

Time Mangement and School Administration in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract *It is quite obvious that time is always used as an excuse by many policy planners and implementers for not meeting their expected targets. Others complained about time for other reasons. This paper tries to examine the relative importance of time as a resource available to both planners and administrators in course of carrying out policy formulations and implementation of educational activities to achieve educational goals. It also emphasized that proper time management facilitates qualitative teaching and learning in accomplishing educational goals and objectives. It started with an overview of time, definition of time and time management, application of time management in school administration, scheduling of activities and time tabling process. Finally summary and some recommendations on how to improve school administration through proper time management were highlighted.*

Keywords: *Time management, School Administration, Prospects, Problems*

Introduction

Despite the type of activity to be performed, time is the most crucial resource first to be considered. From primordial to modern administrative settings challenged by technological innovations time still remains major determinant of successful or unsuccessful completion of task. Every activity following due processes of life is facilitated by appropriate allocation of time. Biblically God completed creation on earth for seven days; even the Great Noah Ark was built timely as directed by God before the great flood destroyed the world at that period. All these are time elements. Time determines the imperativeness of any other resources in accomplishing organization set out objectives and goals. Without time management the efficient and effective use of all resources will be impossible. Mullins (2005:265) points out 'that whatever, the attributes or qualities of a successful manager, or the quality of subordinate staff, one essential underlying criterion is the effective use of time'. Hence Drucker (1988) refers to time as 'the limiting factor for effective executives'. Therefore time management stands as an effective tool necessary for organization effectiveness in realization of set out objectives and goals.

In economics, all resources are inadequate relative to the available demand and pressure. This makes it exigent in economic sense for consideration of time as the scarcest resource administrators must look out in the day to day administration of their organization. Based on this Drucker (1988) emphasized that time is a '**unique resource**' which cannot be rent, hire, buy or otherwise obtain more time. He maintained that time is totally irreplaceable and everything requires time and its supply is totally inelastic. To me, time is a valuable resource one has to efficiently use to accomplish stated objectives or goals.

In both private and public profit organizations time is crucial and lead resource in effective running of the system. For example the opening and closing periods of work is based on the individuals and organization agreed time. There must be maintenance of status quo especially the ideographic and nomethetic dimensions to avoid time conflicts between the employer and the employees. Believing Drucker, time itself cannot be rented, hired, bought or obtain more time, but only the personnel or services can be rented, hired or bought for the specific time. For instance in business organizations personnel are paid for extra time used as overtime because it is the personnel that is rented, hired or bought for the time used. Incidentally, this practice is witnessed in the school organization where an extra mural class is privately organized for that purpose the teacher could be paid for the services rendered. An effective school administrator ensures that

school planned time are not arbitrarily abused by staff. As a bureaucratic organization, time management is necessary for enhancing productivity.

Time management philosophy tends to x-ray the importance and appropriate utilization of time as a resource in accomplishing organization objectives and goals. Managing time appropriately leads to achieving results easily with limited resources. Consequently, any productive system, whatever its structure, human, technology or financial support requires efficient and effective time management procedure. To improve quality of school activities requires cooperative effort of all members through time management. Obviously time is very important administrative tool in carrying out daily duties by the administrators, teachers, students, community and government. A time management plan enables effective administrator to identify if he is using his time effectively and doing important activities with the highest energy levels in the system.

The time required in accomplishing given task is carefully analyzed; other resources are also mobilized with time to achieve the desire result. Management techniques are time dependent like Management Information system (MIS), Management by Objectives (MBO), Critical Path Method (CPM), and Programme Evaluation Review Techniques (PERT). Based on this, Mullins (1999:185) refers time as one of the most valuable, but limited resources and it is important that managers (administrators) utilize time to the maximum advantage. For not realizing time as a scarce resource most administrators run out of time before expected result is achieved.

Time management is also important for effective inspection and supervision of school in bringing the much needed quality. Effective time management ensures unambiguous objectives, proactive planning, well defined priorities and actions; participatory and successful delegation of activities. Nevertheless, time is continuum and all activities or roles performance depend on it whether voluntary or involuntary in avoiding conflicts. Time management facilitates the symbolic relations between the school and society in efficient and effective use of available school resources. Without this mutual relationship realization of school needs would be difficult, untimely and other resources wasted as the community may starve it of facilities and assistance required from them. Hence the school success is made easy or destroyed by extension of relations and services timely or untimely from the wider society.

