

Time Resource Management for Effective School Administration

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Abstract

This work has attempted to explicate on the meaning and strategies of time management practices. In order to expose the practice of effective use of time by the school administrators, it became necessary for this work to analyze the specific tasks of school administration, the knowledge of which will guide the administrator in proper scheduling of tasks, ordering of priorities and allocation of time according to their degree of importance in achieving educationally productive goals. The value of time management were examined and these include the achievement of meaningful productivity, avoidance of stress and frustration, the creation of balance between work, life, leisure and rest, etc. This work finally looked at the factors that influence the administrators' effective use of time which include interruptions and events that just come up, lack of professional training and knowledge of time management skills, large population of students and staff and fear of offending people.

Keywords: Planning, Effective Time Resource Management.

Introduction

Time, as Nwaiwu (2000 p. 171) notes, is the interval between the beginning and the end of an operation. In our traditional society people used the position of the sun and the shadow it casts to make an estimate of time during the day. The length of the shadows cast by the sun helped people estimate time in the morning, mid-day, afternoon and evening, when to start going to the market, when children were expected back from school or when to leave the farm for the house. At the dawn of a new day, the early cock crow indicated different segments of time before the day finally breaks. The first cock crow signaled the breaking of a new day when distant travelers usually set out on their journey while others waited for the second cock crow to start on their daily business. That was in the traditional society marked by simple organisations where time calibration and allocation was done in large segments of early morning, dawn, afternoon, evening and Night. Business was strictly private, organisations were simple, and accountability was to self or family.

Given the complex systems of our present organisations with highly computerized technology, and specialized functions, personnel cannot rely on mechanisms that have broken the day into morning, noon and night to perform functions effectively. Hence the efficacy of timing device called clock which has segmented the day and night into hours, minutes and seconds to guide man in time allocation and performance of his multifarious and multidimensional tasks. Whatever resources are available to the organisation are managed within a definite time frame. An organisation stipulates when work commences and closes, when to recruit personnel, when to orientate recruited personnel, when to supervise them, when to appraise, when to receive visitors and when to go for work-break.

When, talks about time and time are one of the most precious assets (resources) of any organisation. That 'when', indicates the time frame work within which to allocate the various

management functions of an organisation. How managers of an organisation spend their time on their job determines to a large extent the productivity level of the organisation and its effective and efficient performance, profits and survival of the individual and the organization as a whole.

Time is an immaterial resource, inelastic, scarce and erodes fast and once spent, cannot be wound back, stored or recalled for use. The effective and efficient management of time is as important as the management of other human and material resources available to the administrator. This is because given an abundance of human and material resources (which is never the case at any time) a poor time manager would be faced with low productivity inefficiency, ineffectiveness, low morale, stress and frustration with himself and among his workers.

The Meaning of Time Management

Time management as postulates by Achunine (2004 p.218) can be defined as the effective and efficient utilization of a manager's or an administrator's corporate time to achieve organisational and personal goals.

It involves identifying tasks to be performed, planning and scheduling of organisational activities, prioritizing such activities, allocating time to the tasks according to their degree of importance in enhancing productivity minimizing interruptions and frivolities and dealing with routine tasks in such a way that the truly important tasks could receive due attention.

How a school administrator applies these strategies/principles to the management of his contract time will determine largely the coverage of the school's curricular prescriptions for a given period of time. It will also determine the school's performance in the internally and externally set examinations, the discipline tone and general performance in other areas of school administration. When time are scheduled and appropriate amount of time allocated to the performance of each according to their degree of importance in achieving definite organizational goals and at the same time pruning time wasters, one can be said to exercise control of one's corporate time.

Time utilization, Adedeji (1998 p.220), remarks could be explained within the framework of doing the right thing at the right time in the workplace. For effective classroom management and control, time management skills must be imbibed. *Wikipedia defines* Time Management as "a range of skills, tools, and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks, projects and goals. This set encompasses a wide scope of activities, and these include planning, allocating, setting goals, delegation, analysis of time spent, monitoring, organizing, scheduling, and prioritizing. Initially, time management referred to just business or work activities, but eventually the term broadened to include personal activities as well. A time management system is a designed combination of processes, tools, techniques, and methods. Usually time management is a necessity in any project development as it determines the project completion time and scope.

