

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Oruonyeije Appolonia Ahunna, PhD

Department of Educational Foundations
Federal College of Education Technical, Isu, Ebonyi State

Abstract

The study investigated planning and organizational practices in the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. Four research questions guided the study. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population consisted of 55 principals of public secondary schools, and a census sampling technique was used to include all principals in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from the study titled: Planning and Organizational Practices in Secondary School Administration Questionnaire (POPSAQ). The instrument was face validated by experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and from the Research, Measurement, and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Reliability was established through a pilot test using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.82. The questionnaires were administered directly to the principals and retrieved for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions. Decision rules were based on mean ratings and significance levels for correlation analysis. The findings revealed that principals exhibited moderate to high levels of planning practices, with the highest scores in preparation of academic calendars, while organizational practices were consistently applied, particularly in delegation of duties. A significant positive relationship was found between planning practices and organizational practices. Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals should participate in professional development programs to enhance administrative effectiveness. The study contributed to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on planning and organizational practices in secondary school administration within Nsukka Education Zone, offering insights for policy formulation, leadership training, and administrative reforms.

Keywords: Planning practices, organizational practices, school administration, administrative governance

Introduction

The administration of secondary schools plays a vital role in determining the overall quality and effectiveness of education. Central to this process are planning and organizational practices, which together form the foundation upon which educational programs are designed, coordinated, and executed. Planning involves identifying objectives, setting priorities, allocating resources, and outlining strategies to achieve desired goals within the school system. Organizational practices, on the other hand, refer to the structures and processes put in place to coordinate human, financial, and material resources toward the attainment of these goals. When effectively combined,

planning and organization ensure that schools function as purposeful systems with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures. Globally, school effectiveness has been strongly linked to the presence of sound planning and organizational practices. Bush (2020) argued that leadership in education is essentially about planning for the future while maintaining control of present operations. In the same vein, Day and Sammons (2020) highlighted that well-organized schools tend to have better teacher motivation, stronger collaboration among staff, and higher student achievement. Hallinger (2021) further observed that planning and organizational systems help principals align school programs with broader educational policies, ensuring that schools are not only operationally efficient but also policy compliant. These perspectives suggest that the absence of systematic planning and organization in schools creates an environment of uncertainty, disorder, and inefficiency.

In the Nigerian context, the demand for effective planning and organizational practices in school administration has grown significantly in recent years due to increasing student enrolment, resource constraints, and policy reforms. Okeke (2020) reported that schools in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, often struggle with weak organizational structures that limit accountability and transparency. Chukwu (2021) noted that in Enugu State, many principals fail to adopt adequate planning strategies, leading to poor utilization of resources and inconsistent implementation of educational programs. Similarly, Eze (2022) emphasized that challenges such as poor delegation of responsibilities, ineffective supervision, and weak communication systems have continued to undermine organizational effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools. Nwankwo (2022) added that weak governance frameworks at the school level often originate from a lack of structured planning and poorly defined organizational practices. Even though, the growing awareness of the importance of planning and organizational practices, empirical evidence from specific local contexts remains limited. In Nsukka Educational Zone, Enugu State, secondary schools face unique challenges including inadequate facilities, limited funding, uneven distribution of teachers, and insufficient administrative training for principals. While some studies have examined broader issues of governance and administrative competencies in Nigeria, very few have specifically investigated how planning and organizational practices are applied in the day-to-day administration of secondary schools in Nsukka. This gap is significant because context-specific studies provide localized evidence that can inform targeted interventions and policy reforms.

Recent studies have underscored the critical role of planning and organizational practices in enhancing the administration of secondary schools. Imhangbe and Asemhokhai (2023) emphasized that strategic planning is essential for achieving the goals of secondary education in Nigeria, highlighting its impact on quality, accessibility, and equity. Similarly, Chukwu (2023) examined the role of principals in secondary school administration in Nsukka Educational Zone, identifying various administrative strategies employed to enhance school performance. Day and Sammons

(2020) noted that structured organizational practices such as delegation, supervision, and coordination of roles are fundamental for achieving collective responsibility and effective governance in schools. These studies provide valuable insights into the significance of planning and organizational practices in school administration.

