

Research Article

# Identifying the Administrative Problems Encountered by Secondary School Principals in Agbani Education Zone

**Kalu Thankgod Ugochukwu** \* 

Department of Educational Management, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria

## Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone. The research adopts a descriptive survey design, focusing on 594 respondents, including both principals and teachers, from a population of 1,142. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, validated by experts, with reliability established using Cronbach's alpha. The study is guided by two research questions and two hypotheses, tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The analysis utilized mean, standard deviation, and t-tests to evaluate the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding administrative challenges. Key findings indicate that secondary school principals face significant challenges, including truancy, indiscipline among students and staff, poor communication facilities, and inadequate financial resources. These issues were found to detrimentally affect school administration and educational delivery. To address these challenges, the study suggests several strategies, including organizing regular seminars and workshops for principals, involving parents more actively in the administrative process, and improving communication facilities within schools. The study concludes that addressing these administrative issues is essential for improving educational outcomes and overall school management in the Agbani Education Zone. The proposed strategies aim to enhance the leadership capabilities of principals, foster a collaborative environment among stakeholders, and ultimately improve the quality of education in the region. These recommendations underscore the need for a comprehensive approach involving all stakeholders, including government authorities, to create a supportive and effective educational environment.

## Keywords

Administrative Problems, Secondary School Principals, Agbani Education Zone, Educational Management, School Administration, Indiscipline, Communication Facilities

## 1. Introduction

In contemporary society, various entities, including government firms, workers, and households, engage in diverse forms of administration, each grappling with distinct administrative challenges. This dynamic is vividly reflected in educational institutions, where the complexity of administration necessitates meticulous forecasting, planning,

and coordination. In secondary schools, these responsibilities primarily fall on the shoulders of the principals, who serve as the chief executives and are entrusted with the crucial role of managing school operations efficiently. [2]

The role of a school principal extends far beyond mere supervision; it encompasses the holistic management of the

\*Corresponding author: [official.ukalu@gmail.com](mailto:official.ukalu@gmail.com) (Kalu Thankgod Ugochukwu)

**Received:** 26 July 2024; **Accepted:** 5 September 2024; **Published:** 26 September 2024



Copyright: © The Author(s), 2024. Published by Science Publishing Group. This is an **Open Access** article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

institution, including academic performance, staff discipline, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement. Principals must navigate a complex web of responsibilities, balancing administrative duties with the overarching goal of fostering an environment conducive to learning and development. [5] Effective leadership in secondary schools is paramount, as it directly influences the quality of education and the overall performance of the institution.

Secondary school principals are the linchpin of the educational system, acting as the conduit between various stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and the broader community. Their leadership and administrative acumen are critical in addressing the myriad challenges that arise within the school environment. [1] Issues such as staff indiscipline, lack of commitment, strained internal and external relations, and fluctuating student academic performance are perennial concerns that require adept management and strategic intervention.

Administrative proficiency is indispensable for secondary school principals to fulfill their roles effectively. Without the necessary administrative skills, the teaching and learning environment can suffer, leading to pervasive issues like examination malpractice, cultism, academic incompetence, and widespread indiscipline among both students and staff. [4] Similarly, Bamidele & Ajayi [12] remarked that these issues include, but are not limited to, examination malpractice, pervasive indiscipline, academic incompetence, and poor teaching attitudes, are the notable challenges facing Nigeria secondary schools.

Chidobi [1] underscores the challenges posed by teachers and other staff members to principals, particularly in areas such as discipline, motivation, grievance handling, record keeping, and evaluating learning outcomes. Eke & Ndukwe [11] also noted that the location of schools and the exponential growth in student population further complicate administrative tasks, placing additional strain on already limited resources and facilities.

These multifaceted challenges underscore the necessity of this study, which aims to delve into the specific administrative problems faced by secondary school principals and propose viable solutions.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The administration of secondary schools in Nigeria is increasingly fraught with complexity due to a myriad of undefined and evolving problems within the school system. The persistent poor performance of students in critical examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) exams has been a significant concern, often attributed to underlying administrative issues. [2] These issues include, but are not limited to, examination malpractice, pervasive indiscipline, academic incompetence, and poor teaching attitudes. These challenges have far-

reaching implications, not only affecting student outcomes but also reflecting on the broader educational standards within the region.

