Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences Journal of Mathematics and Science Education Print ISSN: 2814-0885 e-ISSN: 2814-0931

www.fnasjournals.com

Volume 5; Issue 1; December 2023; Page No. 143-151.



SCHOOL PLANT MAINTENANCE CULTURE FOR THE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PORT HARCOURT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

The study examined school plant maintenance culture for effective administration in the public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of all 15 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. Therefore, the census sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 45 principals (15 principals and 30 vice principals, of which 19 are males and 26 are females). The instrument for data collection used in this study was "the Plant Maintenance Culture Questionnaire (PMCQ)". The reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using Z-test at 0.05 level. The results showed both male and female principals adopted school plant maintenance culture for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt LGA and that there are challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance culture for effective administration of the secondary schools in Port Harcourt LGA. It was recommended that principals should be encouraged by the government to continually coordinate material resources appropriately as a way of plant maintenance for their effective secondary school administration.

Keywords: Administration, Culture, Effectiveness Maintenance, School Plant, Administrators.

Introduction

School plants play a pivotal role within the educational framework and are of utmost importance for the efficient management of the internal school infrastructure. The school infrastructure serves as a crucial metric for assessing the level and calibre of educational endeavours within educational institutions. Therefore, it is imperative for the school as an institution to ensure the right and efficient management of its material resources to accomplish its objectives. Given that education is a crucial catalyst for the advancement of any nation, educational institutions must prioritise the maintenance and improvement of their physical infrastructure, commonly referred to as the school plant. This is because there is a direct correlation between the condition of the school plant and the overall quality of education that is attained inside a specific educational institution. This pertains to the recognition that the term "school plant" encompasses all tangible infrastructures that facilitate the educational process within and beyond the confines of the classroom setting. Several studies have demonstrated that the presence of essential instructional materials, facilities, and equipment is crucial for facilitating effective teaching and learning within educational institutions. From this perspective, it is necessary for a school administrator to effectively oversee and uphold the school infrastructure entrusted to their supervision. Although other members of the school community may be assigned these responsibilities, they ultimately fall under the purview of the administrator. Ukaigwe (2018) explores the functions of the school plant as a crucial tool for achieving educational objectives. The author emphasises that the school plant encompasses more than just the physical structure of the school building and the surrounding land. All the facilities associated with the school building, including attached and unattached furniture and equipment, fall under its encompassing scope. Additionally, it encompasses all the Nigerian educational institutions that frequently encounter obstacles related to insufficient funding for infrastructure growth and delays in the restoration of damaged school facilities. According to Alabi (2018), the provision and maintenance of school physical facilities appear to be a significantly neglected aspect within the Nigerian education system. He also highlighted the prevalence of schools in Nigeria that exhibit divided walls, leaky roofs, shattered windows, damaged floors, and deteriorating ceilings.

Considering the current condition of a dilapidated structure, unstable furnishings, insufficient learning materials, and overcrowded educational spaces, School plant maintenance encompasses a comprehensive range of actions aimed at preserving the functional value of educational buildings. This becomes imperative due to the ongoing utilisation of buildings, grounds, and facilities, which leads to the gradual deterioration and damage of these assets. To ensure continuous usage, maintenance becomes important. Amanchukwu and Ololube, (2015) proposed that students in secondary schools should contribute to the upkeep of the school environment by engaging in tasks such as cleaning classrooms, toilets, bathrooms, hallways, and the playground. The proposed initiative involves the establishment of a repair workshop within secondary school premises, specifically designed to address minor repairs across all categories of school infrastructure. However, Ezike (2014) argues that the teaching facilities might have a negative impact on the quality of instruction if the physical environment is inadequate. The lack of sufficient training for both principals and teachers in the upkeep of the school facility contributes to challenges in achieving effective internal school administration. The efficiency of principals in the administration of secondary schools is contingent upon their ability to effectively manage and leverage both human and material resources to attain educational objectives, as elucidated by Kpee (2013). It is important to acknowledge that the efficacy of principals in the administration of secondary schools is contingent upon various factors, including the judicious management of financial resources, efficient coordination of material resources, and effective management of student personnel. This suggests that the success of a school is heavily contingent upon the efficacy of the principal in the administration of secondary education. Ogonor and Sanni (2001) found that principals' effectiveness in secondary school administration is influenced by their sensitivity towards the needs of both teaching and non-teaching staff, their ability to foster awareness and collaboration in establishing group goals, their support for individual free expression, their recognition of the consensus decision-making process, their optimistic outlook, their confidence, and their ability to maintain positive relationships with others. It is important to acknowledge that, given the limited availability and high cost of material resources, the school principal's capacity to efficiently coordinate these resources for meaningful classroom instruction is indicative of their effectiveness in administering secondary schools. School administrators must prioritise the maintenance of the school facility to optimise the effectiveness of the teaching and learning environment.