Tasks of School Administration

The introduction of the 3-3 system of secondary education with its comprehensive programme offerings and new social expectations have made the tasks of the present school administration more cumbersome, stretching and challenging. If administration is to facilitate teaching and learning, how one schedules the various tasks and allocates commensurate amount of time to the various tasks, determines to a large extent the productivity level of the organisation.

These various tasks and functions have been identified by Agabi (2002)

Policy implementation and programme planning Human Resource Management

- Student Personnel Management

- Instructional Resource Maintenance
- School plant management
- School finance Management
- Record Maintenance Time Management
- Maintenance of a Healthy school community relations.

These tasks and functions are all in the principal's duty schedule. They can be productively addressed by the administrator; if he acquires the necessary time management skills by Killian, Michael and Sexton (1999 p.83).

These tasks have been categorized into;

- Professional goal functions
- Critical/crises functions, and
- Maintenance functions

Alegbe (1989 p.338)) agreed that curriculum and instruction are at number one in importance in achieving school goals, most school principals do not allocate commensurate amount of time to them. It is believed that since the boards of education and The Ministry reward and reinforce the well- managed and efficiently operated school, principals perform more of routine office jobs by which they can easily be assessed and pay only lip service to curriculum and instructional matters (professional goal matters). It is certain that when principals allocate most of their time for instructional leadership functions, negative outcomes result in the schools.

Strategies of Time Management

There are some strategies which guide effective and efficient utilization of time by managers/Administrators. Sound time management is more than what common sense or experience can teach one. The strategies must be learnt and practiced until one gets involved with the science and art of time management. Its application is not strictly guided by true laws but it can be systematically practiced. Achunine (2004 p.79) proposed that time could be managed through the following;

1. Planning

Administrators should plan effective use of their time and should not perform tasks by chance.

Planning can either be short-range covering daily, weekly, monthly tasks or longer-range. The daily time table is an example of a clear, rather rigid plan of how the days in each week can be spent productively in the school. It shows a daily/weekly plan of time allocation to the various school subjects, programmes and other resources. It ensures that everyone in the school is productively engaged all the time, doing what the school approves as worthwhile. The issue of the school time table highlights the importance of managing time to great advantage. For a school administrator to plan effective and productive use of core time he must be very familiar with the specifics of his job and the goals the school and school system are striving to achieve during a definite time period. In line with this Smithson (1998 p. 178) postulates that every school administrator must have details of his job description embracing all the task areas of the principalship. An analysis of the duties and responsibilities based on clear knowledge of the job description of the principalship and the goals of the school system would inform a principal which functions he can perform based on his superior expertise and experience and which he may delegate to other staff.

Achunine (2004 p.228) states that it is advisable to keep a “things-todo” list or draw up a personal time chart on a daily and weekly bases. The chart conveys at a glance what he is expected to do and what he expects himself to do to achieve mapped out goals and objectives.

Personal Time Chart

Activity From..... To.....	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

When tasks are planned, administrators should not allow urgent events to thwart their plan of activities. Nwankwo and Lulsegg (1985 p.26) articulated some consequences of poor planning — continuous lack of, or inadequate, time and opportunity for carrying out the essential duties.

- Increased misunderstanding and confusion,
- Lack of direction, purpose and commitment
- Frequent stampede or panic measure to beat deadlines
- Generally poor quality of administration and lower quality of products among members.
- Lack of coordination
- Lack of self-realization arising from time wastage and little lime to attend to private matters.
- Conflicts in schedules, timing, activities and even interpersonal relations.

2. Scheduling Task/Activities

This skill involves the school administrator in making an inventory of specific activities which would lead to the realization of the long and short-term school goals. Goal setting and subsequent strategies developed to achieve those goals are the key to spending time productively. For example;

- i) **School goals:** To provide more security for the school property.
Activities:
 - a) Building fences
 - b) Providing burglary proof for windows and door
 - c) Hiring security men.
- ii) **School goals:** Involving the community more closely in school affairs.
Activities:
 - (a) Arranging PTA meetings
 - (b) Arranging Old Boys’ Forum
 - (c) Arranging school’s Day
 - (d) Arranging school’s social/cultural day activities.
- iii) **School goals:** Introducing science programme for the school.
Activities:
 - (a) Recruiting science teachers
 - (b) Procurement of science instructional materials
 - (c) Developing science curriculum/laboratories.

