public Secondary School.

School plant maintenance is simply keeping the school plant in its original state. This has to do with those activities designed to repair plant to their original conditions. Maintenance refers to those cyclic but intermittent services intended to keep school plant near its original state. It is the services, activities and procedure concerned with preserving, protecting and keeping plant in its original nature. The extent to which a principal is able to carry out effective maintenance function determines his effectiveness. Effective is producing an effect, powerful in its effect that is making a striking impression. It means producing the result; this is measured in terms of the achievement of predetermined/desired objectives. The school administration is complex due to a lot of factors, one of which is school plant maintenance. An effective principal is one who does the right thing and produces the desired results like eliciting willingness and cooperation from his staff, discipline on the part of his staff and students, provision of morals that will promote effective maintenance culture in the school which will in turn boost the confidence and perception of parents about his school. Lack of maintenance makes schools inadequate and endanger the achievement of educational goals. It is therefore the responsibility of principals to build a brand name for his school through effective school plant maintenance. In most cases, the school plants are overused and are always breaking down. All effort should be geared toward effective maintenance of school plant for quality education in Rivers State Public Secondary School.

In most public schools in Rivers State, old plants as well as new ones are available, there are no trained technicians to maintain school plant due to lack of funds or untrained principal to effect maintenance of school plant. Educational facilities not properly maintained will not be effective for adequate teaching and learning to take place. In the past public secondary schools in Rivers State were properly equipped and well maintained, parents and guardians gladly sent their children and wards to public secondary schools. But nowadays public schools have lost their glory to private schools due to poor academic performance, indiscipline, lack of maintenance culture which in turn affects the academic standard of the school thereby creating negative perception of public schools in the eyes of the parents and the society at large. In order to achieve the above goals, there is need for effective school plant maintenance. School plant and its adequate provision and effective maintenance is a life wire of any educational system. (Adebayo 2009) posited that quality education cannot be achieved without the ability of the principals to ensure effective school plant maintenance in secondary education. Educational facilities have been discovered to have positive relationship with the standard and quality of education. It is believed that a well-planned and maintained school plant will gear up expected learning outcomes of education which facilitate effective teaching and learning that brings about a better academic performance of students. Peter (2012) posited that school plant maintenance is very essential to teaching and learning processes in the school system and is capable of affecting the standard of education. The aim of school plant maintenance is to keep maximum retardation of physical decay of school plant that may arise due to some circumstances. This is because if school plants are not maintained, it will not function adequately. School plants are those facilities that enhance teaching and learning so that educational objective could be achieved. They are those things that enable the teacher to do his job effectively. School plant are things be it physical or materials that aid the educational process in order to actualize its goals. Alogu (2014) posited that school plant can be described to mean the site, building and all the facilities within the school which enhance teaching and learning activities and at the same time protects the physical wellbeing of the teachers and the learners. School plant is the sum total of buildings, equipments, textbooks including the surrounding where teaching and learning takes place. It refers to many things used in the school which may include school buildings, grounds, equipment, lawns and paths, furniture, fields, laboratories, libraries, tools and machines and chalk board etc. school plant is the hard ware through which the educational curriculum (that is software) is transmitted to the group being educated.
School plant include grounds and the gardens, acres of land that form the site for buildings, classrooms, subject rooms, head masters’ room, library room, the school office, the staff room, school laboratories, the school halls, the playground, the school hostel and refectory facilities etc. The school plant is a basic requirement for the establishment of an institution where teaching and learning takes place.

**Statement of the Problem**

Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006:47) posited that “the problem of Nigerian society is not the procurement of resources but its upkeep (maintenance). The Scholars further stated that our attitude to public property is that of indifference when it comes to usages, repair and maintenance. They maintained that this attitude has become a major factor in most public institutions including our educational institution. According to them in most of the schools for example, there are lots of broken vehicles, chairs, leaking roofs, overgrown lawns/compounds etc. What could be re responsible for this ugly situation? Could it be due to lack of technicians to manage them, or the principals lack maintenance culture to maintain them? And if not urgently checked it will lead to debacles of Rivers State Public secondary school at large. It is based on these that the researcher attempts to critically examine the factors responsible for the above challenges with a view to make appropriate suggestions for solution.

**Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study was to investigate principal’s status and factors that enhance plant maintenance culture in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study seek to:

1. Find out type of principals likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State.
2. Investigate factors likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance among public secondary school principals in Rivers State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What types of principals are likely to bring about status of school plant maintenance culture in Rivers State Public Secondary Schools?
2. What are the factors that enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State Public Secondary Schools?

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals in urban schools and those in rural schools in respect of types of principals likely to bring about status of school plant maintenance culture in Rivers State public secondary schools.
2. Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals in small schools and those of big schools in respect of factors likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted descriptive survey design; the population of this study includes all the 247 Public Senior Secondary School Principals in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State. There was no sampling since the population is small.

The instrument was design on a 4-points Likert rating scale of strongly agreed (SA-4) Agreed (A-3) Disagreed (D-2) and strongly Disagreed (SD-1) point for the research questions. The test retest estimate was used for this study. The two set of scores obtained were correlated, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The correlation co-efficient was 0.84
RESULT

Research question 1: What types of principals are likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools?

