Enrolment Planning and Class Allocation Practices Utilized by Principals as Correlates of Students Population Management in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

Dr. Lucky Julius ILAVBARE
University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State

Corresponding author: **luckshine1@yahoo.com**

DOI: 10.56201/ijee.v9.no7.2023.pg72.81

Abstract

The study investigated the topic: enrolment planning and class allocation practices utilized by principals as correlates of students' population management in public secondary schools in Delta State. The study adopted a correlation research design. Two research questions were answered while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The population of the study comprised 485 principals of public secondary schools in Delta State. A researcher developed a questionnaire titled: enrolment planning and class allocation practices utilized by principals and students population management scale (EPCAPSPMS) was deployed for data collection. The collected data were organised and analysed using Cronbach Alpha approach which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.80, and this was considered appropriate for the study. The researcher in company of 5 research assistants collected relevant data for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for the data analysis. Findings of the study revealed that there is a moderate but positive relationship between principals' enrolment planning practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. The study also reported that there is a significant relationship between principals' class allocation practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. The study recommended that Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should develop and harmonized a class allocation hand book that will content all the foreseeable indices for assigning a potential student to a class without putting the school's students' population jeopardy.

Keywords: *Enrolment Planning, Class Allocation, Principal, Students' Population Management, Public Secondary School*

Introduction

Education always occupy a central place in the agenda of every government, whether at home or abroad. This is not a surprise, because education is the reliable path to development in any society. It helps to training the citizenry the ways and manner the society will prefer them behave, act and work, in order to contribute the overall development of the society. Similarly, Anashie, Ebuta and Adie (2014), asserted that education which is the most potent tool for economic, social, technological and political development in any given nation of the world evolves through teaching and learning. This indicates that education is key to achieving whatever the society dreams of. It can be formal, non-formal and informal in nature, all aimed at equipping every citizen with right skills, knowledge and attitude needed to survive. Education, especially the formal category is structured into three, namely: the primary education, the secondary education and the tertiary education, and both the government and private play important role for each level through their involvement in owners and funding of the schools. This study is more concerned about the public owned secondary education.

Public secondary education is owned, funded, regulated and controlled by the government of the day. For instance, Delta State Government establish, owner, finance, regulate and control public secondary schools in the State through its agency, known as Delta State Post Primary School Management Board and the State Universal Basic Education Board. These boards under the Ministry of Education regulate the schools and the principal in charge of each school. It is the duty of the principal to ensure a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning in the school of his primary assignment. The principal is considered as the chief administrator of a secondary school, who is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring smooth operations of the school on daily basis. Kareithi (2018) and Udoka (2018), are in agreement that it is the responsibility of the principal to provide leadership in the school by seeing to that every aspect of the school is functioning as intended. He does this by coordinating and utilizing available resources of the school to attaining predetermined objectives and goals of the school. Some of the planning practices the principal is expected to be deploying in pursuit of a functional school is enrolment strategies, class sizing and allocation. If these practices are effectively deployed, control will become easier in the school.

Enrolment has to do with officially taking in new students or learning to become who would become the responsibility of the school, especially during school sessions. It deals with admission process through which new learners are brought to experience learning in a unique dimension. Enrolment planning on the other is setting out all the admission requirements upon which acceptance or rejection of potential or would-be student will be based. Principal as the chief admission officer of the school must be well acquainted with all the demand of admission into the school he is in charge of by using available government admission handbook or guideline to envision what it takes to make the minimum admission requirements (Olawuyi, Olanrewaju & Adegoke, 2016). The requirements, such as age, health, previous school record (relative), potential class, parent/guardians approval, gender clause, among others, should guide the principal in planning enrolments. The meeting of enrolment basics will determine class allocation stage.

