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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPALS' SCHOOL PLANT UTILIZATION AND MAINTENANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study comparatively analyzed principals' school plant utilization and maintenance in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State with emphasis on teaching facilities. Two research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 600 respondents made up of 292 public and 308 private secondary school principals in Enugu State. Multistage sampling procedure was used to draw 300 principals of which 146 were from public and 154 from private secondary schools. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an overall reliability index of 0.79. The researchers together with five research assistants collected data for the study and a 94 percent return rate was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed among others that the principals of public and private secondary schools differ in utilization of teaching facilities in the areas of mandating teachers to use the recommended text books available in the school library for their instructional delivery and inspecting

teachers' ICT usage. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the State Post Primary School Services Commission and school proprietors should organize annual sensitization programme for principals to bridge the gap in their utilization of teaching facilities and also imbibe good maintenance culture.

Keywords: Principals, School Plant, Utilization, Maintenance, Teaching Facilities, Sports Facilities

Introduction

The future of any nation depends on the skills, knowledge and attitude of individuals in the country. It is a known fact that such skills and knowledge can only be acquired and enhanced through education. Education is an indispensable instrument for human empowerment and progress of a nation. It is a tool for developing individuals' potentials which enable them meaningfully contribute to the betterment of their selves, families and society at large. Formal education takes place in learning institutions such as primary, secondary and tertiary. Secondary school which is the focus of this study is offered in two categories of schools namely: public and private secondary schools.

Public secondary school is any post primary learning institution established, funded and oversee by the government, while the private secondary school is any post primary learning institution established, funded and oversee by the individuals, groups, missions and non-governmental organization. Ogbiji (2018) noted that the public and private secondary schools are guided by the same National Policy on Education, and purse the same objectives of providing standard and qualitative education. Continuing, the author also stressed that both public and private secondary schools are regulated by government policy in terms of curriculum content, school calendar and daily school hours among others. Public and private secondary school environment is characterized by school plant.

School plant has been conceptualized in various ways. For instance, Ohia (2019) defined school plant as all the facilities, instructional, administrative,

recreational, and residential including all equipment used for the effective learning of students. The physical facilities in the school are known as school plant. Salami (2021) also defined school plant as all the equipment, tools and consumables that enable effective teaching and learning to take place. It is any resources aside from human and funds in the learning environment. According to Iheanyichukwu, Nwosu, Gomma, Ekanem and Edet (2018), school plant consists of the buildings within the school, the equipment and all the durable and temporary facilities for proper teaching and learning. The durable facilities are the school buildings and the temporary facilities are furniture, laboratory apparatus and electrically fixtures. Contextually, school plant is all the physical facilities and material resources in the learning environment which promote instructional delivery.

There are numerous benefits of school plant. School plant shed the students from sun and rain and also creates an enabling learning environment. To buttress this, Atolagbe (2019) pointed out school plant is the most prominent indicator of shelter that protect administrators, teachers, students from rain, sun, hot/cold weather and destruction which has tremendous positive impact on the comfort, safety and academic performance of students. It also prevents students and staff from violent storm. The provision of sufficient school plant creates an inspiring learning environment that satisfies the needs of staff and students. Khatete (2018) also stressed that they are used to satisfy the physical and emotional needs of the staff and students in the course of their stay and study in a school. Huge amount of money is usually expended for the procurement of school plant, hence proper utilization is important to justify the investment.

School plant utilization is concerned with judicious use of school physical facilities. According to Ekpoh (2018), school plant utilization implies putting into proper use, available school plant to achieve educational goals, as well as, avoiding wastage. At secondary school level, principal is the custodian of school plant. One of the responsibilities of principals as the chief administrators is to ensure maximal utilization of the available resources. In other words, It is

the duty of the principal as the custodian of school plant to ensure that the school facilities are ready for use as at and when due and that are correctly used for the purpose of which they are meant for. Livala, Bulus, Daver and Livala (2021) noted that when facilities such as classrooms, library, laboratory, teaching aids among others are available, they need to be skillfully and adequately utilized in order to influence learning and making it more meaningful. Ibrahim, Yahaya and Sahabi (2020) pointed out that whenever, the school plant is utilized in teaching, conducting practical, it satisfies learners' learning need and fosters attainment of educational goals. Osuji and Young-Arney (2019) also stressed that realizing the important role a functional school plant plays in the educational process, school administrators constantly strive to improve on available facilities by utilizing various maintenance practices to ensure that the school plant is kept in a functional state to serve its purpose. As school plant is used on daily basis, they are bound to deteriorate and depreciate and to ensure uninterrupted usage, school plant maintenance therefore becomes crucial.

