

## **MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE WAY FORWARD**

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### **Abstract**

The study examined the management challenges of public primary school administrators in Awka South Local Government Education Authority as well as the way forward. The study was guided by three research questions. The study was carried out in primary schools in Awka South LGA. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was 45 Head-teachers from the 45 public primary schools in Awka South LGA. There was no sampling because all the 45 Head-teachers were used because the population was small. The instrument for data collection was a 28-item structured questionnaire. The instrument was duly validated by experts and tested for reliability which yielded an average reliability value of 0.84, hence was considered reliable for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions. The study found among others that the management challenges in public primary schools administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority, include: over population, family factors, inadequate technological facilities and lack of fund. Furthermore, the study also find out that the school administrators can encourage their teachers to minimize the effect of management challenges on the teachers' productivity by making teachers know they are important, building professional commitment, building feedback system, understanding what teachers need, helping them help the pupils and taking every opportunity to give verbal praise. Finally the study also found out that the possible way forward to minimize the management challenges in public primary schools administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority include: adequate funding, professional development, institutionalising adequate supervision and evaluation of instruction and staff in the schools, provision of adequate fund for school management and maintenance, encouraging parental involvement and collaborative partnership in school management. Based on the findings, it was therefore recommended that School administrators should develop innovative ways of managing schools despite the various constraints and government and policymakers should provide the necessary support to ensure that primary schools are adequately resourced and managed effectively. In addition the study also recommended that adequate funds should be provided by the government and organizational agents that support educational activities and also that collaborative partnership should be encouraged between the school and the community among others.

### **Introduction**

Managers who oversee organizations commonly face several challenges related to productivity and communication and knowing how to recognise these challenges and address them helps increase a manager's confidence and ability to lead. Management challenges refer to the obstacles or difficulties faced by managers in achieving organizational goals and objectives. These challenges can arise from various factors, such as changes in the organizational environment, employee morale, technological advancements, or financial constraints. In their article, 'Top

management challenges in the 21st century," Gouillart and Kelly (2015) identified several management challenges, as globalization, technological change, increased competition, and the need for innovation while according to an article by Armstrong and Mitchell (2017), some of the top challenges facing managers today include managing a multigenerational workforce, fostering creativity and innovation, and managing work-life balance in which according to them, the managers must constantly adapt to the changing organizational landscape to overcome these challenges and ensure organizational success. Management challenges of primary schools refer to the obstacles or difficulties faced by school leaders in managing primary schools effectively. These challenges can be related to various factors, such as resource management, pupil behaviour management, parental involvement, and educational policy changes. Management challenges in public primary school administration have been a subject of research interest for educational researchers over the years. The successful management of primary schools is crucial in ensuring the quality of education and effective learning outcomes for pupils. However, school administrators face various challenges that hinder their ability to manage schools effectively.

The management of public primary schools in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges, which can be attributed to a range of factors. One of the major challenges is the inadequate provision of resources, including funding, infrastructure, and teaching materials (Akangbou, 2017). This has led to overcrowding, poor facilities, and a lack of teaching resources, which can have a negative impact on educational outcomes (Odo, 2019). Another challenge is the high demand for education in Nigeria, which has led to an increase in enrolment rates in primary schools. According to Adeniji (2018), this has resulted in a strain on resources, as the government struggles to keep up with the demand. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many parents are unable to afford private schools, and therefore rely on public schools to provide their children with a low quality education.

Additionally, there is a lack of support from stakeholders such as parents, community leaders, and government officials. This can result to a lack of accountability and transparency, which can lead to mismanagement and corruption (Oyekanmi, 2018). According to Akangbou (2017), many teachers are poorly trained, which result in poor teaching quality and a lack of motivation among the staff. Furthermore, the low salaries and poor working conditions of teachers can lead to high turnover rates, which can impact the stability and effectiveness of the school administration (Odo, 2019).

According to Rukundo and Kyeyune (2016), primary school administrators encounter a wide range of management challenges that include financial constraints, inadequate resources, limited staffing, and insufficient training. Additionally, the authors highlighted the lack of parent involvement, bureaucratic policies, and inadequate decision-making frameworks as significant challenges that hinder effective primary school administration.