Class allocation has to do with the assignment of class to the intending learning provided he has pull through the earlier stage of admission into the school. Salis (2021) considered class

allocation as the apportionment and assignment of classes or arms to potential students who have been approved for the first stage of admission. To allocate classes demand that principal should have assessed the availability and capacity of the class to accommodate the potential student. The class allocation will be dependent on the capacity of the school and set standard for class capacity or teacher-student ratio. There is tendency that this practices might be related to students' population control in the school, if effectively executed according to set standards.

Students population management is the act of controlling the number of students the school can accommodate through the application of different admission related practices. Population is understood to mean the total number of people in a particular geographical entity. Hence, there is school population which reveals the record of students currently under the school's tutelage and training. Anashie, Ebuta and Adie (2014), contended that a school can become over populated or under populated, even though the plan is to have a moderately populated school or balance population. Anashie, Ebuta and Adie stressed that an over populated school is considered to admit excessively without being concerned about the school's carrying capacity, and this is mostly the case of school in urban areas where the general population is high. On the other hand, under population is mostly observed in rural areas where the general population is relatively low, and most classes only have fewer students being admitted because of the unattractive nature of the locality.

The categories of population structure explained here seem to indicate that there is a mismatch between the number of students have actually been admitted and the number expected for admission, based on different localities. There is observable overcrowding situation among schools in urban areas as opposed to those in rural areas. This generates certain problems as the size of the class in urban areas seem to have become increasingly unmanageable and troublesome for teachers. For instance, Ekaette, Eyiene, Ameh and Owan (2020), expressed worried that a teacher-students ratio of about 1:65 which is common in township becomes almost impossible for the teacher to give individual attention to the learners needing it. This makes continuous assessment stands dreaded by teachers when they consider the staggering number of scripts they will mark and record. Egbo, Bartholomew, Okeke and Okeke (2018), also lamented that the teachers' eye contact with the learner in class have become so dissipated that a number of poorly motivated learners form small committees at the back of the class to engage in non-school discussion, while the teacher is busy teaching. This is regrettable and forms the motivation that spurred the researcher into this investigation on the topic enrolment planning and class allocation practices utilized by principals as correlates of students' population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The study generally investigated enrolment planning and class allocation practices utilized by principals as correlates of students' population management in public secondary schools in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. the relationship between enrolment planning practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

2. the relationship between class allocation practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between enrolment planning practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between class allocation practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which further guided the study were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between enrolment planning practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between class allocation practices utilized by principals and students' population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Method

Research Design

Correlation research design was adopted for this investigation. A correlational survey design is viewed as the design that is used to show the magnitude and level of relationship between variables of interest (Galadanci & Mukhtar, 2017). This type of survey design was considered appropriate for the study because it investigated the relationship between enrolment planning and class allocation practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 485 principals of public secondary schools in Delta State, out of which 96 were of the male gender and 389 were of the female gender. The report revealed that 302 schools are basically in rural settings, while 183 schools are considered to be in urban areas. Composition of the population also showed that 190 principals are from Delta Central; 174 are from the Delta North, and 121 are from Delta South. Source: Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Schools (2023). Principals were chosen as respondents to the research instrument because they are understood to be custodians of enrolment planning, control and management of students population of secondary schools of their primary assignment, and are in pole position of supplying information relating to enrolment planning; class allocation practices and students population management. In this study, the entire population of principals in the State was adopted

for the study, because the researcher considered the population moderate and manageable. Hence, sampling was not carried out.

Instrument for Data Collection

The researcher developed a questionnaire titled: enrolment planning and class allocation practices utilized by principals and students population management scale (EPCAPSPMS), which was employed in collection of data from principals of public secondary schools. The researcher developed the instrument through the knowledge from literature reviewed, as well as consultations and insights from experts in faculty of education. The EPCAPSPMS was structured in two sections, namely: A and B.