In the same consideration, Ajayi (2007) suggests the types of maintenance that should be adopted in the school system:

- Corrective Maintenance: This is concerned with repairing faults on time. Repairs of electrical faults in the school building and mechanical faults on generating sets and vehicles are examples of corrective maintenance.
 - Preventive and predictive maintenance: This refers to maintenance carried out to prevent breakdowns or situations that can put part of the plant out of use.
- Shutdown Maintenance: This involves the shutting down of a school plant or part of it to carry out
 maintenance work.
- Running Maintenance: This is the maintenance carried on while the plant or a component is operating.
- Breakdown Maintenance: This focuses on rectifying breakdowns in any component of the plant.

According to Nwamae and Kayii (2018), the primary objective of facility maintenance is to ensure the continuous and optimal operation of a plant, with minimal disruptions, while preserving its original state as much as feasible. The presence of school facilities is crucial for the effective functioning of educational institutions, as principals, who serve as the leaders of these schools, are responsible for efficiently managing the resources at their disposal to attain administrative excellence. In the present context, administrative success refers to the degree of effectiveness in attaining predetermined goals. The outcomes attained are a direct result of established protocols and assigned duties. According to Akomolafe (2012), administrative processes can be understood as constructive reactions, endeavours, and behaviours undertaken to achieve a specified objective. According to Nwamae and Kayii (2018), the principal assumes the role of the administrative leader within the educational institution, overseeing the activities of other personnel to achieve the desired educational objectives. Consequently, the principal should bear the responsibility and be held accountable for any deficiencies that may arise from the implementation of the school's plan. The educational process necessitates the provision of suitable physical facilities, including books, furniture, and playgrounds. It is the responsibility of school administrators, principals, and educators to diligently maintain the many resources within the educational institution. These resources encompass a wide range of things, including classrooms, labs, tools, machinery, laboratory equipment, chalkboards, whiteboards, markers, as well as audio and

visual aids that are provided for instructional purposes. As a result, the researcher noted that both school administrators and government officials have endeavoured to enhance the condition of school facilities. However, their progress has been hindered by many issues. Financial restrictions are a prevalent occurrence inside secondary educational institutions. The absence of crucial equipment and structures can be attributed to financial limitations. The identified factors contributing to the deterioration of school infrastructure include a deficient maintenance culture, instances of vandalism, inadequate oversight by the Ministry of Education, misallocation of maintenance funding, and a lack of dedication among staff members. The primary obstacle faced by secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, pertains to the availability of financial resources for the construction and upkeep of school infrastructure.