3. Setting Up Priorities and Time Allocation

When tasks have been scheduled, the next move is to put the specific activities through which the goals of the school are expected to be achieved into hierarchy, according to their degree of importance in enhancing productivity, from the most educationally productive to the least educationally productive functions.

Killian, Michael and Sexton (1999 p.134), proposed the idea of time scheduling and time allocation to tasks based on how educationally productive they are for ensuring effective teaching and learning. In their time management ladder, they grouped the numerous functions of the school administrator into three categories;

The professional goal functions, the critical/crisis functions and maintenance functions, with the professional goal functions at the apex of the ladder and the maintenance functions at the base of the ladder in order of priority.

The professional goal functions embrace all efforts by the administrator towards the development and implementation of the curriculum and instructional matters and most functions in staff personnel matters that lead directly to effective teaching and learning. Maintenance functions embrace all routine management tasks geared towards maintaining stability and status quo in the school.

The middle level critical/crisis functions embrace mostly activities critical to student personnel administration and fiscal management etc.

Killian and Sexton (1999 p.89) maintained that it is very important to allocate large quality time at a stretch to programmes of importance instead of allocating bits of time stretched out for a long period to the same function. For instance, allocate some two to three weeks in the year at a stretch for supervision of all teachers in the school, lasting for about three hours each day. This will give the administrator a clear and comprehensive picture of the direction the programmes of the curriculum are going and what general and specific problems there are in relation to effective teaching and learning in the school. Allowances must however be made for emergencies and unexpected events as they are bound to come up in any human organisation.

Over-estimation of time should be preferred to under-estimation to avoid frustration of not meeting deadlines.

Daily Planning Document

Priority order of activities	Estimated time needed for completion	When is this time available?	Who else is competent to do it?
Priority 1 Activities			
Priority 2 Activities			
Priority 3 Activities			

Setting Priorities By Executives

4. Delegation

A principal must ask himself, which of the activities mapped out on the schedule could be done by someone else just as well as he can, or even better?" There is no time enough for the administrator to do all that are considered important, so the school administrator should carefully select some

assignments which he is best suited to perform in the school based on his expertise and experience and delegate others to some other competent staff. Wayne, Edwards (2002 p.140) are of the view that a lot of maintenance functions and pupils personnel matters should be delegated to the vice-principals, guidance counsellors and class masters.

5. Evaluation

At the end of each day, an executive should ask himself: "How has my official time been spent today? How much have I kept to the scheduled for specific activities? What activities actually consumed the largest amount of time? Have I maintained the priority list and estimated time allocation?" (Achunine 2004 p.229).

6. Eliminating Frivolities and Time Wasters

Managers and administrators are contracted to spend their core time usefully towards the achievement of organisational goals.

In Africa, misappropriation of official time for unofficial activities is evidenced among many managers, (Alugbuo, 2005 p.62). Principals are expected to put in a contract time of six and half hours on each working day. The debit time principals owe as a result of not completing the contract hour is not made up in most cases through spending extra time in the day or week. Frivolities and time wasters in school organisation include receiving and attending to personal visitors during official hours, escorting personal visitors out, going to the market or mechanic workshop, spending unauthorized break periods, attending to other social engagements, prolonged phone chats and unnecessary meetings. In a study on time management by principals, Achunine (2004 p.34) discovered that whereas principals would wish to allocate only 4% of their working time to non official tasks, in actuality they allocate 7.05% to these activities. This amount of time was found to be more than 6.4 1% they allocate to staff personnel functions and 4.55% they allocate to finance and business management. Time spent on frivolities is time robbed the organisation and time spent away from productivity, effectiveness and efficiency.

If "frivolities" must find their place within the organisation's contract time, they must be scheduled within the authorized break periods. If however, the unexpected happens, for example, an administrator's visitor must be attended to in the office; such amount of time spent on him must be made up outside the official hours. Time spent on gossips and unofficial conversations is big time wasted. Rest and leisure must be planned and allocated proper place for effective use of time.