Section A had two items, school name and location of the school (rural or urban), as the basic demographic data needed of the schools. Section B on the other hand was EPCAPSPMS, which had three clusters, namely: B1-B3. The clusters were based on the three key variables targeted by the study. Cluster B1, contained 5-items on enrolment planning; Cluster B2, had 5-items on class allocation matters, and cluster 3 contained 5-items on students population management. This means the section B of the instrument contains a total of 15 items, all of which were structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) with weighted points: 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instruments were validated by three research experts. These included two lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and a lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To ensure internal consistency of the instruments, a trial test was carried out on 20 principals from 20 secondary schools in Rivers State. The collected data were organised and analysed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability overall coefficient of 0.80. The instruments were deemed reliable as the coefficients are in line with the recommendation of Jain and Angural (2017), who had recommended that co-efficient values ranging from 0.70 and above, should be considered adequate for any research work.

Method of Data Collection

In collecting relevant data for the study, the researcher employed the service of 5 research assistants with himself. The research assistants were briefed by the researcher on the mode of distributing and retrieving the instrument. The copies of the questionnaire were distributed to principals at the schools and retrieve on-the-spot, except in some circumstance whereby the principal preferred an appointment in his/her preferred location. The data collection phase elapsed within two weeks which was set out for it. The direct and on the spot retrieval of the instrument ensured that 100% return rate was recorded.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. For decision on research questions, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, r was interpreted using the guideline provided by Downie and Heath cited in Nworgu (2015), which recommended 0.80 and above as high correlation; above 0.30 but below 0.80 as moderate correlation, and below 0.30 as low correlation. For decision on the null hypotheses, in line with the recommendations of Lumen (2021), if probability value (P-value) was less than or equal to the level of significance or alpha levels of 0.05, the null hypothesis was to be rejected, and if the probability value (P-value) was greater than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis would not be rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between enrolment planning practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 1: Pearson r on Principals' Enrolment Planning Practices and Students Population Management.

	N	Enrolment Planning Practices	Students Population Management	Remarks
Enrolment Planning Practices	485	1.00	0.69*	Moderate
Students Population Management	485	0.69*	1.00	

Table 1 revealed that the correlation coefficient (r) between principals' enrolment planning practices and student population management is 0.69. This revealed that there is moderate relationship between principals' enrolment planning practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. The relationship is also positive.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between class allocation practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 2: Pearson r on Principals' Class Allocation Practices and Students Population Management.

	N	Class Allocation Practices	Students Population Management	Remarks
Class Allocation Practices	485	1.00	0.75*	Moderate
Students Population Management	485	0.75*	1.00	

On Table 2, the result shows that the correlation coefficient (r) between principals' class allocation practices and student population management in Delta State secondary schools is 0.75, which is considered as a moderate and positive relationship.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between enrolment planning practices utilized by principals and students population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson Correlation, r between Enrolment Planning Practices and Students Population Management.

	N	Enrolment Planning Practices	Students Population Management	P-Value	Decision
Enrolment Planning Practices	485	1.00	0.69*	0.05	Significant
Students Population Management	485	0.69*	1.00		

Result of the data analysis presented on table 3 revealed that correlation coefficient (r) = 0.69, which is greater than the 0.05 for P-Value. This shows there is significant relationship between principals' enrolment planning practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between class allocation practices utilized by principals and students' population management in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson Correlation, r between Class Allocation Practices and Students Population Management.

	N	Class Allocation Practices	Students Population Management	P-Value	Decision
Class Allocation Practices	485	1.00	0.75*	0.05	Significant
Students Population Management	485	0.75*	1.00		

Result of the data analysis presented on table 4 revealed that correlation coefficient (r) = 0.75, which is greater than the 0.05 for P-Value. This shows there is significant relationship between principals' class allocation practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study reported that that there is moderate relationship between principals' enrolment planning practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools, and the direction of the relationship is positive. In another study, Olawuyi, Olanrewaju and Adegoke (2016), had reported that such issues as: age, health, previous school record (relative), potential class, parent/guardians approval, gender clause, among others are determinants of enrolment planning that should guide the principal when planning for enrolment in the school. On the other hand, the study further reported that there is significant relationship between principals' enrolment planning practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. This entails that a principal who desires to effectively control students population in the school of his primary assignment, have to be abreast of the indices or issue afore-identified.