The administrative problems faced by secondary school principals are multifaceted and deeply entrenched. Principals often grapple with inadequate financial resources, poor communication facilities, a lack of qualified staff, staff indiscipline, all of which hinder effective school management. [3] Ogunleye & Aluko [8] discovered that principals often grapple with inadequate financial resources, poor communication facilities, and a lack of qualified staff, all of which hinder effective school management. Issues such as staff indiscipline, lack of commitment, strained internal and external relations, and fluctuating student academic performance are perennial concerns that require adept management and strategic intervention. [9]

Additionally, the non-involvement of teachers, students, and parents in decision-making processes exacerbates these challenges, leading to a lack of ownership and commitment among key stakeholders. [10] The location of schools and the exponential growth in student population further complicate administrative tasks, placing additional strain on already limited resources and facilities.

In light of these persistent and pervasive challenges, this study seeks to identify the specific administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone. By examining these issues in detail, the study aims to shed light on the underlying factors contributing to administrative inefficiencies and propose targeted strategies to address them. The central research question guiding this inquiry is: What are the administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone? This question forms the foundation of the study, directing the investigation towards identifying key problem areas and formulating practical solutions to enhance administrative effectiveness in secondary schools.

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify the administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone.
2. Suggest strategies to solve these administrative problems.

## 2. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone?
2. What strategies can be adopted to solve these administrative problems?

## 2.1. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers regarding the administrative problems confronting secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers regarding the strategies that could be adopted to solve these administrative problems.

## 2.2. Research Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to identify the administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone. Descriptive survey research is suitable for systematically collecting and describing data from a representative sample of a population. The researchers used a four-point rating scale with three items.

The target population consisted of 45 principals and 1,097 teachers, totaling 1,142 individuals, according to PRS PPSMB Agbani Education Zone [6]. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 594 respondents. Data was collected using the APESSP questionnaire, which was validated by experts from ESUT's Faculty of Education. The instrument's reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis involved using mean and standard

deviation to answer the research questions, and t-test analysis to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

## 2.3. Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the administrative problems confronting secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone.

The t-test analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis. The results indicated no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers regarding the administrative problems, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the strategies that could be adopted to solve these administrative problems.

The t-test analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis. The results indicated no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers regarding the strategies to solve the administrative problems, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

## 3. Results

Research Question 1: What are the administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone?

**Table 1.** Mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the Administrative Problems encountered by Secondary School Principals.

S/N	Administrative Problems	Principals (x, SD)	Teachers (x, SD)	Combined (x, SD)
1	Inadequacy of finance	3.0, 0.8	2.80, 0.6	2.9, 0.7
2	Poor communication facilities	2.90, 0.7	2.50, 0.5	2.7, 0.6
3	Indiscipline among staff	2.80, 0.9	2.60, 0.6	2.7, 0.8
4	Indiscipline among students	3.0, 0.8	2.90, 0.7	3.0, 0.8
5	Lack of staff	2.60, 0.5	2.60, 0.8	2.6, 0.7
6	Students' population explosion	2.70, 0.8	3.50, 0.5	3.1, 0.7
7	School location	2.50, 0.6	2.80, 0.9	2.7, 0.8
8	Non-involvement of teachers in decision-making	2.60, 0.8	2.70, 0.6	2.7, 0.7
9	Non-involvement of students in decision-making	2.90, 0.7	2.50, 0.6	2.7, 0.7
10	Non-involvement of parents in decision-making	2.60, 0.7	2.90, 0.8	2.8, 0.8
11	Principals' inexperience	2.80, 0.6	2.50, 0.5	2.7, 0.6
12	Non-teaching staff	3.50, 0.8	2.80, 0.7	3.2, 0.8
13	Principals' qualification	2.90, 0.5	2.60, 0.6	2.8, 0.6
14	Lack of managerial skills	2.50, 0.8	2.70, 0.5	2.6, 0.7

S/N	Administrative Problems	Principals (x, SD)	Teachers (x, SD)	Combined (x, SD)
15	Poor financial management	2.80, 0.6	2.50, 0.8	2.7, 0.7

The results in Table 1 show the mean ratings and standard deviations of principals and teachers regarding the administrative problems they encounter. The principals' mean ratings ranged from 2.50 to 3.0, while the teachers' ratings ranged from 2.50 to 3.50, with grand means of 2.80 for principals and 2.70 for teachers. All items had means

above the 2.50 benchmark, indicating that they are indeed administrative problems encountered by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone.

Research Question 2: What strategies can be adopted to solve the administrative problems of principals in secondary schools in the Agbani Education Zone?