School plant maintenance is regular and timely inspection, classification of damaged facilities as well as its' replacement and repair to keep them in an operation state. Ekpoh (2018) defined school plant maintenance as all the activities carried out on any component of school plant such as equipment repairs or services to ensure that they are functioning and in good shape. Maintenance of school plant prevents school facilities against dilapidation, fire outbreak and thieves. Adamu (2019), stressed that maintenance of school plant is necessary in order to retain their value and original status and to keep them in good condition for use and to prevent wastage of those facilities. It is essential that principal as the custodian of school plant regularly inspect, keep record, detect facilities that require replacement and replace services. It also entails ensuring clean and safe learning environment. Osuji and Young-Arney (2019) noted that the importance of proper, timely and adequate maintenance of school plant cannot be underestimated, in view of the huge cost of procurement of new materials. Adamu (2019) stressed that the school plant are

categorized into three major types namely; buildings, sport and teaching facilities. The focus in this study is on teaching facilities.

Teaching facilities are resources that facilitate instructional process. These facilities include; textbooks, audio-visual, newspaper, pictures, maps, sound projectors, chalks, chalk borads, computer, specimens, photocopying machines and crafts among others (Doosuur and Igyuve, 2013). In the assertion of Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo (2013) teaching facilities include; text-books, charts, maps, audio-visual, radio, tape recorder, television and video tape recording. These teaching facilities provide sound, visual or both to the sense organs during classroom instruction. Utilization of teaching facilities is the process of using procured and accessible tools, aids, equipment and appliances to make teaching and learning process easier, interesting and rewarding (Ogbu, 2015). The utilization of teaching facilities in the instructional process makes the contents of the lesson more practical and less vague. In order to benefit the numerous benefits of teaching facilities, regular maintenance is necessary. The maintenance of the available teaching facilities prolongs their life expectancy.

Some school plant that were procured and used for several years are worn and torn, requiring repair or replacement in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State. It is a worrisome situation that school plant maintenance seems to only take place when there is break down of the facilities in some public and private secondary schools in Enugu State. Bisi-Onyemaechi, Akani, Ikefuna, Tagbo, Chinawa (2018) observed that some buildings are dilapidated with worn-off and dusty floor and there are classrooms without ceiling which interfere with learning in schools in Enugu State. Chris-Korie cited in Emenalo and Chris-Korie (2016) reported that school plant have experience blown-of roofs due to frequent stormy wind, over-flooding of play ground as a result of heavy rainfall, flood, excessive heat from increase temperature from blocked drainage system in secondary schools in south east, Nigeria. The state of school plant utilization and maintenance of school plant may differ in public and private

secondary schools due to varying efforts of the owners of the schools to control the activities of principals. The public secondary school plants are collectively owned by everybody and thereby often regarded as ‘‘nobody’s properties’’ which may prompt principals to use and maintain them as they wish to. This is in contrast to private secondary school plant owned by individuals who can go extra mile to ensure that principals utilize and maintain their properties to attract more students to their schools. Most secondary school principals in Enugu State have no school plant maintenance and utilization policy to guide them in managing their school facilities and this can properly account for underutilization and poor maintenance culture in the system. The principals of private secondary schools operate and maintain school plant based on tight instruction and supervision of the proprietor and proprietress who want their facilities to always be in functional state. Thus, the roles of school owners can influence principals' utilization and maintenance of school plant and this prompted this study.

Statement of the Problem

It is the duty of the principal as the custodian of school plant to ensure that the school facilities are ready for use as at when due and that are correctly used for the purpose of which they are meant for. School plant is bound to depreciate as they are often put into use. However, in some secondary schools in Enugu State, there seems to be cases of chairs and tables littered all around the school premises, broken windows and doors, dilapidated buildings and exposed electrical fittings. Negligence in the maintenance of school plant has many adverse consequences such as a collapse of school building, breakdown, and shortages of relevant facilities for effective teaching and learning. Some of the school plant such as furniture, building roofs, sporting equipment and other facilities vandalized during Herdsmen-farmers clashes in communities around secondary schools in Enugu State and effects of political rallies in those schools are still in despair condition.

