

School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

The worry of examination bodies and stakeholders over the continuous slide in pupil/student performance in public schools and the ability of school leadership to realize the goals of the education system as enshrined in the National Policy on Education necessitated this study which sought to find out the school activities-time mix of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria. One research question and three hypotheses were raised for the study. The study employed a descriptive survey design and the Proportional sampling technique to select 116 Head-Teachers and data was collected with a Checklist. The Checklist was used to find out the amount of time spent on Pupil-Personnel, Instructional Supervision, Community-School Relationship, Instructional and Curriculum Development, School Plant and General Tasks. The result was analyzed using the Frequency distribution and T-test and it revealed that primary schools' Head-Teachers in Nigeria spend more time on General Tasks. It was discovered that gender and size of school did not vary significantly in the School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers. Qualification and experience were however found to be significant. It was therefore recommended that Head-Teachers should spend more time on Supervision of Instruction and Experience and Qualification should be considered in the appointment of Head-Teachers to ensure equitable distribution of time on all school activities

Keywords: School Activities, Time, Head-Teachers, Public Primary Schools.

1. Introduction

Primary education in Nigeria occupies a very important position in the educational system and has a very high patronage. It is given to children aged 6-11 and lays the foundation on which the rest of the education system is built. It is the key to the success or failure of the whole system (FRN, 2004) hence responsibility for quality education rests with this level of education. The goals of primary education in Nigeria include 'inculcation of permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively among others (FRN, 2004:14). If these goals are to be attained, the quality of the system cannot be compromised.

1.1 Literature Review

A survey conducted by Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) in 2009, an initiative to intervene in quality education delivery in primary schools and reports from the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on education, revealed that learning outcomes in the country appear to have been indisputably poor. Confirming these reports, a study carried out by Oni (2009) on management of primary education in Nigeria, discovered that the literacy level in Nigeria is steadily and gradually deteriorating as a result of poor management which has been the bane of the system. McCrimmon (2007) in proffering solutions to poor management opined that the best manager is one who achieves a given target while making the best use of all relevant and available resources, one of which is time.

Time is a very important but most often neglected resource in literature on resource management in schools whereas the success of any administration is the ability of the head to manage the available time by adopting the right strategies in carrying out their tasks. These tasks could be categorized as 'urgent and important', 'important but not

urgent' and 'neither urgent nor important'; how equitably the school head shares the available time in attending to these tasks is the crux of this study. This is so because unlike teachers in the school, the head-teacher has no fixed time allocated to the various tasks he has to attend to on a daily basis out of the five and half hours (8.00am - 1.30pm) expected to be spent in Nigeria public primary schools. Ifedili (2002) in her analysis of the concept of time utilization and goal setting described time as a very important resource which is badly managed among many administrators. She opined that in primary and post-primary schools in Nigeria, many administrators appear to be failures because they waste their time in pursuits of intrigues and unproductive daily meetings. Supporting this claim is Kiggunda (2009) who contend that time is poorly managed in schools where the designed time-tables are not respected and that this can affect students' academic performance.

Studies carried out by Amatyia et al (2004) in India revealed that Head-teachers tend to spend less time in activities directly impacting on teaching/learning and more on administrative work. This is corroborated by the quantum of administrative tasks of primary school head-teachers which involves collecting money from pupils/parents, producing class lists, keeping and filing records, producing analysis of examination results, administration of public and internal examination, ordering, setting up, maintaining and supplying equipment, taking verbatim notes or producing minutes of meeting and cataloguing among others. Studies carried out by Omoike and Idogho (2011) and Hamphill, Griffiths and Fredrickson (1992) revealed that gender was not a significant factor in the leadership roles of school heads in carrying out their administrative activities.

Though the study carried out by Balanskat and Gerhard (2005) revealed that administrative tasks of school leaders vary considerably from one country to another in accordance with their educational system, one of the biggest factors affecting leadership is the size of school. With over a population of 74,982 pupils in Nigeria primary schools (Universal Basic Education, 2004), problems of effective leadership could obviously become complex. Owoeye and Yara (2011) however assert that school size does not matter, what is important is the experience of the leaders which is put to bear in carrying out their responsibilities. This is corroborated by the study carried out by Okolo (2007) on the performance of primary school headmasters where it was discovered that there was a significant difference in the performance of Head-Teachers with 4-11 years of experience and those with 20years and above. Amanchi (1998) also reported that teachers who complete degrees in education are more professional in outputs than those who do not. It is believed that specialized training empowers and motivates such teachers for better performance while preparing them for higher responsibilities, one of which is leadership.

The tasks performed by school administrators have been identified as pupil personnel, instructional supervision, Community-school relationship, instructional and curriculum development, school plant and general tasks (Gorton, 1983). These tasks are indications that head-teachers are involved in administrative works, supervising staff, visiting school boards, official work visits, interaction with students, parents, community members, supervision and monitoring and so on. Certain aspects of these tasks are highly represented, while some others are underrepresented; this influences the way schools are managed and invariably learning outcome which is a conglomeration of input, process and output factors (UNESCO, 2002). Any human activity is identified by the quality of its product and the same rule applies to education, In this regard, efficient management of any organization can be achieved by using different models, one of which is the Total Quality Management (TQM) system adopted by educational institutions pushing for quality. Consequently, it is expected that though all administrative tasks are important in the management of the school system, it is imperative that more time should be spent on critical tasks that impacts directly on teaching and learning.