Statement of the Problem

To improve and supplement instruction, learning, and the overall accomplishment of academic objectives, school plant maintenance is essential. The physical look of the school and the overall state of the facilities motivate teachers to carry out their teaching tasks in schools more effectively. The educational process needs appropriate physical spaces, including playgrounds, libraries, furniture, and equipment. Teachers, principals, and other school personnel are responsible for maintaining the school's equipment, which includes supplies like classrooms, whiteboards, audio and visual aids, and more. In secondary schools, financial constraints are a typical occurrence. The researcher, a teacher in Rivers State, saw firsthand the difficulties schools, particularly in Port Harcourt, suffer due to a lack of funding for infrastructural development and a delay in fixing school property damage. These schools neglect the provision and maintenance of school physical amenities. As a result, it is typical to find schools with crumbling ceilings, splintered walls, leaking roofs, and shattered windows. envisioning a dilapidated structure, flimsy furnishings, insufficient textbooks, and packed classes. Researchers' further observations have also demonstrated that students, non-teaching personnel, and school administrators' carelessness and indiscipline all play a part in the poor maintenance of our school plant. The school plant that the community and government established and left in their care is the responsibility of school administrators to manage and maintain. Administrators should assign tasks and foster a maintenance culture among students, professors, and general staff. The principal, who is also the school's administrator and instructional leader, is solely responsible for the maintenance of the school plant. To meet the aims and objectives of the secondary education system, among his responsibilities are the purchase, maintenance, use, and safety of the school plant. To fill this yarning gap, this study wishes to investigate school plant maintenance culture for the effective administration of public senior secondary schools.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to determine how school plant maintenance culture influences the effective administration of public senior secondary schools of Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. Identify school plant maintenance culture for effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State
- 2. Ascertain types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- 3. Determine the challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- 1. What is the school plant maintenance culture adopted for the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in the Port Harcourt local Government Area of Rivers State?
- 2. What are the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- 3. What are the challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are here formulated for the study:

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal for the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals regarding the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Nwankwo (2013), analytical descriptive design is when the variables being studied for any sample are compared for the variously identified portion of the sample through the use of hypotheses. Thus, the variables being studied in this study for the sample are compared through the use of hypotheses. The target population used for this study consisted of all 45 (15 principals and 30 vice principals), of which 19 are male and 26 female principals in the public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt LGA. The sample of the study also consists of 45 principals in the 15 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt LGA. This is using the census sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection used in this study is the Plant Maintenance Culture Questionnaire (PMCQ). The PMCQ is divided into three sections, Sections A, B and C respectively. Section A contains demographic information of the respondents with three items which include: Name of Institution, year of experience and qualification and gender variables. Section B contains 18 items on the various aspects of PMCQ, designed on a four-point rating scale to elicit responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), which have corresponding scores of 4, 3, 2 points and 1 point respectively. The instrument was validated the by researcher's supervisor, a Business Education expert and a Measurement and Evaluation expert at Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, for face and content validation; their corrections and modifications were taken into consideration before the final copy of the instrument was produced. The reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha. The three research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the corresponding hypotheses were tested to determine the significance of z by comparing the Z-calculated with the Z-critical value at 0.05 level of significance.

Results Research Question one: What is the school plant maintenance culture adopted for the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in the Port Harcourt local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 1: scores on school plant maintenance culture adopted by male and female principals

S/N	Items	Male n=19		Fema n=2			Remark
		\overline{X}	S.D	\overline{X}	S.D	\overline{X} set	
1.	Principals repair damaged school plants as soon as the need arises.	3.58	0.79	3.32	0.89	3.61	Agreed
2.	Principals adopt any maintenance culture suitable for them.	3.41	1.01	2.81	1.1	3.29	Agreed
3	Minor repairs on the school plant are done by the principals.	2.56	1.21	3.35	0.88	2.63	Agreed
4	Principals did not employ the services of trained personnel for school plant maintenance.	2.33	1.03	2.92	1.02	2.37	Disagreed
5	The plant gets bad due negligence of the school management	1.99	1.18	2.46	1.03	1.98	Disagreed
6	Principals apply to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) for major repairs and replacements.	2.50	1.11	2.25	0.86	2.54	Agreed
	Grand Mean					2.74	Agreed