Flooding in most parts of the secondary schools in Enugu State has also damaged some part of the school including their

playground and other structures. The deplorable condition of school facilities may differ in public and private secondary schools in Enugu state. Sometimes, school plants in public secondary school are seen as ‘‘no man’s properties’ which is likely to give rise to poor maintenance culture of school plant. On the other, the principals of private secondary schools are accountable for any misuse and poor state of school plants. Thus, they may strive to utilize and maintain the available school plants. Private secondary schools which charge high rate of school fee could strive to maintain and utilize school plant to attract and retain more learners for maximization of profits. It is based on the state of affair that this study was undertaken to comparatively analyze principals’ school plant utilization and maintenance in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. How does principals’ utilization of teaching facilities differ in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. How does principals’ maintenance of teaching facilities differ in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is the design which aims at collecting data and describing it in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. Nwankwo (2013) also saw descriptive survey design as the research design that describes phenomena as they exist. This design is deemed appropriate for the study, since the researcher collected data from a given population of principals to comparatively analyze principals’ school plant utilization and maintenance in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State.

The study was conducted in Enugu State of Nigeria, which is one of the states in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. The government and people of the state have high value for education as reflected by

a good number of school plant in state governments and privately owned educational institutions in the state. As a result of this, there became the need to comparatively analyze principals' school plant utilization and maintenance in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State.

The population of the study comprises 600 principals of which 292 are from public and 308 from private secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample for this study was 300 respondents made up of 146 principals of public and 154 principals of private secondary schools drawn using multi-stage sample procedure involving proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled ''School Plant Utilization and Maintenance Questionnaire (SPUMQ)'' was used for data collection. The instrument was developed by the researchers based on review of related literature and consultation of experts in educational management. The SPUMQ has two sections: A and B. Section A has two items on the demographic data of the school. Section B of SPUMQ was based on school plant utilization and maintenance covered in the study. Cluster A1 has seven items on utilization of teaching facilities while cluster A2 has seven items on maintenance of teaching facilities. The instrument therefore contained a total of 14 items all of which are structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The suggestions were applied in producing the final instrument.

Cronbach alpha through single pilot test was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability indices obtained for clusters A1 and A2 were 0.79 and 0.81 with an overall coefficient value of 0.80. This value was adjudged high enough for the instrument to be reliable. This is in line with Creswell (2009) who recommended that co-

efficient value of 0.75 or above is adequate for any research work.

Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researchers and five research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Enugu State. A total of 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 146 copies for principals of public secondary schools and 203 and 154 copies for principals of private secondary schools. Out of these, total 282 copies of questionnaire made up of 138 and 146 from principals of public and private secondary schools were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 94% percent return. At the end of the data collection exercise, copies of the questionnaire that dully completed and retrieved were used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The decision for the research question is that any item with a mean rating that fell below 2.50 were taken as disagreement while any with mean rating of 2.50 and above were taken to indicate agreement. Standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents mean ratings.

Results

Research Question 1: How does principals' utilization of teaching facilities differ in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?

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S/N	ITEMS	Pub. Sch. Principals (n = 138)			Priv. Sch. Principals (n =144)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Instruct teachers to use public address systems during lesson presentation	2.04	1.04	Disagree	2.15	1.10	Disagree
2	Provide library usage chart for students to make use of the available books	2.88	1.17	Agree	2.58	1.13	Agree
3	Mandate teachers to use the school laboratory for experiments	2.59	1.16	Agree	2.62	1.19	Agree
4	Inspect teachers' use of laboratory apparatus in conducting experiment	2.77	1.10	Agree	2.84	1.08	Agree
5	Ensure teachers make use of the available instructional materials to make teaching interesting to learners	3.16	0.98	Agree	3.11	0.89	Agree
6	Mandate teachers to use the recommended text books available in the school library for their instructional delivery	2.99	1.08	Agree	2.28	1.03	Disagree
7	Inspect teachers' ICT usage	2.18	1.03	Disagree	2.80	1.16	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.66**	**1.08**	**Agree**	**2.63**	**1.08**	**Agree**

As shown on Table 1 the mean scores of public and private secondary school principals for items 2, 3, 4 and 5 were above 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as their utilization of teaching facilities. The mean ratings of both public and private secondary school principals for item 1 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items.

The pooled standard deviation score which stood at 1.08 and 1.08 for public and private secondary school principals respectively indicated that there is homogeneity amongst mean scores indicating a similar consensus of opinion. The cluster mean scores of 2.66 and 2.63 for public and private secondary school principals respectively which are above 2.50 indicated that they utilize teaching facilities. However, as shown on items 6 and 7, principal of public and private secondary schools differ in utilization of teaching facilities in the areas of mandating teachers to use the recommended text books available in the school library for their instructional delivery and inspecting teachers' ICT usage.

Research Question 2: How does principals' maintenance of teaching facilities differ in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?

