

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Timetable and School Effectiveness: The Role of School Administrator

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Abstract:

School timetable reveal the reality of a school's curriculum organization. It performs the important task of allocating a large proportion of the school's resources. The school timetable is a powerful administrative tool. Ideally it should operationalize the aims and objectives of the school by providing an appropriate structural dimension to the curriculum to make the activities school effective. Stark reality may prevent this ideal relationship from being achieved. Another function served by the school timetable is its allocative role. The resources of teacher-time, pupil-time and room-space have their use controlled directly by the timetable. The material resources of equipment and supplies, which are largely related to subjects taught, are indirectly controlled. Timetable analysis can therefore serve two purposes. This paper examines timetable and school effectiveness. Majorly the study examined importance of school time table, guidelines for construction of the school time table. It itemizes the contents of the school time table and the steps to which a school administrator must take in order to ensure school effectiveness. With endless list of activities in the school and for school effectiveness, it was concluded in the study that school administrators and school management at large ensure everything in their capacity to have a well-planned timetable in the school for effective school administration. It was also recommended that in order to keep up with the changing educational system, school administrators need to make use of technology (computer software) in constructing school timetable which will help them attain efficient results that brings about school effectiveness.

Keywords: Timetable, school effectiveness, role of school of administrator

1. Introduction

Leadership plays an indispensable role in effectiveness of an educational institution, right from the setting of goals to accomplishment of goals. Sailesh (2011) notes that various researches have linked the school effectiveness with the leadership. The author maintains further that in absence of leadership goal accomplishment and school effectiveness is never guaranteed. In the view of Cheng and Townsend in Sailesh (2011) for education change and effectiveness, the role of principal is often crucial to their success. The principal is challenged to create the culture of quality that penetrates to the smallest elements, processes and the systems of an institution.

Activities in the school need to be planned for the purpose of ensuring orderliness and decorum among staff and students. Timetable show where a school allocates its resources, in particular the important ones of teacher-time and room-space. Information in these areas should enable school administrators to make better decisions on the school's educational programme and on resource allocation practices to achieve desired aims and objectives. To this end, it becomes necessary for the school administrator to the school has a well-planned school timetable. Obi in Ajayi (2010) defined a school time table as a plan of action on which the subjects of the curriculum are distributed over the teaching periods of the school day of the weeks that make up the terms and the academic sessions. The author further posited that school time table is one of the important records which a school is required by law to keep. It regulates the teaching and learning activities in the school. A general timetable is usually drawn for the school by a designated staff under the supervision of a school administrator Class time tables and subject time table of each teacher are extracted from the general time table. The class time tables are usually drawn on the wall besides the class chalkboard in each classroom.

The role of school administrator particularly in time table and school effectiveness cannot be overemphasized. The dominant view of effective administrators suggests that they generally emphasize those tasks which are directly related to teaching and learning and assert influence and authority surrounding these tasks to coordinate instructional programs with effective timing (Goldring and Pasternack, 2006). Derrick (2018) lamented that the role of the principal covers many different areas in the school effectiveness including leadership, teacher evaluation, ensuring good school time table, student discipline, and many others. Being an effective principal or administrator is hard work and is also time-consuming. A good principal is balanced within all their roles and works hard to ensure that that they are doing what they

feel is best for all constituents involved. Time is a major limiting factor for every principal. A principal must become efficient at practices such as prioritizing, scheduling, and organization.

A school principal or administrator is the primary leader in a school building. As the school leader they must make sure that the programs within the school are effectively planned and evaluated every week and tweaked as necessary. In support of the above statement, Derrick (2018) posited that principal should be positive, enthusiastic, have their hand in the day to day activities of the school, and listen to what their constituents are saying. The author asserts further that being a school principal is balanced between being rewarding and being challenging. It is a difficult job, and like any job, there are people that are just not cut out to handle it. There are certain characteristics of a highly effective principal that some people do not possess. An effective principal is available to teachers, staff members, parents, students, and community members.

The role of the principal covers many different areas including leadership, teacher evaluation, student discipline, and many others (Derrick, 2018). The author notes further that being an effective principal is hard work 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 is best for all constituents involved. Time is a major limiting factor for every principal. A principal must become efficient at practices such as prioritizing, scheduling, and organization. An effective leader steps up to fill in holes as needed, even if it isn't a part of their daily routine. Variety of areas is one way to ensure this. It is acceptable to look at other schools in your area and to implement those programs within your own school that have proved to be effective elsewhere. If school programmes has become stale and activities are not showing much growth, then it may be necessary to review the programmes and make some changes particularly in the issue of time use and management to improve the quality of the programmes to bring about school effectiveness.