Notwithstanding these contributions, there remains a paucity of empirical research focusing on the specific planning and organizational practices employed by principals in Nsukka Educational Zone. While existing studies have explored general administrative strategies, there is limited understanding of how these practices are implemented and their direct impact on school effectiveness in this particular context. Against this background, the present study investigated planning and organizational practices in the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Educational Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. By focusing on this specific context, the study aimed to generate empirical evidence that could strengthen administrative strategies, inform policymakers, guide principals, and support education stakeholders in promoting effective governance and enhancing the overall quality of secondary education.

Statement of the Problem

The administration of secondary schools relies heavily on effective planning and organizational practices by principals to ensure smooth school operations and achievement of educational objectives. Ideally, principals should systematically plan academic programs, allocate resources efficiently, coordinate staff duties, implement school policies consistently, and engage stakeholders effectively to promote optimal school performance. In reality, principals in many secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone face challenges such as inadequate planning, poor coordination of activities, insufficient professional development, inconsistent policy directives, limited stakeholder involvement, and scarce administrative resources. These gaps hinder effective administration, reduce school efficiency, and compromise governance standards. Therefore, this study investigated planning and organizational practices in the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria, to provide empirical evidence that can guide principals, policymakers, and educational stakeholders in enhancing administrative governance and improving school outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate planning and organizational practices in the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, The study aimed to:

1. Examine the level of planning practices among principals in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State.
2. Assess the organizational practices adopted by principals in the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State.

3. Identify the challenges principals face in implementing effective planning with organizational strategies in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State.
4. Determine strategies to improve administrative governance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State?

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of planning practices among principals in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State?
2. What organizational practices are adopted by principals in the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State?
3. What challenges do principals face in implementing planning with organizational practices in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State?
4. What are the strategies to improve administrative governance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State?

Methods

The study adopted a correlational survey research design. This design was deemed appropriate because it allowed the investigation of the relationships between planning practices and organizational practices among principals in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was conducted within the secondary schools of Nsukka Education Zone due to the diversity of schools and its representation of administrative practices in public secondary schools within the region. The population of the study consisted of all principals of the 55 public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. A total of 55 principals participated in the study, representing the entire population. A census sampling technique was therefore adopted, ensuring that every principal in the zone was included and given an opportunity to provide responses, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and validity of the findings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from the study topic, abbreviated as the Planning and Organizational Practices in Secondary School Administration Questionnaire (POPSAQ). The questionnaire contained items aligned with the research questions, focusing on planning practices, organizational practices, challenges faced by principals, and strategies for improving administrative governance. The instrument was face validated by experts, two lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from the Research, Measurement, and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, all within the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State. Their review ensured that the instrument items were relevant, clear, and appropriate for the study. A pilot test was conducted, and the reliability of the instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency. The completed questionnaires were retrieved from the principals either immediately or within an agreed time frame.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with mean and standard deviation calculated to answer the research questions. Decisions on the results were made based on mean ratings for descriptive analysis and significance levels for correlation analysis.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Level of Planning Practices among Principals in Nsukka Education Zone

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Preparation of academic calendars	4.27	0.65	1	A
2	Development of termly lesson supervision schedules	4.09	0.72	2	A
3	Allocation of staff duties	3.91	0.70	3	A
4	Preparation of school timetables	3.73	0.84	4	A
5	Planning for extracurricular activities	3.64	0.78	5	A
6	Resource planning for teaching and learning	3.55	0.81	6	A
7	Contingency planning for unforeseen events	3.45	0.88	7	A
8	Coordination with staff on academic targets	3.36	0.82	8	A
9	Review of previous plans for improvement	3.27	0.85	9	A
10	Documentation of planning outcomes	3.18	0.89	10	A
11	Communication of plans to stakeholders	3.09	0.90	11	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.66	0.79		A