The result from research question 1 in Table 1 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, and 6 are the views of male and female principals on school plant maintenance culture adopted for effective Administration in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. The respondents agreed that principals repair damaged school plants as soon as the need arises (3.61), principals adopt any maintenance culture suitable for them (3.29), minor repairs on school plants are done by the principals (2.63), and principals apply to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) for major repairs and replacement (2.54). While respondents disagreed with the statement; that principals did not employ the services of trained personnel for school plant maintenance and plant gets bad due to negligence of the school management (2.37). Hence, since the 2.74 is above the criterion mean of 2.50, therefore, respondents all agreed that the school plant maintenance culture adopted enhances effective Administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What are the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean scores on the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	Male n=19		Female n=26			Remark
		\overline{X}	S.D	\overline{X}	S.D	\overline{X} set	
7	The principal adopts preventive maintenance services to prevent malfunctioning of equipment, or early deterioration of buildings, parts of buildings, furniture and equipment to maximise their useful life.	2.98	1.29	3.59	1.45	3.28	Agreed
8.	Preventive maintenance requires regular checks, making it possible to predict school plant due for serving.	3.44	1.00	3.65	0.64	3.54	Agreed
9.	Periodic maintenance is done at predetermined times, servicing the school plant.	1.94	1.15	1.59	0.99	1.76	Disagreed
10	The school head removes and replaces unusable equipment or parts of it when due.	2.83	1.11	2.86	0.97	2.84	Agreed
11	The school head applies emergency maintenance which concerns the safety and health of the staff.	2.93	1.03	3.06	0.72	2.99	Agreed
12	Maintenance did not involve removing and replacing equipment or parts of it when due	2.25	1.12	1.86	0.92	2.05	Disagreed
	Grand Mean					2.74	Agreed

The result from research question 2 in Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed that the (item, 7,8,10, and11) are the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State; include; the principal adopts preventive maintenance services to prevent malfunctioning of an equipment, or early deterioration of buildings, parts of buildings, furniture and equipment to maximize their useful life (3.28), preventive maintenance requires regular checks, making it possible to predict school plant due for serving. (3.54), The school head removes and replaces unusable equipment or parts of it when due. (2.84), and they actively seek and give constructive feedback to their students (2.99). While respondents disagreed. (items 9 and 12) include; preventive maintenance requiring regular checks, making it possible to predict school plant due for serving (1.76) and that the school head remove and replace unusable equipment or parts of it when due with a mean score of (2.05). Hence, since the 2.74 is above the

criterion mean of 2.50, respondents all agreed that the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal for effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 3: Summary of mean scores on the challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Statement	Ma n=1		Fem n=			
		\overline{X}	S.D	\overline{X}	S.D	\overline{X} set	Remark
13	Many secondary schools in the state lack equipment and machines in the workshops	3.29	1.14	3.31	0.85	3.30	Agreed
14	Lack of electricity supply.	3.44	1.00	3.65	0.64	3.54	Agreed
15	Validation of plants by students and hoodlum	2.79	1.12	3.11	0.86	2.95	Agreed
16	Lack of funds not generated by the school head delayed repairs and dictated faults in time	2.78	1.09	2.93	1.06	2.85	Agreed
17	lack of Introductory Technology workshops, laboratories,	2.04	1.20	1.75	1.18	1.89	Disagreed
18	Poor maintenance culture	3.03	1.12	3.72	0.58	3.37	Agreed
	Grand Mean					2.93	Agreed

The result from research question 3 shows that the respondents agreed that (items, 13, 14, 15 and 16) are the challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State including many secondary schools in state lack equipment and machines in the workshops (3.30), lack of electricity supply (3.54), vandalization of plant by students and hoodlum. (2.95), lack of funds not generated by the school head delay repairs and dictated faults in time (2.85), and poor maintenance culture (3.37). While respondents disagreed with (item 16) which includes; a lack of introductory technology workshops, and laboratories, (1.89). Hence, since the 2.93 is above the criterion mean of 2.50, respondents all agreed that the items are the challenges facing militating effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses of the study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

 H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Z-test on the mean scores of male and female principals on the school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal for effective administration in public secondary school in Port Harcourt

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Male	19	2.74	1.37				
				43	0.40	1.96	Retained H ₀₁
Female	26	2.84	1.22				

The results in Table 4 show that male principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.74 and 1.37 respectively, while female principals have mean scores and standard deviation of 2.84 and 1.22 respectively. Based on the Z comparison, the calculated Z (0.40) is smaller than the critical value (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis

of no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt does not differ significantly' is retained for insufficient empirical evidence. Thus, male and female principals on the school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt do not differ significantly.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals regarding the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance the effective administration of public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State