Creating schedules in the school can be a daunting task. It can take some time to get everything to fall into its proper place (Derrick, 2018). The author notes further that there are many different schedules in which an administrator or principal may be required to create including a bell schedule, lesson periods, break time, duty schedule, computer lab schedule, library schedule, etc. all in the time table. It must be emphasized that the school administrator ensures cross-checking each of those schedules to ensure that he/she is not putting too much on any one person at once can be difficult. With all the scheduling the administrator has to do, it is almost impossible to make everyone happy with their schedules. For example, some teachers like their plan first thing in the morning and others like them at the end of the day, but it is not impossible to accommodate all of them. It is probably best to create the schedule without trying to accommodate anyone. Also, be prepared to make adjustments to your schedules once the year begins. You need to be flexible because there are times that there are conflicts you did not foresee that need to be changed. Attention has also been placed in the effectiveness literature on the importance of time table to achieve good school coordination and effectiveness.

2. Importance of School Time Table

Allocating time wisely is critical when creating a school timetable. School timetables are extremely important for a variety of reasons in the school (Pinzow, 2018). The author notes further that time table ensure that no teacher is scheduled for too many back-to-back classes or for two classes at the same time. Teachers are given the opportunity to modify lesson plans during preparation periods and collaborate with their colleagues. The timetable allows students to know exactly when a specific subject is scheduled. A well-constructed timetable establishes a natural rhythm and routine, which can be comforting to teachers and students. It is therefore important that the school administrator ensures that School timetable is well-planned and accessible in the School for efficient and effective School administration. According to Pinzow (2018), timetables are very vital in the following areas in the School.

2.1. Curriculum Organization

A school timetable with mandated period lengths, such as 45 minutes per period, and specific subjects for each period helps administrators allocate sufficient resources to the most important curriculum areas, according to a 2006 article in the "Journal of Educational Administration." Curriculum should be organized so that the most important subjects are at optimal times of the day. For example, if an administrator believes that the morning is the best time to schedule English language arts courses, then reading and writing should almost always be scheduled before lunch.

2.2. Student Organization

The school timetable allows students to know the exact time and duration of each class period. In elementary school, a class of students usually follows the same schedule, while in secondary school, students have individualized schedules. Without a school timetable, students would have no idea how to prepare for the day, when to go to their lockers if they are in middle or high school, how much transit time they have before they are late for class, and who their teachers are.

2.3. Reducing Confusion

A smartly designed master school schedule reduces confusion for teachers, allows them to set their routines and creates comfort during the first two weeks of school, when classroom management is critical. Teachers and administrators can also rectify mistakes by using the master schedule, such as one teacher being placed in two classrooms at the same time, or another teacher not receiving a preparation period during a particular day.

2.4. Routines are Critical

The most important reason for creating a school timetable is developing a routine for all students and staff. Just as teachers must develop routines for their students to build a class structure, administrators must use the school timetable to clearly delineate exactly when and where students go to class and when teachers are scheduled to teach. If an administrator creates a poor timetable, which either requires teachers to work several consecutive periods or students to go without an elective, such as art, music or physical education for two or three consecutive days, the management effects trickle down to the teachers and an unsustainable student behavior situation results.

The importance of school time table in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the school cannot be overemphasized. In the view of Obi in Ajayi (2010), the importance of a school time table is listed as follow:

- It guides the teachers to know what and when to teach.
- It assists the students to know which books and materials to bring to school each day.
- It helps the students to know when a particular lesson to be taught and by which teacher.
- It reminds the students of the assignments that could ordinarily have been forgotten.
- It prevents unhealthy rivalry among teachers by eliminating possible clashes in the teaching schedule.
- It ensures the maximum utilization of the available time for teaching and learning activities.
- It prevents monotony and boredom in school work through regular and systematized changes in teaching and learning activities.
- It makes the implementation of school curriculum easy through programmed teaching and teaming activities.
- It makes it possible to bring together the school subjects, teachers, available rooms and other facilities in the best xv possible permutations in order to accomplish the objectives of the school.

3. Guidelines for Construction of the School Timetable

The school administrator must be guided by a number of factors in constructing an effective school time table. According to Ajayi (2010), the designated staff for time table construction in the school must also be well guided by following factors:

3.1. Allocation of Periods

The allocation of periods in the time table should be based on the number of subjects to be taught and their relative importance. For instance, more periods are usually allocated to English Language and Mathematics when compared with other subjects. Moreover, practical subjects such as Agricultural Science, Fine Art, Home Economics and Technical Drawing which require longer time to teach may be allocated double periods in the time table.