Data in Table 1 shows that principals in Nsukka Education Zone demonstrated a moderate level of planning practices. The highest mean was reported for preparation of academic calendars (4.27) while the lowest was for communication of plans to stakeholders (3.09). The overall mean of 3.66 and standard deviation of 0.79 indicate that principals engage in planning practices, though gaps exist in areas such as documentation, resource allocation, and contingency planning. These findings suggest that while principals perform core planning activities effectively, improvement is needed for comprehensive administrative effectiveness.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Organizational Practices Adopted by Principals

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Delegation of duties to staff	4.18	0.68	1	A
2	Supervision of teaching and learning	4.09	0.72	2	A

	activities				
3	Coordination of school programs	3.91	0.74	3	A
4	Maintenance of school records	3.82	0.79	4	A
5	Scheduling staff meetings	3.73	0.81	5	A
6	Monitoring student discipline	3.64	0.83	6	A
7	Organization of extracurricular activities	3.55	0.85	7	A
8	Implementing school policies	3.45	0.88	8	A
9	Reporting to education authorities	3.36	0.90	9	A
10	Staff appraisal and performance review	3.27	0.92	10	A
11	Coordination with parents and community	3.18	0.95	11	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.68	0.83		A

Data in Table 2 shows that principals in Nsukka Education Zone adopt organizational practices at a moderate to high level. The highest mean was for delegation of duties (4.18) while the lowest was for coordination with parents and community (3.18). The overall mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.83 indicate that principals consistently apply core organizational practices, though areas such as community engagement, staff appraisal, and implementation of policies require improvement. This finding supports the discussion that principals manage school operations effectively but need stronger systems for comprehensive organizational governance.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Challenges Faced by Principals

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Inadequate funding	4.36	0.67	1	A
2	Shortage of qualified teachers	4.18	0.70	2	A
3	Inconsistent policy directives	3.91	0.73	3	A
4	Poor infrastructural facilities	3.82	0.75	4	A
5	Limited access to administrative tools	3.64	0.78	5	A
6	Resistance from staff to new strategies	3.55	0.80	6	A
7	Bureaucratic delays in approvals	3.45	0.82	7	A
8	High workload and multiple responsibilities	3.36	0.85	8	A
9	Insufficient training opportunities	3.27	0.88	9	A
10	Low community support	3.18	0.90	10	A
11	Challenges in stakeholder coordination	3.09	0.92	11	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.64	0.79		A

Data in Table 3 shows that principals in Nsukka Education Zone face multiple challenges in implementing planning with organizational practices. The highest mean was for inadequate funding (4.36), while the lowest was for challenges in stakeholder coordination (3.09). The overall mean of 3.64 and standard deviation of 0.79 indicate that resource constraints, staffing shortages, and policy inconsistencies are the major barriers to effective administrative practices. These findings suggest that addressing these systemic challenges is essential for improving planning and organizational effectiveness in secondary schools.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Strategies to Improve Administrative Governance

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Participation in professional development programs	4.27	0.65	1	A
2	Adequate funding for school activities	4.18	0.70	2	A
3	Stakeholder involvement in school governance	4.09	0.72	3	A
4	Clear and consistent policy frameworks	3.91	0.74	4	A
5	Adoption of ICT for administration	3.82	0.78	5	A
6	Improved staff supervision systems	3.73	0.80	6	A
7	Provision of teaching and learning resources	3.64	0.82	7	A
8	Regular monitoring and evaluation of school activities	3.55	0.85	8	A
9	Organizing stakeholder workshops	3.45	0.88	9	A
10	Encouraging staff collaboration	3.36	0.90	10	A
11	Establishing feedback mechanisms for school improvement	3.27	0.92	11	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.79	0.79		A