Examination bodies and stakeholders are worried about poor pupil/student performance and have expressed fears at the ability of school leadership to realize the goals of the system as enshrined in the National Policy on Education especially at the primary school level which lays the foundation for other levels of the educational system. Since government took over the running of primary and secondary schools, Adegbesan (2010) asserts that education has become bureaucratized and subjected to the un-enterprising attitude of the Nigerian public service. It has been observed that school heads spend more time on administrative activities to the detriment of the more productive aspect of teaching and learning. Hence the study seeks to find out the distribution of time by Head-Teachers among the various school activities to ensure that quality is improved and the goals of education at this level are met. The pertinent question which this study will attempt to answer therefore is: how do Head-teachers distribute their time among the numerous activities that directly affect teaching and learning in public primary schools in Nigeria?

1.1.1 Research question:

What is the School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria?

1.1.2 Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the School iActivities-Time Mix of male and female Head-Teachers in the public primary schools in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the School Activities-Time Mix and qualification of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the School Activities-Time Mix among experienced and inexperienced Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria.
4. There is no significant difference in the School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers based on school size in public primary schools in Nigeria.

1.1.3 Method of study

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the Head-Teachers in the public primary schools in South-South Nigeria. The Proportional sampling technique was used to select 116 Head-Teachers from the schools. Data was collected from 106 Head-Teachers using the 'School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers Checklist' (SATMHTC) to find out the amount of time spent on a daily basis on each administrative task and if there is a significant difference in the School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers by gender, qualification, experience and size of school. The instrument was adapted from administrative tasks of school leaders as listed by Gorton (1983); Pupil Personnel, Instructional Supervision, Community-School Relationship, Instructional and Curriculum Development, School Plant and General tasks. Statistical tools such as Mean, Frequency distribution and T-test were used to analyze the Data collected.

1.1.4 Research Question

What is the School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria?

Table I: School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria

S/N	Activities	No of Head-Teachers	Total Time Per Day	Mean	Rank	SD
1	General Tasks	106	1hr.13min 4sec	73.07	1 st	46.75
2	Instructional Supervision	106	1hr.12min 58sec	72.96	2 nd	47.98
3	Community-School Relations	106	48min.40secs.	48.66	3 rd	42.07
4	School Finance and Business Management	106	46min	46.00	4 th	35.79
5	Pupil Personnel	106	45min. 50secs.	45.84	5 th	28.06
6	School Plant	106	28mins.54secs.	28.90	6 th	21.02

Table I shows the various activities carried out on a daily basis by the 106 Head-Teachers in the five and half hours spent in schools. The activities are ranked according to the amount of time allocated to each; General tasks with a mean of 73.07 (1hr.13min 4sec.) ranked 1st and closely followed by Instructional Activities with a mean of 72.96 (1hr.12min 58sec.), Community-School Relations; 48.66 (48min.40secs), School Finance and Business Management; 46.00 (46min), Pupil Personnel, 45.84 (45min.50secs) and School Plant, 28.90 (28mins.54secs.).

1.1.5 Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the School Activities-Time Mix of male and female Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria

Table II: School Activities-Time Mix of Male and Female Head-Teachers

Items	N	Df	Mean score	t-value	Sig	Decision
Pupil personnel	106	104		-.415	.679	Not sig
Instructional supervision				-.007	.994	Not sig
Community-school relations				.301	.764	Not sig
School finance and business management				.997	.321	Not sig
School plant				-.371	.711	Not sig
General tasks				-.356	.723	Not sig

$\alpha = .05$

Table II shows that since the significant values were all greater than the α value of 0.05, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the school activities-time mix of male and female Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria is accepted.

1.1.6 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the school activities-time mix and Qualification of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria

Table III: School Activities-Time Mix and Qualification of Head-Teachers

Items	N	Df	t-value	Sig	Decision	
Pupil personnel	106	104		1.079	.283	Not sig
Instructional supervision				1.300	.197	Not sig
Community-school relations				2.716	.008	Sig
School finance and business management				2.547	.012	Sig
School plant				1.014	.313	Not sig
General tasks				1.594	.114	Not sig

$\alpha = .05$

Table III indicates that the significant values for Pupil Personnel, Instructional Supervision, School Plant and General Tasks are greater than the α value of 0.05, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the Time-Activities mix of Head Teachers with University degree and those without University degree in public primary schools in Nigeria is therefore retained. However, since the significant values for Community-School Relations and School Finance and Business Management are less than the value of 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected for these items.

1.1.7 Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the Time-Activities mix among experienced and inexperienced Head-teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria.