Table 4.1: Mean (X) and standard deviation (S.D) scores on types of principals that are likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Principals that enforce discipline</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Principals who effectively work with Other teacher</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Principals who have appropriate leadership styles</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Principals who can maintain public property</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Principals who can guide staff/students on usage of public property</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Principals without complacent attitudes</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criterion mean (X) = 2.50

Grand mean (X) = 3.40

From the table above the high mean scores ranging from 3.26 to 3.53 indicated that all the identified items were accepted by the respondents as type of principals likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State. Therefore, the respondents agreed that principals that enforce discipline, principals who effectively work with other teachers; principals who can maintain public property; principals who can guide staff/students on usage of public property; and principals who do not have complacent attitudes are types of principals that are likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools.
Research questions 2: What factors enhance status of school plant maintenance among public secondary school principals in Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Mean (X) and standard deviation (S.D) scores of respondents on factors that enhance status of school plant maintenance among public secondary school principals in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Improvement of security presence on campus</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2^nd</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Constant taking of inventory of school property</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>4^th</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Staff and student orientation in usage of school plant</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>6^th</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Constant repair of faulty school plant</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>5^th</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Early identification of maintenance problem</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>3^rd</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Disciplinary measures taken against violators of school plant guideline</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1^st</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criterion mean (X) = 2.50  
Grand mean (X) = 3.09

From the table above, the high mean scores ranging from 2.89 to 3.44 indicated that all the identified items were accepted by the respondents as the factors that enhance school plant maintenance among principals in Rivers State. Therefore, the respondents agreed that, improvement of security presence on campus, constant taking of inventory of school property; staff and students orientation in usage of school property; constant repair of faulty school plant; early identification of maintenance problem and disciplinary measures taken against violators of school plant guidelines are factors that enhance status of school plant maintenance among public secondary school principals in Rivers State.

Testing of hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested by using Z-test analysis, which is a test of difference in mean.

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals in urban and those in rural schools in respect of types of principals likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools.
Table 4.3: Z-test analysis on the difference in opinion of types of principals likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>level of sig</th>
<th>decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>H_o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.930</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decision**
The data in table 4.08 above, show that the z-calculated value of 0.807 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance with 241 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis (H_o) was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between responses of principals in urban and those in rural schools in respect of types of principals likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools.

**Hypotheses 2**
There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals in small and those of big schools with regard to factors likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools.

Table 4.4: Z-test on the difference between the mean rating of principals in small and of big schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Level of Sig</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Schools</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.930</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>H_o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Schools</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.930</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decision**
The data in table 4.07 above show that z-calculated value of 0.930 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance with 241 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis H_o was accepted.

**DISCUSSION**
**Types of Principals That Are Likely To Enhance Status of School Plant Maintenance**
The findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean response of principals in urban and those in rural schools in respect of types of principal likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State.

Some similar studies arrived at closely related result. Obudeji (2002) carried out a study on effective school plant management, the findings reveals that there is no significant different between the type of principals that enhance effective school plant maintenance.

Uwaoma (2008) examined school plant utilization and maintenance. The study reviewed that no significant difference was found between urban and rural schools. His study juxtapose the previous studies and confirm that each of the principals in public schools can adopt the individual leadership styles that affect their performance in managing and maintaining school plant in Rivers State. The study upheld that principals in rural areas with better leadership character and strategies perform better as their counterpart in the urban schools.

There was a contrary finding by Jack (2001) that there is a significant difference between school heads in urban and rural schools in school plant management. The reason for the divergent findings could be due to the fact that the study adopts a different design from the present study.
This current study implies that the location of school in which the principal’s head does not affect his/her leadership style being a principal that adopts an autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire leadership style. In other words, the principal that has appropriate leadership style will perform his duty well despite the location of the school be it urban or rural.

**Factors That Enhance Status of School Plant Maintenance**

The findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals in big and those of small schools with regard to factors likely to enhance status of school plant maintenance in Rivers State public secondary schools. Some earlier studies on a similar topic arrived at closely related result. Ogbikara (2010) investigated facility provision and maintenance of school plant. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference between factors that enhance effective school plant maintenance. Ogunde (2009) in a similar view also obtained similar results. Akandi (2010) carried out research on effective management of school facility; his findings showed that there is no significant difference between principals in big and small schools in respect of factors that enhance effective management of school facility. He concluded that principals in big schools and those in small schools when formulate and adopt similar policies achieved the same result in terms of school plant management. Thus, both principals in big and those in small schools are confirmed to arrive at the same result in school plant management.

Lyman (1998) showed that, there is a significant different between principals in small schools and those of big schools in respect of factors that enhance facility maintenance. The contrary findings may be due to the fact that the research was done in the developed western world where worker enjoy better welfare packages.

This current study implies that both principals in big and small schools adopt the same factors that enhance status of school plant maintenance. Thus, to enhance status of school plant, both principals of small and big schools do the following; staff and student’s orientation in usage of school property, constantly taking inventory of school plant and disciplinary measures taken against violators of plant guidelines are adopted by principals in small and those of big schools.

**CONCLUSION**

The following conclusions were drawn based on the research findings. Both experienced and inexperienced principals adopt same strategies that enhance status of school plant maintenance. Male and Female principals face different challenges that impede status of school plant maintenance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Principals should ensure that they work hand in hand with the maintenance department and also adopt appropriate leadership style as it is done now by both principals in urban and those of rural schools to maintain the high status of school plant.
2. Principals should be given adequate incentives to motivate them to put in more effort and be committed to the training of the students to maintain the present progressive status of school plant maintenance.
3. Government should establish policy guidelines on minimum standard in relation to school plant maintenance; provision should be made in Federal and State budgets for the maintenance of school plant.

**REFERENCES**

