

## PRINCIPAL'S APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study examined principals' application of management by objective in the administration of schools in Nigeria. Six research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study sample comprised 204 principals. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled application of Management by Objective schools. Data collected were analyzed using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings between the male and female principals in the application of management by objective in schools. Secondly, there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural principals in favor of the urban principals. The study recommended that Secondary Education Board should on regular basis organize seminar workshops for serving principals highlighting the place of MBO in school administration.*

**KEYWORDS:** Management, Administration and Management by Objective.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education in all ramifications all over the world is seen as the most important instrument of social change in any society. In this regard, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2012) maintains that education is a veritable tool for social change national integrations. FRN (2012:4) also affirms "efforts shall be made to relate education to overall needs of the Nigerian society" Achievement of the above goal is dependent on the quality of education offered to the citizenry especially in secondary schools and principals' application of management by objective (MBO) in school administration in Nigeria. The broad goal of Nigerian secondary education as specified in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2012) is aimed at preparing students for useful living within the society. Achievement of these aims has remained largely elusive in the school system due to poor application of management by objective by school principals in school administration.

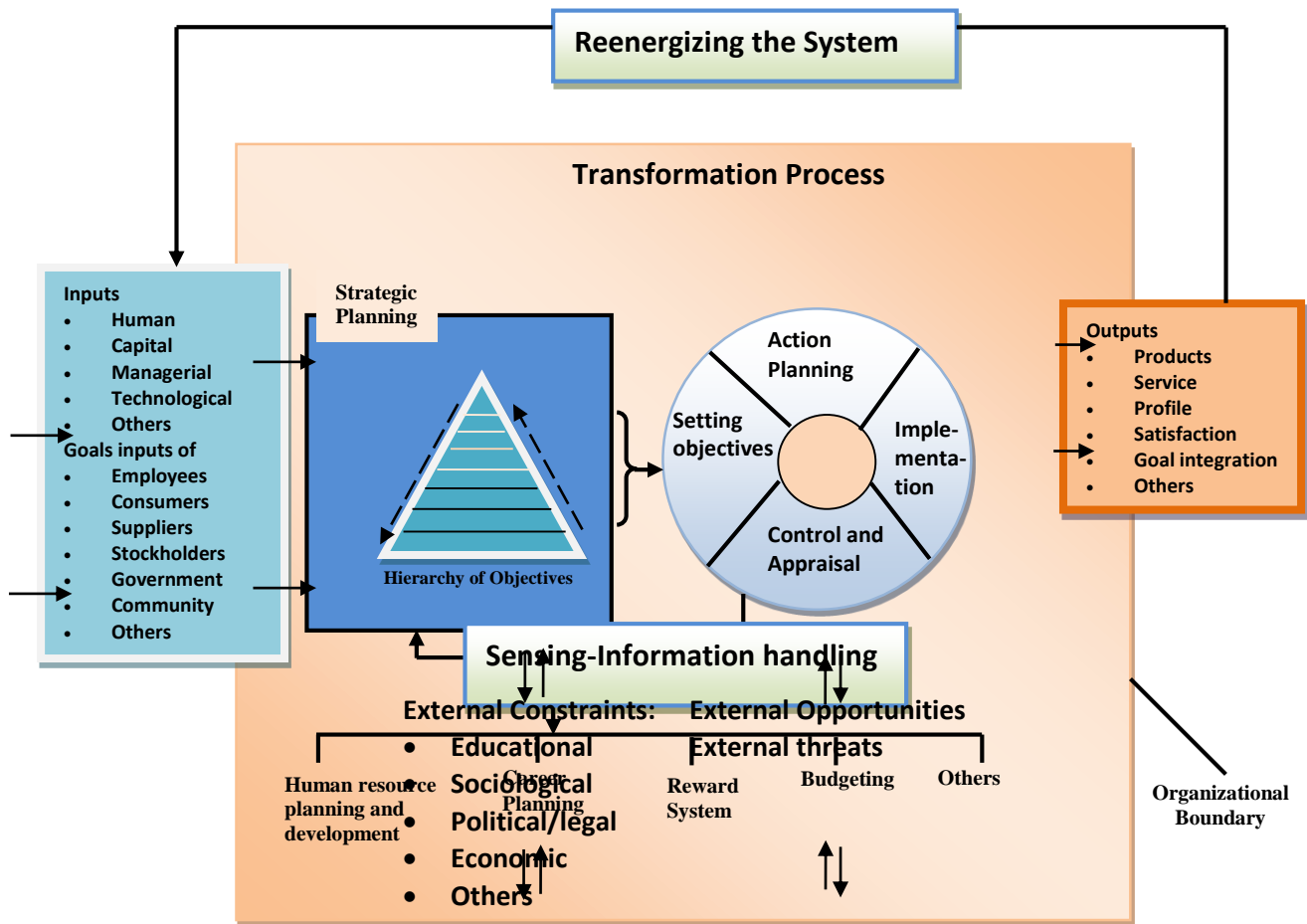
Babalola (2004) argued that achieving these aims appear unattainable due to problems of teachers and students' management, finance, infrastructures, motivation, curriculum and supervision plus information and technology facilities. As a result, principals of secondary schools as school administrators continue to be subjected to blames that the complex task they perform are not efficiently and effectively channeled towards providing education necessary for the world of today and the future (Adebola 2006). Therefore, for the goals of secondary education in Nigeria to be achieved, effective school administration and management and techniques should be applied by school principals.