Apart from the challenges mentioned above, primary school administrators also face difficulties in managing pupils' behaviour and maintaining discipline in the school environment. According to Al-Ali (2019), primary school administrators in Oman identified student behavior as one of the major challenges they faced in school management. The author highlighted that managing pupil behavior requires a multifaceted approach that involves collaboration between school administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, primary school administrators face challenges in promoting parent involvement and community engagement in school activities. According to Kinyanjui (2017), primary school administrators in Kenya identified the lack of parent involvement and community support as a significant challenge in school management. The author highlighted that parent involvement is crucial in promoting pupils achievement, improving school attendance, and enhancing the overall school environment.

In addition to the challenges mentioned earlier, primary school administrators also face challenges in managing the curriculum and implementing educational policies. According to Mahamane and Diawara (2017), primary school administrators in Mali face difficulties in managing the curriculum due to the limited resources and inadequate teacher training. The authors highlighted that the lack of training for teachers on the new curriculum and instructional strategies has contributed to the poor performance of pupils in national exams.

In another development, Olayiwola and Babatunde (2018) conducted a study in Nigeria and found that primary school administrators face difficulties in implementing policies due to the lack of clarity in the policies, inadequate resources, and insufficient training. The authors highlighted that effective policy implementation requires the involvement of all stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, and policymakers. However, according to Thompson and Sandhu (2020), primary school administrators in the United States face challenges in managing the diverse needs of pupils, including pupils with disabilities and pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds. The authors highlighted that effective management of diversity requires the development of inclusive policies and practices that promote equity and access for all pupils.

Furthermore, Abdullahi (2018) revealed that the management of public primary schools in Tanzania was plagued with numerous challenges. The author identified the lack of resources, inadequate staffing, inadequate teacher training, lack of parental involvement, and inadequate infrastructure as significant challenges affecting primary school management in Tanzania.

The administration of primary schools has become an increasingly complex and demanding task in recent years, due to a range of factors such as increasing enrolment rates, the demand for better educational outcomes, and changing societal expectations. These challenges can be compounded by inadequate resources, limited funding, and a lack of support from stakeholders. This study aims to explore the topic management challenges in public primary school administration, with a focus on the Nigerian context. It is important to note that the specific challenges faced by primary school administrators in Awka South Local Government Education Authority in Anambra state may vary depending on the local context and the unique needs of the community. The findings of research studies on this topic will provide valuable insights into the challenges facing primary school administrators and can inform the development of effective strategies to improve school management and promote positive student outcomes. This study therefore, examines the management challenges of public primary school administrators in in Awka South Local Government Education Authority as well as the way forward.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the management challenges of primary school administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?
2. In what way can Head-teachers minimize the effect of management challenges on teachers' productivity?
3. What are the solutions to the management challenges of public primary school administrators in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?

### **Methods**

Descriptive survey design was used for the research. Descriptive survey method generally involves the collection of data from a defined population to describe the condition of the population using the variable under survey. The population of study was 45 Head-teachers and the sample size

is 45 head teachers from primary schools in Awka South LGA. No sampling was done since the population is manageable. Structured questionnaire which was dully validated by three experts from the department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka was used for data collection. It contained 28-items. The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections. Section A was on demographic data while B sought head teachers' opinion on the management challenges of primary school administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority while section C deals with the way the Head-teachers can minimize the effect of management challenges while section D elicited response on the solution to the management challenges of public primary school administrators in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. The items were developed on a 4-point scale of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree with values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Mean was used for the analysis, a mean of 2.50 and above indicated acceptance while a mean below 2.50 indicated rejection. The instrument was pilot tested in Awka North using 50 teachers. The copies of the questionnaire were administered to the teachers directly by the researchers assisted by two (2) research assistants. The overall reliability of the instrument obtained was 0.85 using Cronbach's Alpha method.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What are the management challenges in public primary school administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation responses of Head teachers on the management challenges in public primary school administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?**