3.2. Length of Periods

The age of pupils and the nature of subject should be considered in determining the length of periods in the school time table. The duration for a period may vary from 35 minutes in the primary schools to 40 minutes in the secondary school.

3.3. Arrangement of Subjects

Arrangement of subjects in the time table should take into consideration the nature of the subjects. Some practical subjects such as, Woodwork, Metalwork, Fine Art and Home Economics should not be kept close to some subjects which require physical activities such as Physical Education and practical agriculture, particularly Garden/Farm work. This is necessary in order to ensure effective teaching-learning activities.

3.4. Timing of Subjects

The time a subject will come up in the time table will depend on the nature of the subject. Subjects which require a lot of mental concentration such as Mathematics and Accounts should come up early in the day. It is also better to teach Physical Education lesson early in the day rather than in the afternoon when the sun becomes hot. Subjects that require less mental concentration such as Music, Fine Art and Social Studies could come up in the afternoon.

3.5. Break Periods

Break periods should be determined in line with government's regulation; it is conventional to have break period immediately after the morning session on the time table after which the afternoon session will commence. The break periods may vary between 20 minutes and 30 minutes.

3.6. Space

The availability of space should be taken into 'consideration in constructing the school time table. This determines the number of classes, average class size, the time each subject is offered as well as the period allocated to each subject. The task of constructing effective school time table is easier where there are adequate spaces than where there are inadequate spaces. Inadequate spaces may lead to overcrowded classrooms which may not facilitate effective ' teaching and learning of the subjects stipulated in the time table.

3.7. Teaching Personnel

The number of teachers available in a school has to be considered in the construction of time table. This determines the Students Teacher Ratio (STR) and the work load of each teacher. If the number of teachers required to teach the school subjects is inadequate, this could result in work overload, and failure to teach some of the subjects scheduled in the time table and consequently make the time table ineffective. Adequate number of teachers is required in order to make the construction of school time table effective. Moreover, the area of specialization of each teacher should be the basis for allocation of subjects in order to enhance. Effective teaching. Each subject should be taught by a teacher who is a specialist in the subject.

3.8. Availability of Social Amenities

Electricity and water are very important in the teaching of practicals in subjects such as Agricultural Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Metalwork. The availability of these social amenities must be considered when preparing the school time table. Where they are not available, it may be very difficult or impossible to teach certain aspects of practicals in these subjects.

3.9. Number of Subjects Offered in the School

Allocation of subjects on the-time table should take into consideration the number of subjects-offered in the school. Compulsory subjects must be identified and the availability of the subject teachers in the school must also be considered in order to determine the number of periods allocated to-each subject ' as well as the workload of each teacher.

4. Contents of the School Time Table

The school time table according to Ajayi (2010) must contain the following:

4.1. Title

It must indicate the level of education that it is made for. The-time table could be for the primary school, junior secondary school or senior secondary school.

4.2. Days of the Week

The days of the week must be indicated on the time table, that is, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

4.3. Classes

In order to avoid clashes, the classes for which each subject is to be taught must-be specified. This will also enable each teacher to know the exact class he or she is expected to teach at a particular time. The classes must be specifically identified on the time table, e.g. JSS 1A, JSS1B, JSS 2A, JSS 2B, SS 1A, SS 2B, SS 3A, etc.

4.4. Time

The time for every activity of the school for each day must be indicated on the time table. The time for morning assembly, the time for registration, the time for lessons, the time for break, the time for moral instruction and the time for manual labour must be indicated on the time table.

4.5. Subjects

The various subjects being offered in the school must be indicated on the time table. The periods during which the subjects must be taught must also be specified. It will be wrong to feature subjects that are not taught in a school in the time table.

4.6. Other School Activities

Other school activities such as morning assembly, registration, manual labour, moral instruction and break periods must be indicated on the time table.

5. Time Table and School Effectiveness

When the aims and objectives of preparing a time table in a school have been achieved, such school can be said to be effective. Such aims and objectives are achieved when all the activities scheduled on the time table are carried out as expected and effective teaching and learning have taken place. Edsys (2014), reported that the school timetable is a powerful administrative tool for school effectiveness. According to Alammar (2015), effectiveness is clearly often seen as being related to a means-end relationship. When applied to educational situations, effectiveness refers to the level to which educational practices result in the attainment of educational targets. Campbell et al in Alammar (2015) suggest that effectiveness is system oriented and has to do with the achievement of the organization (school) goals. The author notes further that school effectiveness is strongly focusing on characteristics of schools through various activities in school. Effectiveness at school is measured according to its yearly intake which could partly be attributed to intensive canvassing or school marketing.