Time management appropriately adopted by school administrators helps to improve standard, save costs, remedy poor situations, leads to value and above all, harmonizes organization focus. Improving school administration requires time to provide all it takes to make a quality school (administrators, teaching and non teaching staff, classrooms, libraries, desks, chairs, tables, environment and entire school plant management etc). It upholds the principle of Just-in-Time approach in managing school process for quality assurance at various levels of education. Improper use of time has been attributed to poor administrative styles by most administrators in handling organizational task. This paper therefore view the following areas of concern

1. What is time and time management?
2. Application of time management in school Administration
3. Scheduling of activities and time tabling process
4. Summary and Recommendation

What is Time and Time Management?

Time is very unique in any particular time zone. The difference in time is its allocation to activities according to ones priority. For example 7.00am is 7.00am and 06.00pm is 06.00pm everywhere in Nigeria. If two persons want to start an activity at a particular place they use the same time for the task. However, if they are at different locations their time for starting the job may differ. One important thing about time is its specificity. As one chooses to start by 07.00am another may start by 07.10am. The choice of an individual or group determines to great extent the use of time in that particular situation. Time however, is very useful for goal setting activities and helps in crisis management which ensures activities are measurably, realistically and specifically carried out. There is obvious need for administrators to be conscious of the value of time, and the

need to timely apply administrative and interpersonal skills to the benefit of the school.

Time is a part of the measuring system used to sequence events, to compare the durations of events and the intervals between them, and to quantify rates of change such as the motions of objects. Time is an evolving thought and it constantly change as we live and carryout our daily activities. On the other hand, time management is defined as the planning, organizing, scheduling, and [budgeting](#) one's time for the purpose of generating more effective work and productivity. A time management schedule boosts job efficiency and reduces tension. Most often we embark on unimportant task and neglect the critical activities. A time management process mends this. Time management enables placing more emphasis on results and careful monitoring of progress through task delegation, team management and cooperative skills in accomplishing school goals.

Application of Time Management in School Administration

There are four main ways administrators can apply time management principles in school administration. They are planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating.

Planned School Time

According to Charles Richard in Lara (2003) states that 'the time we have depends on the time we use'. In order to manage time successfully, administrators must have self knowledge and set out goals to achieve. Such an awareness of what goals to be achieved helps to prioritize activities. Planning school time involves adequate patterning of time according to activities in order to enhance role performance and accomplishing tasks within a set out period. Planning helps to avoid conflict among use of resources based on the fact that resources are limited including time. Time is planned in such a way to enable easy goals achievement with the available limited resources to the administrator. Planned school time therefore means a designed way by school organization to arrange all its activities for efficient and effective role performance in realization of school results.

In school organization, time is managed through the use of time table. Time table is a specific arrangement of time scheduled according to specific activity. It is used to show the uniqueness of activity in every formal organization. In typical school situation time is arranged for various activities to be performed ranging from opening and closing devotion, classroom work, agricultural work,craft,examinations, labour, sports, recreation, prep, dining and closure etc. All these are ways of planned school time. Internal school administration can effectively be done with proper planned time for the various activities utilizing the available resources toward their realization. Education planners make policies and programmes while Administrators see that policies made are carried out within specific period for the effective functions of the school.

One problem of planned school time is the hasty approach to policies by the school planners without given considerable time for planned policies and programmes to be actualized. Changes are made without considerations to obvious facts. Basically the implementation processes of planned school system are not timely leading to transparent failures in the system. For instance, the movement from 6-3-3-4 to UBE (9-3-4) system is still ill prepared. There are crises of insufficient trained administrators, teachers, school facilities and fund to manage the school as pupils are found in most areas learning under deplorable and congested situations. Where some facilities exist like so called modern primary schools built there are pressures due to improper planning. This poses great question on the prospect of the UBE scheme. Obviously, it appears that changes made do not have enough difference in the system. For instance the introduction of UBE has been criticized as appearing to be a new system but it follows the 6-3-3-4 system of education because both have true resemblance in terms of common problems. This situation appears like putting old wine in a new keg.

Planned time is important to avoid failure. It is a Just – in –time Approach that ensures errors detection and correction in time before advancing next stage of the process. The educational changes going on require

proper control and management to assure quality timely, so that they do not have unpleasant effect on the system. Even the 6.3.3.4 does not have the full weight of technical base it requires, if they have, necessary facilities to facilitate technical skills are not easily found in the schools. Changes in the school system must be line with timely societal needs. Reliably, Maduagwu (1998) assertion that 'education is one of the tools to effect a society's goal towards development' supports this reason. The school requires proper time management for good teaching and learning process to take place (enough time to plan enough time to implement). Therefore planners and administrators must budget and legitimate the time to accomplish set out goals as well as compare the total estimated time for expected maturity.