Fatunwa (2000:82) views administration as a process whereby the school head as the chief executive of the school coordinates the efforts and activities of the staff towards the

achievement of goals of the school system. Nwite (2014) sees administration as the process of directing and controlling human and physical resources in order to make profit in a social organization. From the foregoing definitions, administrative efficacies of the school principles employs coordination of efforts of staff, students management, school financial transactions, supervision of instruction, among others are ways of applying management by objective (MBO) techniques for the purposes of achieving set school goals.

Management according to Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz (2011) is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in group, efficiently accomplish selected aims. Management here is concerned with productivity which has to do with principals' effectiveness and efficiency in the administration of the school. For Enyi (2002) management is a goal-oriented activity and is useful in personnel management and task performance in schools organization.

Parkin (2010) and Gordon (2008) identified management by objective (MBO); programme evaluated and review techniques (PERT); planning, programming, managing and budgeting system (PPMBS) and Delphi technique as a process of management techniques in an organisation. Management by objective (MBO) is the major focus of this study. Management by objective is now practiced in the school system around the world. Despite its wide application, it is not always clear of its proper application and implementation of its principles by school principals. Some school principals see it as appraisal tool, motivational, techniques, planning or control device ([www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/wehrich/docs/newmbo.ptf](http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/wehrich/docs/newmbo.ptf)). Blanchard and Hersey (2008:9) defines MBO as a process whereby the superior and the subordinate workers of organization jointly identify its common goals, defines each individual's major areas of responsibilities in terms of results expected of him and use these measure as guides operation of the unit and assessing the contribution of its members. Supporting the above view, Nwosu (2008) affirms MBO as result-oriented management techniques in which all stakeholders participate actively often cooperatively in all salient activities of an organization to achieve optimal result. Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz (2011) define MBO as a comprehensive managerial system that integrates many key managerial activities in a systematic manner and is consciously directed towards the effective and efficient achievement of organizational and individual objectives. Wehrich (1973) in his study illustrated the above definition in figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: System Approach to Management by Objective**

Adapted from Heinz Weihrich, *Management Excellence: Productivity Through MBO* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), P.18 .

From all indication MBO is a comprehensive goal- driven, success-oriented management system if principals of secondary schools integrate the activities into the school system. However, it is pertinent to state that beside MBO being used as performance appraisal, instrument for motivation, strategic planning, it integrates human resource planning and development (staff, students and organizational development), career planning (personnel strength over coming weakness), budget (financial control), community relationship, and school plants (infrastructural provision) among other managerial activities for specific positions. Principals need to integrate these managerial activities into the school system through their administrative functions. Public outcry over non utilization of MBO techniques expected of principals in their planning and administration have in one way or their other affected standard of education and academic excellence. Lack of effective management techniques in education are obstacles to the achievement of educational goals (Nwankwo 1981). The present study is of the view that school principals whether male or female in Urban or rural area should endeavour to exert principles of MBO since he/she takes blames for ineffective administration and glory for effective administration and management.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to investigate empirically whether there are some variations in principals' application and utilization of MBO in secondary schools management in Ebonyi state.

