

Principals' Preferred Approach in Educational Planning: A Systematic Search and Review

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Abstract:- To unleash the unlimited potential of the young generation is the primary objectives of our educators. Educational planning, policy making, huge range of technologies, integration and aligning security process, interdisciplinary and collaboration, students critical thinking and creativity, is what educators role to combat technology innovation. This study examines principals' preferred approaches to planning with contextual variables included as controls are identified. These looked at the influences of personal characteristics in support for various planning approaches and best practices of an institution. Data were gathered from data mining. Lastly, a principal must incorporate satisfying and useful approaches to improve the quality and learning process of education.

Keywords: Educational planning, school principal, principals' preferred approach, educational planning approach

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is being considered a key to change and progress. It is acquiring knowledge and a powerful tool of development where a child is fully nurtured. Education not only provides knowledge and skills but also inculcates values, fostering right attitudes and habits. In short, the aim of education is complete human development (Zamir, 2016). Without proper education, one gets lack of all educational benefits in life.

Planning is the most essential part in decision making in order to achieve the desired goal. It is a process of deciding what objectives to pursue within a period of time and what to do to achieve those objectives to reduce unnecessary pressure of immediacy. With planning, objectives are carried promptly and achieve one's aim. To ensure an institution's success like education, one should plan ahead.

Educational planning in its broadest generic sense is the application of rational, systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the

needs and goals of its students and society (Coombs, 1972; Ololube, 2009) . Effective Educational planning enables you to make a smooth transition from high school to college, further technical education or military service. Educational Planning is an absolute necessity that provides vision and organization of thoughts.....

Education reforms and the planning are the core to improve the performance of the students by improving the quality of the schools (Patrinos et al, 2013). Educational Planning is necessary if organizational excellence is to be achieved in our public schools. Without planning, the operational and functional performance of the school will be less than optimal and the overall objectives and goals will be difficult at best to achieve. For this reason, the goal of this research study is to find out best practices, constraints and most preferred educational planning approaches in school management or operation.

II. OBJECTIVES

The impetus of this paper is to analyze the most preferred educational planning approaches used by school principal in the educative planning process. It makes use of a thorough systematic procedure to elaborate and synthesize facts of information. This study specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What Educational Planning Approach most preferred by the principal in the planning process:
 - 1.1 Incremental;
 - 1.2 Mixed-Scanning;
 - 1.3 Goal-free method; and
 - 1.4 Garbage Can Model?
2. What are the constraints encountered by the principal during the planning process?
3. Based on the findings, what are the recommendations in order to address the issues involved in the planning process?

III. DESIGN AND METHOD

This research uses a systematic search and review design. A data mining process which extracts the information from large scale of data to find some important values or convert the information into knowledge. This method is also very useful and efficient procedure for finding interesting knowledge and constraints from the raw data.

The content and presentation of this paper utilizes related studies or reviews as benchmark in finding the most preferred educational planning approaches used by school principals in the educative process. Furthermore, this research work attempts to answer the best practices and constraints meet during the planning process and how these issues or concerns are solved.

IV. PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Planning is a vital part of all organizational levels of formal education, from basic to higher education and it

is an essential management function in every school to serve best to their stakeholders. Moreover, it is a process of establishing priorities for future actions. According to Beach (2004), the reduction of principal preparation programs' attention to planning as a management function may well be attributed to failure of past planning practices. Although principals may no longer be formally prepared with knowledge of planning models and practices (Beach & Lindahl, 2000), they utilize a variety of such models intuitively (Beach & McInerney, 1986; Cooper, 1990), with varying degrees of success.

The different approaches in Educational Planning are the building blocks of the school to be effective and efficient in creating and guiding changes in the educative process. This part of the research seeks to discuss these approaches that are commonly used by the school principal in five different countries namely Australia, Dakota, Nigeria, Pennsylvania and Singapore.

Table 1.0 PERCENTAGE OF PRINCIPALS' PREFERRED APPROACH IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Countries	Incremental	Mixed-Scanning	Goal-Free Method	Garbage Can Model
Australia	26.71	19.26	32.63	21.40
Dakota	15.35	29.85	25.82	28.98
Nigeria	58.20	8.70	4.10	29.00
Pennsylvania	63.75	19.25	6.80	10.20
Singapore	48.50	8.10	15.20	28.20
Mean Percentage	42.50	17.03	16.91	23.56

As presented on table 1.0, the survey shows that among the four educational planning approaches the Incremental Method has the highest mean percentage score of 42.50 %, followed by the Garbage Can Model with 23.56%, Mixed Scanning Model with 17.03% and the Goal Free Method has the lowest mean percentage of 16.91%.

In addition, the data emphasizes that the most preferred Educational Planning Approaches adapted by the five (5) different countries. The Incremental Method is commonly used in Pennsylvania with 63.75 % while in Dakota the said method is least preferred in the planning process and has the lowest percentage of 15.35%.