Organized School Time

Organizing is the next stage after successful planning. Organizing involves ordinarily arrangement of all planned activities. At this stage of time management, organizing has to do with time in bringing all the required resources together. It deals with assemblage of resources for facilitating the easy realization of set out goals. Organizing time in its simplest meaning relates to putting time into jobs according to people, place or needs. In this regards, administrators involved in internal school administration must in this process assign role responsibilities to staff accordingly with targets. There must be time line for any administrator to have target met.

Organized time helps (i) analyze allocated time to events (ii) evaluate time for each event (iii) cost time for total events (iv) pressing events to be identified (v) coordinate all events (vi) improve standard (vii) team participation process (viii) easy task implementation.

There is no one best way to organize school time by any administrator but the school as a formal organization is regulated through the instrumentality of the state or federal ministry of education who determine externally school time like reopening and closure of school, period for external examinations (WAEC, NECO). The school internally allocates time to different activities like curriculum, classes, sports, labour and internal examinations among others.

Time management provides an opportunity to create work schedules for easy goal accomplishment. It involves the school organization developing and maintaining a corporate, flexible schedule which leaves room to include the things that are most important to the school. There are different types of schedule for different activities including personal and corporate activity schedule. The resources available to are not only limited but can be efficiently and effectively managed when activities are properly organized, coordinated and controlled by the administrator.

Typical organization of time in a training session

Activity Day	Time						
	0900 - 10.00am	10.00 - 10.15 am	10.15 - 12.00 noon	12.00 - 2.00pm	2.00- 3.00pm	3.00- 3.15pm	3.15 - 4.00pm
1	1 st session	Short break	2 nd session	Lunch break	3 rd session	Short break	4 th session and closure
2							
3							
4							
5							

Extract of school organized time table for typical class SS 3 A

Day	0740-08.00	0820-0900	0900-0920	0920-1000	1000-1040	1040-1120	1120-1200	1200-1240	1240-0120	0120-0200	0200
Mon	Devotion	Eng	Eng	Govt	CRK	Phy	Break	Acct	Agric	Hist	Closure
Tue		Math	Acct	Bio	Econs	-		Lit	Bio	Phy	
Wen		Phy	-	Agric	Agric	CRK		Govt	Chem	Bio	
Thurs		Govt	Econs	Hist	Eng	-		-	Lit	Hist	
Fri		CRK	Lit	-	Chem.	Chem.		Econs	Acct	-	

From the above, it could be seen that various activities are handled without undue interferences. It enables one subject teacher to handle different classes on the same subject but at different periods as shown below for typical English teacher handling SS3 A,

Organizing school time facilitates easy teaching and learning. This Idu (2004:22) points that organizing helps the principal after planning to ensure that the teachers are teaching what they are supposed to teach. It also ensures that all the materials including classroom furniture are maintained for future usage. Organizing time helps to achieve all these purposes in school administration.

Implemented Time

Time planned and organized helps to accomplish not only set out objectives and goals but enables its operators to go extra mile in achieving what necessarily would have not been achievable. Planned and organized time is easily implemented, and engenders facilitative actions. For example time table indicates planned and organized time for classes, recreation, labour, examination, opening and closure of school to mention but a few. One greatest importance of time table is creation of space for simultaneous activities which helps activities to be implemented without conflicts like classroom allocation to various periods and subjects. Implemented time ensures complete mobilization of all planned activities according to schedule. Educational planners and administrators must ensure use of time appropriately in the school through team work. Implementing planned time requires collaborative efforts by staff for quality implementation of school activities.

Evaluated Time

Time cannot only be planned, organized and implemented but must also be evaluated to show its efficient use in accomplishing set objectives and goals. This helps to find out the workability of planned activities whether they can be accomplished within the time allocated to them. For example a teacher covers the class syllabus planned for 10 weeks before the end of term examination is administered to the students establish that the period of teaching – learning has been effective on one hand. On the other hand, their performance in the weekly test or examination may prove whether the whole time served its purpose because poor performance may indicate wasted period. A review of allocated time to activities indicates where deficiency exists.

Evaluated time also helps to determine saved periods at the end of each session, the problem encountered as well as the capabilities of the teachers and students in effective teaching and learning. Today, the efficiency and effectiveness of school administration is determined by the level of students' performance during examinations like NECO, SSCE, Junior WAEC, and GCE etc. Efficient time management is an assurance for accomplishing school activities in time.