Values of Time Management

Alegbe (1989 p.218) enumerated about five values of time management.
include:

1. To Avoid Stress And Frustration

People feel frustrated when they do not finish important jobs they set out to do within a time limit. Such people develop panic in their lives and at times rush in inadequately done tasks. At such times, people find themselves working long hours even into the nights, weekends and spending what should be rest and leisure hours rushing under stress to get specific tasks accomplished. Procrastination wastes corporate time and makes task performance run into time allocated to other

obligations. Stress sets in when this happens. Thus managing time is stress management of the highest order.

2. Balance Between Work And Personal Life

Some administrators complain that school work does not allow them time to do some of the things they would personally want to do (such as writing a book, attending conferences, seminars and workshops and even taking their annual leave and family leisure) whereas some others have time for all they would want to do. This is attributable to how well one can plan for effective use of time. Good time management skills integrate the administrator's corporate time plan with that for his personal life. Good time management enables one to achieve a more balanced life with adequate time and energy for work, leisure, home, family and self.

3. For Meaningful Productivity

"Time equals productivity" so goes a saying in the business world. How managers of organisations spend their time on their job determines to a large extent the productivity level of the survival of the individuals and organisation as a whole. When people work on intelligently scheduled programmes, allowing more time for priorities, eliminating frivolities and time wasters, they become more effective and efficient in their work thus leading a meaningful productivity.

Efficient and effective use of time automatically increases the productivity level of an administrator.

4. Goal Achievement

When an administrator properly schedules his corporate and personal activities and allocates proportionate time to the performance of the functions, he tends to achieve both corporate and personal goals which he has mapped out.

5. Staff Development

Since an administrator skilled in time management delegates specific functions to staff, he offers in-service opportunities to staff to learn, grow, ultimately develop competence through practice and experience.

Factors That Influence Time Management

Even though what administrators do on a given day may be determined in part by advanced planning, scheduled daily/weekly responsibilities, certain factors play a major role in influencing time management practices of administrators. Some of the factors include;

1. Events That Just Come Up:

Events that just come up tend to make the planning process highly influenced. They have the characteristic of shattering an administrator's daily, weekly, monthly or yearly Calendar e.g. teacher's strike action, emergencies in the school compound etc. Duignan (2000 p.178) observed that certain activities or events (unplanned for) come up and often initiate a series of reactions from the administrator that last for a whole morning, day or week. The administrator is therefore compelled to spend much of his time reacting to events that just come up instead of acting on already

scheduled events. Administrators are however advised to develop strategies whereby they act on their task priority instead of spending a huge proportion of their time reacting to events that come up.

2. Lack of professional training and lack of knowledge of skill of time management.

Wayne, Edwards (2002 p.229) postulates that many school administrators do not have a professional training in educational administration, and such could not be said to be conversant with the specifics or job description of the school administrator. It is when he is sure of what to do that the individual tries to order his priorities right. Lack of appropriate academic and professional knowledge and skill could be blamed for the inadequate performance of many principals. In addition some school administrators have not been exposed to courses/ seminar in time management as do other managers of industries. Surely, training deficiencies are contributory to inefficiency and ineffective management of resources in general and time in particular.

3. Large staff and students population:

Drucker (1995 p.281) found in his study that the principals of schools with large student population, especially those located in the urban areas spend unnecessary large proportion of their school hours on pupils and personnel matters and public relation issues instead of curriculum and instruction planning and implementation, principals in the rural schools with lesser student population spend more time than their counterparts on curriculum development than on public relations and pupils problems. In order not to allow the expenditure of time resource to waste unnecessarily to issues that are not directly connected to improving curriculum, teaching and learning, the size of students/staff population should be minimal.

4. Fear of offending people:

Fear of offending people has been identified as one of the factors that could influence how the principals spend their time. Some administrators could be constrained to reschedule their time unnecessarily if they are the type that fears offending people, especially visitors to the school. Achunine (2004 p.228). But school administrators should learn to say No at times since there is no time and nowhere anyone could do what everyone wants. The important thing is to tackle scheduled priority tasks at the scheduled time since these will enhance the administrator's productivity level.

Conclusion

Even though in human situation no one can scientifically and completely manage time resource, yet through acquisition of time management skills, through practice and exercise of discipline, and also plugging time leaks and will to achieve, administrators can control their time to enhance productivity at work place.

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