S/N	The management challenges in public primary school administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority include:	X	SD	DESICION
1.	Over population	3.55	0.17	Agree
2.	Family factors such as divorce, single parents and poverty issues	3.10	0.48	Agree
3.	Inadequate technological facilities such as computer facilities	3.60	0.56	Agree
4.	Insecurity	3.20	0.94	Agree
5.	Inadequate parental involvement	3.03	0.91	Agree
6.	Lack of Fund	3.87	0.75	Agree
7.	Poor maintenance and inadequate facilities	3.05	0.43	Agree
8.	Lack of accurate and timely information to staff and pupils	2.57	1.23	Agree
9.	Problem of discipline in school	3.45	0.84	Agree
10.	Unhealthy environment	2.64	1.45	Agree

Table 1 shows that all the items, 1-10 has mean score of 3.55, 3.10, 3.60, 3.20, 3.03, 3.87, 3.05, 2.57, 3.45 and 2.64 respectively and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore, this shows that the head teachers accepted all the items as the management challenges in public primary schools administration in Awka South Education Authority. These include: Over population, Family factors, Inadequate technological facilities, Insecurity, Inadequate parental

involvement, Lack of Fund, Poor maintenance and inadequate facilities, Lack of accurate and timely information to staff and pupils, Problem of discipline in school and Unhealthy environment.

### **Research Question 2**

In what way can Head-teachers minimize the effect of management challenges on teachers' productivity?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Ways Head-teachers minimize the effect of management challenges on teachers' productivity?**

S/N	The way Head-teachers can minimize the effect of management challenges on teachers' productivity include:	X	SD	DESICION
11.	Make teachers know they are important such as remind them in words and notes how great their profession is and say inspirational things about them	3.64	0.17	Agree
12.	Build professional commitment	3.21	0.23	Agree
13.	Build feedback system	3.44	0.76	Agree
14.	Understand what teachers need and consider them	3.83	0.42	Agree
15.	Help them help the pupils	3.02	0.81	Agree
16.	Use every opportunity to give verbal praise	3.84	0.61	Agree

Table 2 shows that all the items, 1-6 are accepted and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore, this shows that the head teachers accepted all the items as how the school administrators can encourage their teachers to minimize the effect of management challenges on the teachers' productivity. These include: making teachers know they are important, building professional commitment, building feedback system, understanding what teachers need, helping them help the pupils and taking every opportunity to give verbal praise.

### **Research Question 3**

What are the solutions to the management challenges of public primary school administrators in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation responses of head teachers on the solution to the management challenges of public primary school administrators in Awka South Local Government Education Authority.**

S/N	The way forward to minimize the management challenges in public primary school administration include:	X	SD	DESICION
17.	Recruitment of more teachers for empowerment programs such as teaching for Nigeria, N- power, etc. to schools with more populated pupils.	3.87	0.87	Agree
18.	Provision of school guidance counsellor in schools for guiding children's behaviour	3.00	0.42	Agree
19.	Provision of technological facilities like computers, printers, projectors, digital camera, laptops, etc	3.78	0.32	Agree

**Table 3: Contd.**

S/N	The way forward to minimize the management challenges in public primary school administration include:	X	SD	DESICION
20.	Provision of security such as security men and fencing the school compound.	3.45	0.45	Agree
21.	Encouraging parental involvement and collaborative partnership in school management such as attending PTA meetings and engaging in school projects	3.74	0.67	Agree
22.	Provision of adequate fund for school management and maintenance.	3.94	0.87	Agree
23.	Proper monitoring of schools by governmental bodies and schools to checkmate school challenges.	3.02	1.12	Agree
24.	Ensure that teachers are furnished with accurate information and on time	3.58	0.14	Agree
25.	Institutionalising adequate supervision and evaluation of instruction and staff in the schools.	3.84	0.56	Agree
26.	Professional development such as training to improve their professional skills and knowledge	3.87	0.58	Agree
27.	Inclusive policies and practices such as policies that include the diverse needs of children and encouraging equity	2.84	1.04	Agree

Table 3 shows that all the items 1-10 are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore this shows that the head teachers accepted all the items as the possible way forward to minimize the management challenges in public primary schools administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. The way forward include: adequate funding, professional development, institutionalising adequate supervision and evaluation of instruction and staff in the schools, provision of adequate fund for school management and maintenance, encouraging parental involvement and collaborative partnership in school management among others.