Time evaluation serves a lot of purpose by seeking answers to this basic question:

- i) Whether time plan worked for the accomplishment of goals?
- ii) Did it help in accomplishing school result?
- iii) What next needs to be done?
- iv) Are there any changes to be made?
- v) What will be the future of the system?

Time Management Principles

The efficient and effective use of time is a prerequisite for accomplishing task easily. Therefore the following principles need to be adopted.

1) **Use of proper time schedule:** This helps to avoid conflict among major actors carrying out school activities and ensure each task is fully accomplished as planned.

2) **Avoid too much procrastination:** All planned activities must be carried out according to specific time allocated like subject periods, labour, sports, prep and siesta etc. no particular activity should be put off without sufficient reasons because this may affect time allocated for other activities.

3) **Adopt good method of task delivery:** Planned activities can only be accomplished timely if the process of performing the task is well defined. This tends to put self- confidence on the people undertaking the task. This is the basis for equal opportunity of academic and non academic personnel participation in school decision process.

4) **Use of appropriate tools for the job:** For instance, classroom, blackboard or pen board, table, chairs, desks, books etc those are required for effective teaching and learning by the teacher and pupils. Basically, where they are lacking accomplishment of result will take time to actualize.

5) **Evaluate different task levels:** For instance the senior classes require more teachers and time because of different courses than junior classes'. Likewise larger classes are to be allocated larger classroom than smaller class. This gives room for proper management of school time.

6) **Initiate good school climate:** Good climate allow appropriate use of time than sterile climate. Good school climate here refers to the favourable conditions prevailing for effective participation of members in realization of school set out goals. A school where time is not organized there is bound to be poor relationship existing and wastage of resources.

7) **Simplified time evaluating process:** Assessment procedures must be standardized, reliable and valid in testing what it intends to test within the allocated time. If the process is too ambiguous much time will be wasted for the particular activity to be accomplished.

Time Management an Instrument of Change

In critically evaluating contingency approach, it has shown realistic instance of changes in variables that constitutes organization structure. It considers the situational variables rather than a number of classical and human relations propositions. Despite its limitations, contingency model depicts the idea of innovative changes in organization management. Schmidt (1968) in Uche (2010) notes "that an organization that lacks viability cannot hope to survive in the world of today and will never see the world of tomorrow". Change

therefore is an instrument of time in organization development. It becomes imperative that for innovative changes to occur time use must be appropriate, else, the expected results may not be achieved. Planned change may not be accomplished in event of poor time management; else, other activities may overrun it. It is absolutely necessary that school planners follow the change processes through timing societal changes.

Time Management as Characteristic of Effective Goal

Effective goal contains a time element (Mills and Friesen, 2001). In school, goal is achieved when those been empowered knows when their progress will be measured. This gives them focus and work towards it. This is why examination bodies like WAEC, NECO and JAMB fixed the examination dates and schedule ahead for the students and schools to prepare on time. The performance of the school in general and students in particular is determined by summation of their level of preparedness before examinations.

Even the internal school examinations are scheduled with specific dates and time. Without this process school set out goal cannot be easily achieved. Significance of time is very important in school administration as Uche (2010) pointed that organization development needs deliberate planning of school resources such as time, energy, money more so longer period of time is required for serious and self sustaining projects to be achieved.

Time Management an Effective Tool for Capacity Building

Time management creates self-assured behaviours on what to be done and when it will be done. In the internal school administration the principal is saddled with a lot of tasks which require proper attention. In meeting this demand there is need for delegation of tasks to teachers like labour, sports, social and disciplinary masters and or committee to assist in the running of the school which the principal cannot do alone.

These functions are rotated periodically amongst staff thus building confidence in achieving set out school goals. Effective delegation process enhances capacity building as time is given to role participants to develop particular skill on the job. It has been shown that many administrative problems are self generated by administrators who failed to delegate task to staff members. The ability to delegate successfully determines the effective use of time in developing other organization members.

Summary

Time management enables teachers and students have some choice in their teaching and learning strategies for successful accomplishment of education goals. Time management principles encourage proper classroom management through planning, organizing and reviewing teaching and learning techniques, situations and proffer possible solutions since the classroom is the teachers' clinic. Effective time management can have a dramatic effect on our life. Time management should be considered by any administrator for effectively managing school resources in meeting the expected school outcome.

Recommendations

For effective and efficient running of school, planners, administrators, teachers and students keep time management log to indicate how time is being used. Important activities should be marked as priorities followed with proper planning. There should be time saving approach through team work and delegation for most activities and proper schedule of time. As a contemporary issue it is adequate if practicing school planners and administrators as well as management students are trained in this area. This will bring the much need quality in the school management system.

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