The study also reported that the correlation coefficient (r) between principals' class allocation practices and student population management in Delta State secondary schools is moderate and positive. The study also reported that there is a significant relationship between principals' class allocation practices and student population management in Delta State public secondary schools. In a similar investigation, Salis (2021), asserted that class allocation will be dependent on the capacity of the school, and set standard for class capacity or teacher-student ratio.

Salis stressed that there is tendency that class allocation practices of principals might be related to students' population control in the school, if effectively executed according to set standards. This is a testament to the fact that if students population must be effectively managed, there should be a set standard that must be strictly followed.

Conclusion

In the study, it was understood that principals of public secondary schools in Delta State make a lot of effort at utilizing any foreseeable enrolment planning practices and class allocation practices for the purpose of effective management of students' population in schools of their primary assignment. Some of the enrolment practices include examining of previous, academic records, parents/guardians consent, gender of the potential student, date of birth, and state of origin. Also, some of the class allocation practices available for principals include but are not limited to: examining of number of students expected for each class, the limit of the number of arms a particular class should have, and availability of teachers to hand the class or arm. The application of these enrolment planning and class allocation practices have been found to be positively related to students' population management and control. The relationship is found to be significant.

Recommendation

Having observed the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should expose and equip principals with more innovative technical skills needed in planning for enrolment, whether in densely populated environment and or sparsely populated environment.
2. Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should develop and harmonized a class allocation hand book that will content all the foreseeable indices for assigning a potential student to a class without putting the school's students population jeopardy.

References

Anashie, A. B., Ebuta, E. E. & Adie, L. (2014). Influence of students' population pressure and class size on the academic performance of secondary school students in Cross River State. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development, 22*(1), 1-8.

Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (2023). *Secondary schools in Delta State.* Available at https://deltastatemobse.net

Ekaette, S. O., Eyiene Ameh, E. & Owan, V. J. (2019). School characteristics and enrollment trend in upper basic schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria from 2008-2016. *Pedagogical Research, 4*(3), 1-10.

Ekaette, S. O., Eyiene Ameh, E. & Owan, V. J. (2020). *Statistical trends of school size, location and enrolment: An evaluation of public junior secondary schools for sustainable development.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344358446, on 15/05/2023. DOI: 10.18488/journal.119.2020.22.76.88

Kareithi, M. W. (2018). *Effect of performance appraisal system on performance of secondary schools' teachers in Kirinyaga West sub-county, Kenya.* Unpublished Master's degree thesis, School of Business at KCA University, Kenya.

Lumen, L. (2021). *Linear regression and correlation: Testing the significance of the correlation coefficient.* Retrieved from https://courses.lumenlearning.com/introstats1/chapter/testing-thesignificance-of-the-correlation coefficient/, on 7 October, 2020.

M. N. Egbo, M. N., Bartholomew, D. C., Okeke, J. U. & Okeke, E. N. (2018). Markov chain approach to projection of secondary school enrolment and projection of teachers. *Open Journal of Statistics, 8*, 533-555.

Olawuyi, B. O., Olanrewaju, A. O. & Adegoke, J. M. (2016). Factors affecting secondary school students' enrolment and retention in schools in Irepodun, Kwara State, Nigeria. *The Educational Psychologist, 12*(1), 164-173.

Orji, F. O. & Unachukwu, G. O. (2021). Principals' staff development and disciplinary practices as correlates of teachers' job productivity in Anambra State public secondary schools. *African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies, 4*, 1-8.

Salis, K. Y. (2021). An analysis of primary and secondary school enrolment and inclusive growth in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management and Sciences, 10*(4), 99–115.

Udoka, T. (2018). Strategic appraisal management in Nigerian schools. *Educational Journal on Effective Teaching in Schools, 2*(1), 14-25.