This implies that Pennsylvania based on Liberal politics and focused on Satisfactory instead of utility maximization. Therefore, planner stands as a mediator of public and special interest across the board. Superintendents frequently use this as a budget planning model, requesting an annual budget that presumes the previous year's budget as the baseline and calls for an incremental advance of X% to cover inflation, salary or fringe benefit increases, district growth, and new programming (see Wildavsky,1975). In both the classical and the administrative models, theory is viewed as a useful way to bring relevant knowledge to bear on specific problems. Simon, 1997 emphasizes that incremental models do not substantially challenge or expand existing goals and do not call for evaluation of and selection from extended lists of alternative means.

In Mixed-Scanning Model, Dakota has the highest percentage of 29.85% while Singapore has 8.10 % as the lowest percentage among the listed countries.

This shows that the Educational planning in Dakota allows decision making to be carried in two distinct phases and it will be broadly evaluate (scan) all of the available policy options in terms of their effectiveness in meeting pre-existing objectives. Mixed-scanning reduces the unrealistic aspects of rationalism by limiting details required in fundamental decisions and helps to overcome the conservative slant of incrementalism by exploring longer-run alternatives Etzioni,1967). This mixed scanning model reflects Etzioni's recognition that an organization's planning process need not to be monolithic. , many school-based planning teams have discovered the efficacy of Etzioni's mixed-scanning model. After attempting to address all planning through even a bounded rational model, such teams often find themselves devoting seemingly limitless time and energy to issues that have not been previously problematic. This has often led them to the axiomatic conclusion, "If it isn't broken, don't fix it!" In other words, teams should use an incremental planning approach to those issues and reserve the more comprehensive or bounded rational approach for key issues that warrant greater attention and which the school-based planning teams feel are satisfying and useful to explore. As this model is essentially incorporates elements of two other rational models, some planning theorists no longer consider it a separate model, but rather a philosophy illustrating the wisdom of combining various planning models in order to capitalize on their unique strengths and weaknesses (Ronald A. Lindhal, et.al).

In Goal Free Planning, Australia has the highest percentage of 32.63% and Nigeria on the other hand

marked 4.10%. This implies that educational leaders may gravitate toward the goal free planning model because of their perceptions of the inadequacy of the traditional rational models. On the other hand, they may do so because of their affinity for some of the tenets of the goal-free method (Lindahl, Ronald, Vol. 23, No. 3).

Lindahl based on Clark's (1981) model also emphasizes that formulating a future-oriented shared vision in most school situations does not require such a paradigm shift. The mission, vision, and values can be reflected upon and discussed in relation to current and predicted future conditions; with the purpose of discerning some key areas for future direction or thrust. Rather than adopting finite, rational goals, e.g., improving reading scores by x% over the next y years, broader directions, such as promoting reading across the curriculum, providing students with formative evaluation feedback to improve their reading, and assisting students to acquire skills and positive dispositions toward reading, are derived. Then, rather than prescribing how this should be implemented, the goal-free approach calls for leaders to work with the organizational stakeholders to help them to identify what contributions each could make to move the organization in the desired direction. This could well vary greatly among stakeholders; for example, the contributions an English teacher might propose in moving toward this direction would likely be considerably different from those of a music teacher; yet, each could make his or her unique contribution. The school leader's responsibility would be to provide the necessary professional development, resources, encouragement, supervision, and evaluation to assist each stakeholder to make his or her contribution.

Moreover, one principal reason why educational leaders would favor the goal-free planning approach is its heavy foundation in the organization's culture and climate. Although many attempts have been made in the professional knowledge base to differentiate between these two constructs, there remains no clear, agreed-upon distinction. For example, Martin (2002) compared and contrasted 12 definitions of culture, alone. Harrison and Shirom (1999) defined climate as being people's perceptions of the culture, and Tagiuri (1968) conceptualized culture as one element of climate. Consequently, for this discussion of goal-free planning, they are treated as one interrelated construction, one that is a key element in a school's performance (Cohen, McCabe, Michelle, & Pickeral, 2009; Elbot & Fulton, 2008; Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckennooghe, & Alterman, 2008; MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009) and in efforts improve that performance (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Cohen, Pickeral, & McCloskey, 2009; French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2000; Fullan, 2005; Schein, 1992, 1999). Sarason (1996) provided one of the most powerful, and most widely accepted, testimonies to the importance of organizational climate and culture in school improvement when he declared that it is often the climate and culture of the organization that must be changed rather than the typical school improvement foci of curriculum, pedagogy, structures, etc. Another positive attractor of goal-free planning is its emphasis on the individual in the school