Ideally it should operationalize the aims and objectives of the school by providing an appropriate structural dimension to the curriculum. Stark reality may prevent this ideal relationship from being achieved. Another function

served by the school timetable is its allocative role. It performs the important task of allocating a large proportion of the school's resources. The resources of teacher-time, pupil-time and room-space have their use controlled directly by the timetable. The material resources of equipment and supplies, which are largely related to subjects taught, are indirectly controlled. Robert (2010) reported that due to the complexity of the reform and our rapidly changing in the school, it is now essential for schools to have effective principals as leaders. The author notes further that as educational leaders, principals face the challenge of improving teaching and learning to ensure effectiveness in the school. One of them is ensuring efficient use of the school timetable.

Creating schedules every year can be a daunting task. It can take some time to get everything to fall into its proper place (Derrick, 2018). There are many different schedules in which a principal may be required to create including a bell schedule, duty schedule, computer lab schedule, library schedule, etc. Cross-checking each of those schedules to ensure that you are not putting too much on any one person at once can be difficult. The Derrick (2018) lamented further that with all the scheduling you have to do, it is almost impossible to make everyone happy with their schedules. For example, some teachers like their plan first thing in the morning and others like them at the end of the day, but it is not impossible to accommodate all of them. It is probably best to create the schedule without trying to accommodate anyone. Also, be prepared to make adjustments to your schedules once the year begins. You need to be flexible because there are times that there are conflicts you did not foresee that need to be changed.

As leaders, principals should not only foster the vision that expresses the school's values but also develop the culture of effective use of school timetable and policies that provide support for the vision (Robert, 2010). Timetable analysis can therefore serve two purposes. It can reveal the reality of a school's curriculum organization. This reality may be intentional or unintentional. Secondly, it can show where a school allocates its resources, in particular the important ones of teacher-time and room-space. Information in these areas should enable school administrators to make better decisions on the school's educational programme and on resource allocation practices to achieve desired aims and objectives.

To this end, a school administrator must take the following steps in order to ensure school effective through effective time table.

- He must comply with government directives and policies on time table.
- He must ensure that every teacher conduct; his lessons as scheduled in the time table.
- He must supervise instructional activities of the teachers to ensure that they teach effectively.
- He must ensure that every teacher makes the optimum use of the school's resources.
- He must ensure amicable resolution of clashes in the time table between teachers.
- He must put in place time table monitoring committee that will ensure strict adherence to the time table.
- He must make the school environment conducive for teaching and learning.
- He must maintain discipline among staff and students' in the school.

6. Conclusion

Managing timetables, plotting school bus route plans, calculating payroll and evaluating teacher performance adds to the tedious tasks of school management. Time tables have been helping schools to manage these activities effectively by lessening the day-to-day time and effort put to complete them. Although, planning timetables is a difficult task for many school authorities. It involves continuous updating based on the availability of teachers, time required for each subject, etc. the school authorities can have timetable management software to ease the tension associated with setting and managing timetables and help the overall administrative functions of a school. According to Edsys (2014), using a timetable management system in schools will reduce confusion and bring about effectiveness in the school. It is therefore important that the school administrators do everything in his/her capacity there is a well-planned timetable in the school for effective school administration.

7. Recommendations

With an endless list of activities in the school, manual school management is always tough and troublesome. But Timetable management software can make it easy for school authorities to manage the school affairs very effectively. While creating timetables many things have to be taken into consideration like availability of teachers, number of classrooms, allotted time etc. It's so confusing that errors may occur while setting it. Generating timetables automatically can help to avoid this and for that the school administrators can use timetable management software which provides a feasible solution. Automatic timetable generation will help ease the disorder associated with manual timetable management. One special feature is the facility to generate timetables interactively. This will help in reducing the limitations of manual timetable management. Timetable management software is helpful in reducing manual errors. Sometimes, manual timetables can create confusion among teachers. So, using timetable management software can help school administrators and school management at large to effectively allot class hours to available teachers accurately. It must be emphasized that manually managing the affairs of a school is not as easy as you think. Therefore, in order to keep up with the changing educational system, school administrators need to make use of technology which will help them attain efficient results that bring about school effectiveness. Edsys (2014) notes that timetable management software is one such change which you can make in order to make things move faster. This not only helps in effective school management but also contribute significantly to the overall learning atmosphere of the school.

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