### **Statement of Problem**

A greater number of secondary school principals in Nigeria with particular reference to Ebonyi state are still faced with multiplicity of problems and challenges in the performance of their multifarious task. Among the problems and challenges include role expectation such as leadership, accountability, inadequate authority and power function. It is doubtful whether the principals apply effective management by objective in handing the challenges to appreciable extent. There are reports, observations and public outcry over poor school management in Nigeria. Gwacham (2005) observed that some principals hardly go near the classroom to supervise, guide, direct and motivate teachers for effective curriculum delivery. Some other prevalent problems encountered by secondary school principals include inadequate finance, motivation, information and communication technology facilities in the administration of the school system. These deficiencies impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The resultant effects is that MBO as system of managing or administering schools using MBO is not shared by some principals in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. However, with all the wealth of experiences in the administrative circle of the school principles, one wonders whether principles do apply MBO in their schools to overcome the deficiencies and lapses in school administration/management. This state of affairs agitated the investigation of this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent of principals' application of management by objectives (MBO) in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. It is aimed at examining principal's application of MBO in school instructional programme, financial management, personal management, infrastructural management, management of school-community relationship, and the differences between male and female principals towards the application of MBO in school administration.

### **Research Questions**

1. How often do principals apply management by objectives (MBO) in the management of instructional programmes in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?
2. How often do principals apply MBO in the management of students in secondary school in Ebonyi state
3. How often do principals apply MBO in the management of staff in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?
4. How often do principals apply MBO in school infrastructure management in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?
5. How often do principals apply MBO in school financial management in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?
6. How often do principals apply MBO in the management of school-community relationship in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?

## Hypotheses

1. **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals in application of management by objectives in techniques in secondary school administration in Ebonyi state.
2. **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school principals in application of management by objective techniques in secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

## Literature/Theoretical Framework

In school organisation, management in a generic term is synonymous with administration as viewed by scholars. Management relates to process of operational supervision or collectively to those who engage with supervision at various levels, while administration is the process of working with and through others to efficiently accomplish organisational goals (Sergiovani 1980 cited in Peretomode, 2008). Kinicki and Willams (2003) recognize management as the pursuit of organisational goal efficiency and effectively by intergrating the work of others people through planning, leading and controlling the organisational resources. Management is the guidance and control of action required to execute a programme ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov) 2010). Put differently, it is the organisational process that has do with planning, setting objectives, managing resources, developing the human and financial assests needed to achieve objectives of the organisation.

Management by objective (MBO) is described as identifying goals and objectives, defining mangerial responsibilities in terms of expected results, measuring performances and achievement against those goals and objectives through participation of all concerned ie principals and staff of the institution-through team spirit.

In other words, effective management demands management by objective (MBO). According to classifical theory of management by Henri Fayol (1841-1952) states that top management is concerned with objective setting directing and controlling the efforts of middle level managers and lower level staff. That is the basis features of MBO is superior/subordinate participation, joint goal setting, support and encouragement from superior to subordinate. Put differently MBO is result-oriented philosophy that offers some advantage such as employee motivation, high morale, effective and purposeful leadership and clear objectives before all concerned persons.

Therefore MBO appears participative and democratic where the superior and the subrodinate workers in an organisation jointly make work plans by identifying common goals and defining each individuals major areas of responsibility in terms of expected result of the organisation.

Getzels and Guba (1968) in their social system theory stated that the institution (nomethetic dimation) and the individuals within the institutions (idographic) dimation, each has certain needs and dispositions which are in constnat instration. This implies that the school as a social system involving two classes of phenomena that are independent at the same interactive. Put succinctly, the concept underlying the theory is that, organisation like schools are established for the purpose of achieving their goals and fostering their survival through the efforts of the

super-ordinate (principal) and subordinates (staff) by the way of satisfying their needs and interest and that of the organisation.

Stating the importance associated to management theory of motivation, Evan's (1970) path-goal theory draws heavily on the expectancy theory of motivation. The theory explains the impact of leadership behaviour on subordinate motivation, satisfaction, effort and performance as moderated by situational factor and environment. The theory contended that leaders (principals) should motivate subordinates (staff) which MBO advocated by establishing good relationship, clarifying and facilitating the path subordinate must take to fulfill their needs as well as organisational needs clearing ways or reducing roadblocks and pitfalls that prevent goal attainment and increasing personal satisfaction among subordinates (Vroom, 1983) MBO advocates that application of these theories by school principals to enable teachers use their potentials and creatively towards attainment of education goals for better performance of students academically. MBO also advocates the application of Mcgorgor (1980) theory Z that place emphasis on that emphasises concern for teachers participation in decision making as an approach to motivation for increased performance in school organisation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The rationale for adopted for the study. The rationale for the choice is in line with Best and Kahn (2008) and Nnamdi (2002) who states that descriptive survey is concerned with describing, coordinating, analyzing and interpreting condition that exist about a phenomenon. The population of the study consisted of all the two hundred and four (204) secondary school principals and vice principals in public secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The population served as the sample because of its manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a researcher structured questionnaire titled: Application of management by objective techniques in the management of secondary schools in Ebonyi state (AMBOTMSS). The instrument was designed to elicit information from the respondents about the administration/ management by objective principals in public secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