### **Discussion**

The findings revealed that over population, family factors, inadequate technological facilities, insecurity among others are management challenges. Table 1 shows that all the items, 1-10 are accepted and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore this shows that the head teachers accepted all the items as the management challenges in primary school administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. This finding is similar with the finding of Al-Ali (2019) and Adeyemo and Adeyinka (2015) who identified several challenges faced by primary school administrators in Nigeria. These challenges include inadequate funding, insufficient facilities, teacher shortage, inadequate instructional materials, and lack of support from the government. These challenges have contributed to the low performance of primary school pupils in Nigeria.

Table 2 shows that all the items, 1-6 are accepted and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore this shows that the head teachers accepted all the items as how the school administrators can encourage their teachers to minimize the effect of management challenges on the teachers' productivity. These include: making teachers know they are important, building professional commitment, building feedback system, understanding what teachers need, helping them help the pupils and taking every opportunity to give verbal praise. This finding is in

agreement with the findings of Alzyoudi and Al-Srouf (2017) conducted a study in Jordan and found that primary school administrators face challenges in evaluating teacher performance, providing professional development opportunities for teachers, and ensuring the availability of high-quality instructional materials.

Table 3 shows that all the items 1-10 are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore this shows that the head teachers accepted all the items as the possible solutions to minimize the management challenges in public primary schools administration in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. The way forward include: Provision of adequate fund for school management and maintenance, Professional development, Institutionalising adequate supervision and evaluation of instruction and staff in the schools, Encouraging parental involvement and collaboration in school management among others. This is congruent with Arim (2017) observation, that Primary schools should be adequately funded to provide the necessary resources and support for effective teaching and learning. This includes providing funding for teacher training, classroom materials, and technology resources. According to him, adequate funding has been linked to improved academic performance

Furthermore, Primary school administrators should be provided with opportunities for professional development and training to improve their leadership skills and knowledge of best practices in education. According to a study by Al-Ali (2019), providing professional development for school administrators can help them manage student behavior and create a positive learning environment.

In addition, Parents should be encouraged to participate in their children's education and be involved in school activities. Research has shown that parental involvement is positively associated with improved academic outcomes for students (Kinyanjui, 2017).

The findings is also in agreement with Olayiwola and Babatunde, (2018) study that Primary school administrators should collaborate with other stakeholders, such as community organizations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, to address the challenges facing schools. This can include partnering with organizations to provide additional resources and support for schools, or working with local government agencies to advocate for policy changes that benefit schools.

Finally, primary school administrators should promote inclusive policies and practices that address the diverse needs of pupils and promote equity and access. According to Thompson and Sandhu (2020), promoting inclusive policies and practices can help schools better manage diversity and support the academic success of all pupils.

In summary, the management of public primary schools in Nigeria is faced with numerous challenges, including inadequate resources, high demand for education, a lack of support from stakeholders, and challenges related to teacher recruitment, training, and retention.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study provide insights into the challenges faced by primary school administrators and inform the development of effective strategies to address these challenges. These challenges can impact the quality of education provided to pupils and can lead to inefficiencies and mismanagement within the school administration. It is crucial to address these challenges in order to improve educational outcomes and ensure that every child has access to quality education.

In summary, addressing the challenges faced by primary school administrators require a multifaceted approach that involves adequate funding, professional development, parent

involvement, collaborative partnerships, and inclusive policies and practices among others. By working together and implementing evidence-based solutions, schools can provide a positive and supportive learning environment that promotes academic success for all pupils.

In conclusion, the management of public primary schools is a challenging task that requires effective strategies to address the various challenges.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should develop innovative ways of managing schools despite the various constraints.
2. Governments and policymakers should provide the necessary support to ensure that primary schools are adequately resourced and managed effectively.
3. Adequate funds should be provided by the government and organizational agents that support educational activities.
4. Collaborative partnership should be encouraged between the school and the community.
5. Professional development should be encouraged by the school management.

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