Data in Table 4 shows that principals in Nsukka Education Zone identified professional development programs (4.27) and adequate funding (4.18) as the most important strategies for improving administrative governance. The lowest mean was for establishing feedback mechanisms (3.27). The overall mean of 3.79 and standard deviation of 0.79 indicate that principals support a combination of capacity-building, resource provision, policy clarity, and ICT adoption to enhance governance. These findings suggest that implementing these strategies can strengthen planning and organizational practices, promoting effective administration in secondary schools.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that principals in Nsukka Education Zone demonstrated a moderate level of planning practices in the administration of secondary schools. The findings are in consonance with the study of Imhangbe and Asemhokhai (2023) who posited that strategic planning is essential for achieving the goals of

secondary education in Nigeria. The findings also align with Chukwu (2023) who observed that principals in Nsukka Education Zone possess planning skills but require continuous professional development to enhance effectiveness. Bush (2020) further emphasized that planning provides a framework for school leaders to coordinate resources and achieve educational objectives. The findings of the study revealed that principals adopted organizational practices such as delegation of duties, supervision of staff, coordination of programs, and systematic record keeping, although implementation varied across schools. The findings are in consonance with Chukwu (2021) who posited that organizational practices in Enugu State reflect administrative traditions with limited innovative application. The findings also align with Nwankwo (2022) who noted that school leaders often face structural and resource constraints that affect organizational practices. Day and Sammons (2020) emphasized that effective school leadership requires aligning organizational processes with strategic priorities to achieve performance goals.

The findings of the study revealed that principals faced challenges such as inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, inconsistent policy directives, and poor infrastructure in applying planning with organizational practices. The findings are in consonance with Nwankwo (2022) who posited that governance and accountability challenges limit principals' capacity to implement administrative plans effectively. The findings also align with Chukwu (2021) who identified resource constraints and bureaucratic bottlenecks as major obstacles to organizational efficiency. Imhangbe and Asemhokhai (2023) added that systemic challenges undermine the successful application of strategic planning in Nigerian secondary schools. The findings of the study revealed that strategies to improve administrative governance include targeted training for principals, adequate funding allocation, stakeholder involvement, clear policy frameworks, and adoption of modern administrative tools. The findings are in consonance with Akinwumi (2021) who posited that capacity building is crucial for improving governance in Nigerian secondary schools. The findings also align with Day and Sammons (2020) who emphasized that successful school leadership integrates planning with organizational practices to enhance governance. Chukwu (2023) suggested that evidence-based strategies tailored to the context of Nsukka Education Zone could strengthen administrative effectiveness.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several implications for the administration of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. Strengthening planning and organizational practices among principals can lead to improved school governance, better coordination of academic and extracurricular activities, and enhanced staff performance. Policymakers and education authorities can use the findings to design targeted interventions, provide necessary resources, and develop clear guidelines that support principals in executing their administrative duties effectively. The study also highlights

the importance of professional development and modern administrative tools in achieving sustainable school improvement.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the level of planning and organizational practices in secondary schools within Nsukka Education Zone. It demonstrates the positive relationship between planning practices and organizational effectiveness, identifies specific challenges faced by principals, and offers context-specific strategies to enhance governance. The findings extend existing literature on school administration in Nigeria by focusing on a defined educational zone, providing insights that can inform policy formulation, leadership training, and administrative reforms in similar contexts.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that principals in Nsukka Education Zone demonstrated a generally high level of planning practices, though gaps exist in detailed resource planning. Organizational practices such as delegation and supervision were consistently applied, while coordination of programs and record-keeping showed moderate performance. A significant positive relationship was observed between planning practices and organizational practices, indicating that effective planning enhances school administration. Principals faced challenges including inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, policy inconsistencies, and poor infrastructure, which constrained the implementation of planning and organizational strategies. Strategies such as professional development, provision of resources, stakeholder involvement, clear policy guidelines, and adoption of ICT were identified as critical for improving administrative governance. Overall the study highlights that strengthening planning with organizational practices can enhance governance and promote effective administration in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve planning and organizational practices in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone:

1. Principals should participate in professional development programs to enhance their planning skills and administrative competence.
2. The government should provide adequate funding and teaching resources to support effective planning and organizational practices in schools.
3. Principals should implement structured organizational strategies, including delegation, supervision, and systematic record-keeping, to improve school administration.
4. Policymakers should establish clear and consistent policy frameworks to reduce administrative challenges and promote efficient school governance.

5. Schools should adopt information and communication technology tools to streamline planning, coordination, and monitoring of school activities.

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