Views and findings from related literature and survey instrument guided the construction of questionnaire with 4points rating scale of Always (AL), Sometimes (SO), Rarely (RA), and Never (NE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive statement while the reverse is the case for negative statement. The reliability estimate was determined using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability, Alpha coefficient of all clusters yielded an overall coefficient of 0.773 which was considered high enough for the study. T-test was used to test the hypotheses on gender and location at 0.05 level of significance.



**RESULTS****Table 1: t-test Value Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principals in Secondary Schools Administration. N: 204.**

S/N	Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
1.	Instructional programme management.							
	Male	134	3.32	0.32				
	Female	70	3.26	0.42	202	1.410	1.960	NS
2.	Students' management.	134	3.14	0.31				
	Male							
	Female	70	3.13	0.33	202	0.297	1.960	NS
3.	Staff Management.	134	3.12	0.33				
	Male							
	Female	70	3.10	0.42	202	0.404	1.960	NS
4.	School Infrastructure	134	3.18	0.36				
	Male							
	Female	70	1.02	0.37	202	3.041	1.960	S
5.	School Financial.	134	3.09	0.45	202	1.316	1.960	NS
	Male	70	3.11	0.45				
	Female							
6.	School Community Relationship.							
	Male	134	2.91	0.39				
	Female	70	2.92	0.38	202	0.152	1.960	NS
7.	Management by Objective.							
	Male	134	3.13	0.22				
	Female	70	3.09	0.27	202	0.777	1.960	NS

Table 1 shows that the t-calculated values for each of the following variables: instructional programme management (t-cal 1.410 < 1.960), students' management services (t-cal 0.297 < 1.960), staff management (t-cal 0.404 < 1.960), school financial management (t-cal

1.316<1.960) and school community relationship (t-cal 0.152<1.960) is less than t-table value of 1.960. Since the t-calculated values are less than t-table, there is therefore no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principles in the application of MBO in the school administration with regard to all the variables. On the other hand, the t-cal-value for school infrastructure management (t-cal 3.041>1.960) is greater than the t-tab value implying that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings in the application of MBO with regard to the variable.

The overall t-cal value of 0.777 is less than the t-tab value of 1.960. This implies that there is no significance in the mean ratings of male and female principles in the application of management by objective techniques in the administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

**Table 2: t-test Value Difference between the Mean Ratings of Urban and Rural Secondary School Principals in Application of Management by Objective Techniques in School Administration.**

S/ N	Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
1.	Instructional programme management.							
	Urban	134	3.26	0.32				
	Rural	70	3.36	0.27				
					202	2.280	1.960	S
	Students' management							
2.								
	Urban	134	3.10	0.32				
	Rural	70	3.19	0.31	202	1.897	1.960	NS
3.	Staff Management.							
	Urban	134	3.05	0.39				
	Rural	70	3.19	0.30	202	2.921	1.960	S
4.	School Infrastructure.							
	Urban	134	3.18	0.36				
	Rural	70	1.02	0.37	202	3.041	1.960	S
	School Financial Management.							
	Urban	134	3.07	0.44	202	1.929	1.960	NS
	Rural	70	3.19	0.49				
5.	Management of School Community Relationship.							
6.								



Urban	134	3.07	0.44				
Rural	70	3.19	0.49	202	0.539	1.960	NS
7.							
Management Objective.	By						
Urban	134	3.07	0.27				
Rural	70	3.19	0.18	202	3.491	1.960	S

Table 2 shows that the t-cal values of for each variable: instructional programme management t-cal (2.280>1.960), staff management (t-cal 2.921>1.960) and school infrastructure management (t-cal 4.229>1.960) is greater than the t-tab value implying that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school principals in the application of MBO in school administration with regard to the variables. However, the t-cal value for students' management t-cal 1.897<1.960), school financial management (t-cal 1.929), school financial management (t-cal 1.929<1.960) is less than t-tab value of 1.960 since the t-cal values are less than t-tab value, there is therefore no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school principals in the application of MBO in their school administration with regard to each of the variables.