Table IV: Time-Activities Mix of Experienced and Inexperienced Head-Teachers

Items	N	Df	t-value	Sig	Decision	
Pupil personnel	106	104		-3.156	.002	Sig
Instructional supervision				-1.856	.066	Not sig
Community-school relations				-2.450	.016	Sig
School finance and business management				-2.793	.006	Sig
School plant				2.858	.004	Sig
General tasks				-2.082	.040	Sig

$\alpha = .05$

The table shows that there is a significant difference in the Time-Activities mix and learning outcome of experienced and inexperienced Head-teachers in all the school activities except Instructional Supervision whose significant value is more than the value of 0.05. The hypothesis for the item is therefore retained while others are rejected since their significant values are less than 0.05

1.1.8 Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference in the Time-Activities mix and learning outcome of Head-Teachers based on size of school in public primary schools in Nigeria.

Table V: Time-Activities Mix of Head-Teachers based on school size

Items	N	Df	t-value	Sig	Decision
Pupil personnel	106	104	1.073	.286	Not sig
Instructional supervision			.038	.969	Not sig
Community-school relations			.619	.537	Not sig
School finance and business management			.091	.928	Not sig
School plant			.868	.387	Not sig
General tasks			.486	.628	Not sig

$\alpha = .05$

The result indicates that the significant values for all the items are greater than the α value of 0.05, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the Time-Activities mix of Head-Teachers based on the size of public primary schools in Nigeria is therefore retained.

2. Discussion of Results

The major concern of this study was to determine the Time-Activities Mix of Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria. The findings revealed that of about six hours spent in the school, Head-Teachers spent five and half hours on administrative tasks as follows: General tasks (which ranked highest); 1hr.13mins.4sec, closely followed by Instructional Supervision; 1hr.12mins.58sec, Community-School Relations; 48mins.40sec, School Finance and Business Management; 46mins, Pupil Personnel; 45mins.50sec and School Plant; 8mins.54sec. It was expected that more time should have been spent on Instructional Supervision which directly impact on teaching and learning when compared to other administrative tasks. This finding corroborates Amatya et al (2004) whose study revealed that Head-teachers tend to spend less time on activities directly impacting on teaching/learning and more on administrative work. Could this be responsible for the poor pupil performance and alleged slide in the quality of education?

The study also showed that there was no significant difference in Time-Activities Mix of Head-Teachers by sex as the male and female Head-Teachers did not vary in their School Activities-Time Mix. This finding supports that of Omoike and Idogho (2011) and Hamphill, Griffiths and Fredrickson (1992) who posit that gender of Head-Teacher is not a significant factor in the administrative roles of school leadership. Similarly, there was no significant difference in Time-Activities Mix of Head-Teachers by qualification. Teachers with University degree and those without University degree did not differ in their Time-Activity mix on General tasks, Instructional Supervision, and General Tasks. However, the result of the difference between Community-School Relations and School Finance and Business Management varied according to qualification of Head-Teachers which were found to be significant. This finding supports the study carried out by Amanchi (1998) who found out that professionally trained school heads perform their roles better than non-professionals.

Experience was found not to be significant in the School Activities-Time Mix of Head-Teachers as relates to Instructional Supervision. It can thus be inferred that the amount of time spent by Head-teachers on Instructional activities does not depend on their experience on the job. This finding negates that of Okolo (2007) who discovered that there was a significant difference in the performance of Head-Teachers who are experienced (above 20years) and those who are not experienced (4-11years). This has also been supported by the result of this study which revealed that there was no significant difference between experience and General tasks, School Plant, Pupil Personnel, Community-School Relations, School Finance and Business Management.

The result of the difference between school size and Time-Activities Mix of Head-Teachers negates the study of Balanskat and Gerhard (2005) which revealed that one of the biggest factors affecting leadership is the size of school. Owoeye and Yara (2011) on the other hand opined that school size does not matter. This later view was collaborated in this study as the results show that there was no significant difference in the Time-Activities Mix of Head-Teachers based on size of school.

2.1 Implication for Educational Administration

The result of this study which revealed that Instructional Supervision was not given enough time based on its ranking as

number two implies that teaching and learning is not adequately monitored. Though all other administrative tasks in the school are important, time spent on Instructional Supervision should rank topmost because it is directly geared towards the attainment of effective learning outcome. Qualification of Head-Teachers plays a crucial role in school administration; professionally trained school heads will perform better in Community-School Relations and School Finance and Business Management as shown from the result of this study. Experience, though found not to be a significant factor in the time spent on Instructional Supervision, was found to affect how Head-Teachers allot time to other administrative tasks. The result of this study also showed that school size is not a factor in how school leadership spends time on administrative activities.

3. Conclusions

Head-Teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria engage in various administrative activities during school hours. The time spent on these activities varies with General tasks ranking highest followed by Instructional Supervision, Community-School Relations, School Finance and Business Management, Pupil Personnel and School Plant. Gender of Head-Teachers and school size were found not to be significant factors in time allocation to administrative activity. Experience and qualification were however found to be important factors in the amount of time Head-teachers allocate to Instructional Supervision.

4. Recommendations

- i. Head-Teachers should spend more time on Instructional Supervision that directly affects teaching and learning.
- ii. Experience and Qualification should be considered in the appointment of Head-Teachers to ensure equitable distribution of time on all school activities.

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