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S/N	ITEMS	Public School Principals (n =138)			Private School Principals (n =144)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
8	Regularly service school public address system to keep them in functioning states	2.12	1.09	Disagree	2.08	1.07	Disagree
9	Instruct librarian to ensure that school library are swept after usage	2.79	1.08	Agree	2.66	1.24	Agree
10	Mandate laboratory attendants to ensure students clean the school laboratory after experimental classes	2.35	1.11	Disagree	2.85	0.96	Agree
11	Ensure teachers return textbooks to the school library after their instruction	2.64	1.07	Agree	2.53	1.19	Agree
12	Instruct school Liberian to monitor students activities in the school library	2.63	1.24	Agree	2.69	1.19	Agree
13	Repair broken chairs and tables so that students can comfortably sit down and learn	2.45	1.08	Disagree	2.69	1.07	Agree
14	Repair faulty computer facilities	2.36	0.98	Disagree	2.83	1.20	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.48**	**1.09**	**Disagree**	**2.62**	**1.13**	**Agree**

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Results presented on Table 2 the mean scores of public and private secondary school principals for items 9, 11 and 12 were above 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as their maintenance of teaching facilities. The mean ratings of both public and private secondary school principals for item 8 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items.

The pooled standard deviation score which stood at 1.09 and 1.13 for public and private secondary school principals respectively indicated indicating that their responses are homogeneous. The cluster mean of 2.48 for public secondary school principals which was below 2.50 indicated disagreements on maintenance of teaching facilities, while the cluster mean of 2.62 for private secondary school principals which was above 2.50 indicated agreements on maintenance of teaching facilities As shown on items 10, 13 and 14, principal of public and private secondary schools differ in maintenance of teaching facilities in the areas of mandating laboratory attendants to ensure students clean the school laboratory after experimental classes, repair of broken chairs and tables so that students can comfortably sit down and learn and repair of faulty computer facilities.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study shows that there are some areas of difference in principals' utilization of teaching facilities in secondary schools in Enugu State. The principals of public and private secondary schools differ in utilization of teaching facilities in the areas of mandating teachers to use the recommended text books available in the school library for their instructional delivery and inspecting teachers' ICT usage. This finding is in contrast to earlier finding of Bukoye (2019) who reported that there is no difference between government and private secondary schools in terms of putting into good utilization of teaching (instructional) materials such as textbook and ICT devices. The dissimilarity in the findings could be attributed to difference in geographical location of the two studies. Principals of public secondary schools mandate teachers to use the recommended text books available in the school library for their instructional

delivery, unlike their secondary school private counterparts who fail to do so. On the other hand, principals of private secondary schools inspect teachers' ICT usage, while principals of public secondary schools fail to do so. The possible explanation for this finding could be attributed to the fact that most private secondary school principals are tightly supervised by the school owners to ensure maximum use of the available resources to attract and retain more students unlike the public counterparts that rarely monitored. The disparities in utilization of teaching facilities make students to have dissimilar learning experience and opportunities for easier and acquisition of concepts being taught in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State.

The finding of this study indicates that there are some areas of difference in principals' maintenance of teaching facilities in secondary schools in Enugu State. The principal of public and private secondary schools differ in maintenance of teaching in the areas of mandating laboratory attendants to ensure students clean the school laboratory after experimental classes, repair of broken chairs and tables so that students can comfortably sit down and learn and repair of faulty computer facilities. This supports the finding of Uchendu, Ekanem, and Jonah (2013) who reported that school facilities maintenance differ based on school types as they are done in private schools than in public secondary schools. It is principal private secondary schools that maintain teaching facilities in the areas of mandating laboratory attendants to ensure students clean the school laboratory after experimental classes, repair of broken chairs and tables so that students can comfortably sit down and learn and repair of faulty computer facilities, while their counterpart in public secondary schools fail to do so. The difference in the principals' maintenance of teaching facilities could account for the poor state of facilities such as broken chairs and desks, leaking roofs, rough floors and cracked walls found in the public secondary schools than in the private schools in Enugu State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that difference exists in the maintenance and utilization of school

plants in public and private secondary schools. Most school plant are better utilized and maintained in private secondary schools than public secondary schools. Public secondary school plant are regarded as nobody properties which can account for less utilization and maintenance when compared to private secondary schools in Enugu State. The development of better utilization and maintenance in private than public secondary schools might be connected to high rate of fee paid by students and desirable to attract and retain more learners for maximization of profits.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The State Post Primary School Service Commission and school proprietors should organize annual sensitization programme for principals to bridge the gap in their utilization of teaching facilities and also imbibe good maintenance culture.
2. The State Post Primary School Service Commission and school proprietors should recruit skilled professionals with proficiency in sports facilities operations to fill the gap in their utilization of the available facilities.
3. All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) should organize specialized training programme on sports facilities maintenance operation for school administrators to up-grade their technical skills and knowledge.

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