The overall t-cal value is 3.491 and is greater than the t-tab of 1.960. This is greater than the t-tab of 1.960. This implies that there is therefore a significant difference between the secondary school principals in the application of management by objectives techniques in school administration in Ebonyi state.

## DISCUSSION

Results in table 1 showed that there was no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female principals in the application of management by objective techniques (MBO) in secondary school in Ebonyi state. Since no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals in the application of MBO in secondary school administration in Ebonyi state, the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. The possible interpretation could be that they knew the advantage of MBO in school administration with regard to the management of instructional programmes, student's guidance and welfare services of the staff and harmonious relationship with staff to achieve set goals of the school. This speculation is interdem with the findings of Ofojebe (2010), Nwosu (2008) and Jaiyeoba (2004) who in their separate studies reported that principals they studied knew that MBO could be beneficial in achieving continuous improvement in school administration or management. Nwosu (2008) reported principals should be prudent in the management of funds in school. The implication of the finding is that principals should in as much as possible avoid reckless spending of school fund and embezzlement of funds. However, the finding of this study is not in line with the finding of Di-ibor 1985 who discovered in his study that principals he studied lacked managerial attributes that would make them effective financial managers.

Result in Table 2 showed that there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school principal with the overall t- cal value of 3.491 and t-tab value

of 1.960. Since there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school principals in the application of MBO in secondary schools in Ebonyi state, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. As a significant difference existed between means ratings of urban and rural secondary school principals in the application of MBO probably in favour of principals in urban secondary schools, the possible interpretation could be that principals in urban are exposed to urbanization changes and advantage, in other way round principals in rural areas may not have known the full advantages of MBO in school administration. This speculation is at variance with the findings of Nwosu' (1994) and Ofojebe (2010) who reported that principals and vice principals studied initiated and sustained the processes of MBO in school administration. The findings of this is consistent with the findings of Ugwu (2002) who reported that principals in urban and rural areas he studied agreed on the modus operandi of MBO, but objectives to be pursued by principals were not strictly followed in rural areas. The implication of the findings of this study is that principals in secondary schools in rural areas may not achieve the set goals as much as their counter parts in secondary schools in urban areas in Ebonyi state.

### **Educational Implication**

Findings from this study provides some practical implication for school principals, vice principals and teachers of secondary schools. Principals, vice principals and teachers have specific roles and responsibilities towards the attainment of school set goals. To attain these goals utilization of MBO in principals' task performance may revolutionize secondary education system in Nigeria.

When objectives are not clearly stated, written, understood and analyzed, the principal and his subordinates may not realize that objective of the school. Hence realistic and attainable objectives should be encouraged. Therefore each unit in the school must not operate in disregard of the objectives of other unit who are pursuing overall aims and objectives.

The growing complexities of educational enterprise, rising cost of education, the increasing politicization of education, social changes; the impact of these change makes it difficult for school principals/administrators to rely on their experiences alone in administering modern education institutions in Nigeria, hence the need for application of MBO techniques for attainment of millennium development goals secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and findings the study concluded that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals with regard to the application of management by objective techniques in the areas of institutional programmes, students and staff management, and school finance with a significant difference in school infrastructural provisions. Secondly there was significant difference between the urban and rural principals in the application of MBO in school administration. The urban principals seem to more exposed to the advantages of urbanization.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Judging the findings of the study, discussions made and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should be re-oriented on the importance of applying management by objective techniques in the management of infrastructural facilities as availability of space, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, current textbooks, information communication technology tools in their good number encourages teaching and learning and achievement of organizational goals of the school.
2. Secondary Education Board (SEB) of each state should on regular basis organize workshops and seminars where management functions of the school principals will be discussed. Such workshops and training should be made compulsory for all serving principals and vice principal as to highlight the place of MBO in school administration and overall success of the school principal should be encouraged to maintain the status quo and better still improve on the areas where deficiencies are observed. For instance provision of infrastructural materials in their good number, and maintenance of cordial school-community relationship to bring about actual, positive, functional and meaningful achievement of the set goals of the school.

## Future Research

From the followings and the limitations of the study, the following suggestions are made:

1. Replication of this study including public and private school principals.
2. Replication of the study in Enugu State for comparative purposes.
3. Application of MBO in South – East geo-political zone of Nigeria.

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