improvement process. As Evans (2001) explained, the success or failure of school change can generally be attributed to human aspects; resistance to change is natural, but can be overcome. Rogers (2005) is widely recognized for his work on the differential rates at which individual stakeholders accept innovations, categorizing them into such groups as early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. This closely resembles the work of Hall and Hord (2014), who provided excellent insight into individuals' differential levels of concern and levels of use of the innovation. This focus on the individual corresponds well to school leaders' current understandings of professional development, which also must situate the individual's knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward a new professional practice in the direction the organization is hoping to move (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010; Joyce & Showers, 1980, 2002; Learningforward, 2011; National Staff Development Council, 2005; Sparks, 1983, 2005; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; SouthWest Development Laboratory, 2011). It also aligns well with current leadership thought on the need to lead through empowerment of all organizational members (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015; Burns, 1978; Bass, 1997; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993; Tichy & Devanna, 1990). As Handy (1994) pointed out, people are not meant to be empty raincoats, mere pieces of organizations playing roles; membership (involvement) is more important than ownership (power). This individualistic approach to change is also consistent with most major motivation theories (Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943, 1970). Astuto et al. (1994, p. 74) contrasted such empowering leadership with traditional authoritative, top-down leadership as follows: "Decision processes require administrators to seek advice from professional staff and others, develop consensus, and select options consistent with the school's goals, purposes, and processes" or "Decision processes require professional staff to identify and select a range of alternative options consistent with principles of teaching and learning and the value referents on which the school community is based." By focusing on how each individual can best contribute to the organization's chosen direction or thrust, goal-free planning helps to fulfill Slater's (2008, p. 67) contention that "A leader's success will be measured not by the number of followers they have, but rather by the number of individuals that they have inspired to become leaders themselves.

In Garbage Can Model, Nigeria has the highest rank with 29.00 % and Pennsylvania has 10.2% and the lowest in rank among the five countries. This shows that Individuals and institutions sometimes need ways of doing things for which there are no good reasons. Not always, not even usually, but occasionally people need to act before they think (March, 1982, 1994).

It explains why solutions may be proposed to problems that don't exist; why choices are made without solving problems; why problems persist without being solved; and why few problems are solved. Events may be so poorly defined and complex that problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities act as independent events. When they mesh, some problems are solved, but in

this chaotic decision process many problems are not solved—they simply persist (Daft, 1989). Undoubtedly the garbage can metaphor contains elements of truth, and it appears to be an apt description of the way decisions are reached in some situations but not in others.

V. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning is aimed at continuous forecasting and guidance so as to match the demand for human resources with its supply in required quantity and quality. It must be comprehensive in nature and must incorporate every level and types of education, all stages of life as well as life-long learning.

The role of the principal in planning covers many different areas including leadership, teacher evaluation, student discipline and many others. Being an effective principal is hardwork and is also time consuming. A good principal is balanced within all their roles and works hard to ensure that they are doing what they feel best for all constituents involved. A principal must become efficient at practices such as organizing, scheduling and planning. (Derrick Meador, 2019).

With the demands of 21st century learners, Principals are faced with complex and difficult challenges in the field of educational planning.

Some of the problems include:

1. Inaccurate Data

One of the most difficult challenges that educational planners face is the issues of inaccurate statistical data. The quality of technical planning is in most cases inhibited by statistical deficiencies and inaccurate data. Nigerian education systems has failed to effectively plan because of lack of accurate data, which is because of the use of mediocre to prepare data for use in the planning and forecasting processes.

2. Inadequate Skilled Personnel

Most educational planners in Nigerian do not have complete competence in planning. Qualified planners are the single most significant resource that can lead to greater and efficient planning productivity and performance. In planning, what is needed is the effective utilisation resources by connecting the totality knowledge, skills and talents to achieve planning objectives. The quality of planners should not be nothing less than the basic acceptable standards worldwide.

3. Economic Circumstances

The budgetary allocations that are available for educational planning in Nigeria is nothing to write home about. Funds provide for education planning is too small for proper planning to take place. The condition of the sector remains a thing of concern. Under-funding and systemic corruption makes the matter worse. The insufficient funding of the education planning sector in some Asian countries stands as one of the major factors working against effective planning and implementation of education programmes.

4. Inadequate Planning

There is a popular saying that “he or she who has failed to plan has planned to fail”. Education planning in Nigeria has always been inadequate in line with the enormous facing our educational system. The lack of effective planning poses a significant obstacle to the advancement of education across the country. The success of any educational system hinges on proper planning. Planning of human and material resources has evolved to guide the allocation and utilisation of educational resources in the school systems. Such planning is required to arrest areas of wasted resources and to make educational production more successful. Consequently, for any educational system to truly develop, effective planning is indispensable as education and planning are essential characteristics for effective education (Ololube, 2013).

5. Technological Problem

Another serious problem in the planning of education in Nigeria is the lack of attention paid to emerging technological innovations planning mechanisms. The success of Nigerian education planners depends upon their ability to identify and respond to technological changes in other to elevate their planning output. Over the years, a number of technological changes have taken place that involves the introduction of modern advancements into the planning process and approaches, and understanding emerging issues related to educational planning and development.

To ensure quality educational reform in any nation, the need to plan is crucial requirement in its system to work efficiently and effectively. When reform is adequately planned, it accelerates structural integration of a plural society by equalizing economic, social and political opportunities (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010). Thus, educational planning is concerned with the problems of how to make the best use of limited resources allocated to education in view of the priorities given to different stages of education or different sector of education and the need of the economy (Olambo, 1995; Ololube, 2013).

This research work suggests several propositions for future research and practice. These search and review observations pertain most directly to students, faculty, and researchers of the different levels of educational institutions. At the school operation or management level, this study calls for policies to ensure balanced investments in, and increased funding for, education planning that will facilitate for the effective use, integration and application of educational planning approaches and methods in the teaching and learning processes.

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