**Table 2.** Mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the Strategies to Solve Administrative Problems.

S/N	Strategies	Principals (x, SD)	Teachers (x, SD)	Combined (x, SD)
1	Organizing seminars and workshops for principals regularly	2.60, 0.8	3.0, 0.5	2.8, 0.7
2	Involving parents in the administrative process	2.50, 0.6	2.80, 0.9	2.7, 0.8
3	Providing adequate financial resources	2.70, 0.5	3.0, 0.6	2.8, 0.6
4	Establishing effective communication channels	2.80, 0.8	2.50, 0.7	2.7, 0.7
5	Enhancing staff and student discipline through strict policies	2.90, 0.9	2.60, 0.8	2.8, 0.8
6	Encouraging collaboration among staff, students, and parents	2.80, 0.7	2.70, 0.6	2.8, 0.7
7	Providing training on financial management for principals	2.70, 0.6	2.80, 0.5	2.8, 0.6
8	Employing more qualified staff	3.0, 0.5	2.90, 0.8	3.0, 0.7
9	Improving school infrastructure and facilities	3.50, 0.8	3.0, 0.9	3.2, 0.8

The results in Table 2 demonstrate that the mean scores for all suggested strategies exceed the 2.50 benchmark, indicating their viability for addressing administrative problems in secondary schools within the Agbani Education Zone. This suggests a consensus among respondents on the potential effectiveness of these strategies in mitigating challenges such as inadequate financial resources, poor communication channels, staff and student indiscipline, and insufficient collaboration among stakeholders. The consistency in the mean scores across different strategies reflects a broad agreement on the necessity and practicality of these approaches in enhancing school administration.

## 4. Discussion of Findings

The study identified several administrative problems faced by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone. The most prominent problems include inadequacy of finance, poor communication facilities, indiscipline among staff and students, lack of staff, and students' population explosion. These findings are consistent with the views of scholars such as Akomolafe & Adesua [4] who indicated that

secondary school principals face significant challenges, including truancy, indiscipline among students and staff, poor communication facilities, and inadequate financial resources. Ali & Yusuf [7] posited that strategic management is crucial in navigating the complexities of educational administration, ensuring that institutions are not only reactive but also proactive in addressing challenges

Similarly, Ezeocha [3] emphasized the importance of improving communication facilities within schools, noting that poor communication can lead to inefficiencies. Obi & Mba [14] established that effective communication is a cornerstone of successful educational management, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned with the school's goals

The study also revealed that non-involvement of teachers, students, and parents in decision-making processes contributes to administrative challenges. This finding is supported by the views of Obasi & Okpara [5], who argued that participation of parents in the decision making fosters a sense of partnership and participation among stakeholders.

The strategies suggested to address these problems include organizing regular seminars and workshops for principals, involving parents in the administrative process, providing

adequate financial resources, establishing effective communication channels, enhancing discipline through strict policies, encouraging collaboration among stakeholders, providing training on financial management, employing more qualified staff, and improving school infrastructure and facilities. These strategies are supported by the literature on educational management. For instance, Adepoju & Ojo [2] buttressed the strategies for enhancing school management through continuous professional development for school administrators, while Chidioi [1] encouraged the need for adequate funding and resource allocation in schools.

## 5. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the significant administrative challenges faced by secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of these problems, which include inadequate financial resources, poor communication facilities, indiscipline among staff and students, and a lack of qualified personnel. Moreover, the exclusion of teachers, students, and parents from decision-making processes exacerbates these challenges, leading to a lack of ownership and commitment among key stakeholders.

The implications of these findings are profound. Effective school administration is crucial for fostering an environment that promotes academic excellence and holistic student development. When principals are hampered by administrative inefficiencies, the ripple effects are felt throughout the school community, manifesting in poor academic performance, low staff morale, and a decline in overall school standards. The persistent poor performance of students in critical examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) exams highlights the urgent need for addressing these administrative challenges.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. The study identifies several viable strategies, including the provision of adequate financial resources, regular professional development for principals, establishment of effective communication channels, strict enforcement of discipline policies, and active involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process. Additionally, training programs on financial management and efforts to recruit more qualified staff are essential for improving administrative effectiveness. The improvement of school infrastructure and facilities is also highlighted as a critical area for investment.

Implementing these strategies demands a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including government authorities, educational administrators, teachers, parents, and the community at large. The government must take the lead by providing the necessary financial support and creating policies that facilitate effective school administration.

Educational administrators should focus on creating a supportive environment for principals, providing them with the tools and training needed to navigate the complexities of school management. Teachers, parents, and students must be engaged as active participants in the school community, contributing to decision-making processes and supporting the implementation of policies and programs.

The role of secondary school principals is pivotal in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of students. By addressing the administrative challenges identified in this study, principals can enhance their leadership capabilities and create a more effective and supportive educational environment. This, in turn, will contribute to the overall improvement of educational standards in the Agbani Education Zone and beyond.