Table 5: Z-test on the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance effective administration of public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State

Gender	N	\overline{X}	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Male	19	2.66	1.11				
				43	0.11	1.96	Retained H ₀₂
Female	26	2.72	0.95				

The results in Table 5 show that male principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.66 and 1.11 respectively, while female principals have mean scores and standard deviation of 2.72 and 0.95 respectively. Based on their Z comparison, the calculated Z-calculated (0.11) is less than the critical value (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis of 'no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State, Thus, mean scores of male and female principals on the types of school plant maintenance culture adopted by the principal to enhance effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State does not differ significantly.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 6: Z-test on the challenges facing principals in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State

Gender	N	\overline{X}	SD	df	Z-cal	Z -	Decision
Male	19	2.46	1.12				
				43	0.56	1.96	Retained H ₀₃
Female	26	2.82	0.95				

The results in Table 6 show that male principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.46 and 1.11 respectively, while female principals have mean scores and standard deviation of 2.82 and 0.95 respectively. Based on their Z comparison, the calculated Z-calculated (0.56) is less than the critical value (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis of 'challenges facing principal in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State, Thus, mean scores of male and female principals on the challenges facing principal in school plant maintenance for effective administration in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State does not differ significantly.

Discussion

Results of the findings of the study as indicated by the respondents generally showed that school plant maintenance is a determinant for effective administration in public secondary school administration in Rivers State of Nigeria. However, there is a much-needed improvement in the school plant maintenance due to the challenges if the tempo is to be maintained. Table 2 examined the school plant maintenance culture adopted for effective administration in public secondary schools in the Port Harcourt local Government Area of Rivers State. Effective and efficient coordination of material resources such as sports equipment, functional libraries and laboratories, and enough classrooms and halls will in no small measure help principals in their day-to-day school administration. The coordination of these material resources is one thing, their maintenance is also important as no school plant that is

not maintained will be used in future for classroom instruction. Effective management of material resources enhances proper classroom instruction. It is in this regard that Aleru (2023) noted that principals' effectiveness in the administration of secondary schools presupposes that they can diligently influence both human and material resources for the achievement of educational goals. Also, the respondents' responses to research question 2 revealed that the school plant maintenance culture adopted enhances effective administration in schools. This is because when school plants are maintained regularly, they will not depreciate and the money which would have been used for replacement will be saved for another purpose in the school. Maintenance of school plants is also important because the money spent in procuring them is huge and as such should not be allowed to spoil or wear out some of its parts. This is in agreement with Kayii et al. (2023) who stressed that school plant maintenance enhances prudent management of school funds as this will avoid the wastage of lean financial resources as the government has other sectors of the economy to care for. This is in line with (Asiegbu, 2014) who asserted that there is a relationship between the environment of the school and students' attitude to work poses some challenges in the maintenance of school plants.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that school plant maintenance determines effective administration in secondary schools School plants when properly and regularly maintained will uplift the tone of the school, improve student personnel management and above all ensure prudent management of the lean financial resources at the disposal of the school principal. School plant maintenance is also an important strategy in achieving predetermined educational objectives and aids the greater academic performance of students. It is imperative for the school as an institution to ensure the right and efficient management of its material resources to accomplish its objectives. Given that Education is a crucial catalyst for the advancement of any nation. The institution should prioritize the maintenance and improvement of its physical Infrastructure. The lack of sufficient training for both Principals and Teachers in the upkeep of the school facility contributes to challenges in achieving effective Internal School Administration. Therefore, the efficiency of principals in the administration of secondary schools is Contingent upon their ability to effectively manage and leverage both human and material resources.

Recommendations

- 1. Principals should be encouraged by the government to continually coordinate material resources appropriately as a way of plant maintenance for their effective secondary school administration.
- 2. Principals and teachers should be trained to acquire knowledge and skills in financial management.
- 3. School plant maintenance should be a joint responsibility of both principals and teachers as this will help in the proper arrangement of student personnel.

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