In conclusion, the study reaffirms the critical importance of effective school administration in achieving educational excellence. By adopting the recommended strategies and fostering a collaborative approach to problem-solving, secondary school principals in the Agbani Education Zone can overcome the identified challenges and lead their schools toward a brighter and more successful future. The ultimate goal is to create an educational system that not only meets the academic needs of students but also supports their overall development, preparing them to become responsible, productive, and engaged members of society. Through sustained effort and commitment from all stakeholders, this vision can be realized, ensuring a high-quality education for all students in the Agbani Education Zone.

## 6. Recommendations

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

1. **Financial Resources:** The government and educational authorities should ensure that secondary schools receive adequate financial resources to support their administrative functions. This can be achieved through increased budget allocations and efficient financial management practices.
2. **Professional Development:** Regular seminars, workshops, and training programs should be organized for principals to enhance their administrative skills and knowledge. Continuous professional development will enable principals to stay updated on best practices and innovative management strategies. Onyebuchi & Ekene [13] suggested that regular seminars, workshops, and training programs should be organized for principals to enhance their administrative skills and knowledge.
3. **Effective Communication:** Schools should establish robust communication channels to facilitate smooth information flow among staff, students, and parents. Effective communication is crucial for preventing misunderstandings and fostering a collaborative school

environment.

4. **Discipline Policies:** Schools should implement and enforce strict discipline policies to maintain order and create a conducive learning environment. Clear guidelines and consistent enforcement can help address issues of indiscipline among staff and students.
5. **Stakeholder Involvement:** Teachers, students, and parents should be actively involved in the decision-making processes of the school. Inclusive decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among all stakeholders, leading to a more supportive and engaged school community.
6. **Financial Management Training:** Principals should receive training in financial management to enhance their budgeting and resource allocation skills. This will enable them to manage school funds more effectively and ensure that resources are used efficiently.
7. **Qualified Staff Recruitment:** Efforts should be made to recruit and retain qualified staff to address staffing challenges. Providing competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment can help attract and retain talented educators. Oladele & Ibitoye [15] recommended that efforts should be made to recruit and retain qualified staff to address staffing challenges.
8. **Infrastructural Improvements:** Investment in school infrastructure and facilities is essential to create a conducive learning environment. Upgrading classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other facilities will enhance the overall educational experience for students.

## Abbreviations

WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination
NECO	National Examinations Council
APESP	Administrative Problems Encountered by Secondary School Principals Survey
PRS PPSMB	Primary and Secondary Schools Management Board

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## References

- [1] Chidobi, R. U. (2012). Administrative challenges in secondary schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(6), 45-54.
- [2] Adepoju, T. L., & Ojo, M. O. (2019). Enhancing school management: Challenges and strategies for educational leaders. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 12(4), 135-145.
- [3] Ezeocha, P. A. (2005). *Effective communication in educational management*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.
- [4] Akomolafe, C. O., & Adesua, V. O. (2020). Administrative effectiveness and school management in secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 34-41.
- [5] Obasi, M. U., & Okpara, N. C. (2018). The impact of inclusive decision-making on school administration. *International Journal of Educational Administration*, 6(4), 39-52.
- [6] PRS PPSMB Agbani Education Zone. (2023). *Statistical record of principals and teachers*.
- [7] Ali, G., & Yusuf, A. (2022). Strategic management in educational institutions: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Educational Management Studies*, 18(3), 112-123.
- [8] Ogunleye, A., & Aluko, O. (2021). Financial constraints and administrative effectiveness in Nigerian schools. *Journal of Education Finance*, 15(2), 89-97.
- [9] Uzochukwu, E. O., & Nwaeze, N. M. (2023). The impact of teacher indiscipline on student performance in Nigerian secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 10(1), 22-34.
- [10] Adewale, K. A., & Salami, O. (2022). Stakeholder involvement in school administration: A pathway to sustainable education. *Educational Planning Journal*, 28(4), 56-68.
- [11] Eke, C. I., & Ndukwe, U. C. (2021). The role of school location in determining academic performance: Evidence from Nigerian secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 13(2), 77-86.
- [12] Bamidele, M. O., & Ajayi, S. B. (2022). Addressing examination malpractice in Nigerian secondary schools: Challenges and solutions. *International Journal of Educational Integrity*, 18(2), 45-58.
- [13] Onyebuchi, J. O., & Ekene, F. K. (2023). Enhancing educational leadership through professional development: A study of Nigerian schools. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 19(1), 99-110.
- [14] Obi, N. O., & Mba, I. E. (2021). Effective communication strategies in educational management: A Nigerian perspective. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, 14(3), 115-126.
- [15] Oladele, B. T., & Ibitoye, K. J. (2023). Overcoming staffing challenges in Nigerian secondary schools: Policy and practice recommendations. *Journal of Educational Workforce*, 22(4), 78-89.