

ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the roles educational administrators play in managing health and safety in universities in South East, Nigeria. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of ten federal and state universities in the zone comprising 106 administrative staff (Deans, Heads of Departments and Directors of institutes) in the Faculties of Education and Management Sciences. A sample size of 46 administrative staff was drawn from four universities (two state and two federal universities) using proportionate stratified random sampling technique, and this represented 43.4% of the population. They included 31 staff from federal and 15 staff from state universities. The instrument used was questionnaire tagged 'REAMHSUQ' developed by the researchers, which was validated. Instrument reliability was tested using test retest method and calculated with Pearson's product moment correlation, which yielded an index of 0.79. Mean scores, standard deviation, rank order and bar charts were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings revealed among others that educational administrators can manage health and safety in universities by integrating health/safety education programmes in the curriculum of school system, providing waste bean at all corners of their institutions, introducing of health/safety clubs in the school system, promoting sound health/safety management policies and practices throughout the institution, promoting awareness by educating students on the various health/safety related issues, educating students on the ways of reducing/preventing pollution, and monitoring students on health/safety programmes that can assist them as well as the society in life. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that educational administrators should incorporate health and safety programmes into the school curriculum to enable students acquire concrete knowledge on various ways of managing health and safety for present and future development.

Keywords: Educational administration, health and safety management, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

In university system, educational administrators are in control of school management, which includes the management of staff, students, school facilities, time, and health and safety practices. Adequate management of these variables would improve the school standard and achievement of educational goals and objectives. Educational administrators in the university system are the university council, vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, provosts, deans, head of departments and directors of institute. With their active participation in the

management of educational resources in the system, individual as well as institutional goals and objectives would be achieved.

The University Council has overall responsibility for health, safety and risk management within the University. The role of Council is to set the strategic health and safety aims and objectives of the University; to ensure that adequate resources are allocated; and to monitor and review performance by means of periodic written reports from the Officers of the University. The Vice Chancellor has overall executive responsibility for health and safety at the University. In this the Vice-Chancellor is supported by a Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) who chairs the Health and Safety Committee, to whom day-to-day responsibility is delegated. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that the University's health and safety policy is implemented effectively at all levels within the University and across all its operations; making available the necessary resources for the safe operation of University activities; ensuring that the University's health and safety policies are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, to reflect compliance with all statutory obligations; ensuring that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned and promoting active acceptance of this responsibility throughout the University; and working to secure effective communications and a culture of active engagement with health and safety issues (Health and Safety Services, 2013).

Educational administrators set clear leadership examples and promote high degree of health and safety awareness among staff and students in an educational institution. They take responsibilities on safety management within the School/Service/Department/ Units. They contribute to the development of, and approve of University policies, procedures and standards on health, safety and welfare. They equally monitor health and safety performance and compliance, including receiving reports on the outcomes of health & safety audits, accident and incident investigations, reports of inspection visits by regulatory authorities. They promote effective two-way communications on health & safety between the Officers of the University and Heads of School/Service. They encourage consultation and co-operation between the University authorities, its employees and students and promote best practice in matters relating to health and safety (Health and Safety Services, 2013).

Health and safety management practices could be seen as the systematic application, utilization and maintenance of health and safety programmes/facilities to achieve expected results from the staff, students and institution. It creates an avenue for staff to carry out their duties effectively, and students to participate/focus on their studies (Ukaigwe & Warriwei, 2016). This can be achieved through proper management of health and safety practices in universities by educational administrators.

Effective management of school health and safety facilities as stated by Hargreaves, Earl, Moore and Manning (2011), leads to managerial and administrative perspective where the administrators act as leaders in all aspects of the school curricula; imparting and enforcing on the intellectual and emotional development of the teachers, changing the instructional climate of the school, and affecting and transforming the students learning as well as behavioural and attitudinal achievement. A good understanding of the basic underlying principles of effective health and safety programme ensures that practitioners develop confidence in their respective duties for school development (Ewens, 2006, Ukaigwe & Mba, 2016). Effective health and safety practice is all about common sense, alertness, and sensitivity on health and safety related issues (Ukala & Nwabueze, 2016). However, health and safety management is about caring for people in their learning as well as gaining benefits beyond the learning

environment. This implies that good management policies can significantly improve health and safety in higher institutions.

The aim of this policy is to convey the university's commitment to a safe and healthy environment for work and study. The university is committed to excellence in environmental health and safety stewardship through a university-wide Environmental Health and Safety Management System (University of Victoria, 2012). However, Administrative Authority which include: individuals with administrative responsibility for Units such as Deans, Chairs, Executive Directors, Directors and other Unit heads establish mechanisms to accomplish health and safety policies. They pay particular attention to the provision of safe and healthy school/working environment as well as sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all staff and students contribute to the practice of health and safety, and that of the visitors. They are fully involved in the provision of safe plant, equipment and system of work as well as arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of equipment, materials and substances.

Health and Safety Management System therefore, is an integrated system of procedures which outline responsibilities, activities and assessment of performance with respect to health, safety and environmental goals (Oragwu & Nwabueze, 2016; Ukaigwe & Orlu-Makele, 2016). It is part of the overall management of the university that addresses hazards and risks associated with its activities.

Statement of the Problem

In some tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria, management of health and safety practices among administrators appear to be very poor. This makes the school environment unsafe for administrative and academic purposes. The staff may not be able to carry out their duties as expected and students cannot concentrate on their academic activities. There is need for sufficient provision and management of health and safety facilities to make the environment safe for teaching, administration, research, learning and community service otherwise, the goals and objectives of university education would be jeopardized. These facilities when provided need proper management for effective and constant utilization in the school system. This study seeks to examine the roles educational administrators play in managing health and safety in universities in South East, Nigeria; with major focus on the ways educational administrators can manage health and safety in universities.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the roles educational administrators play in managing health and safety in universities in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. Identify the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities;
2. Determine the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities;
3. Examine the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. Who are the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities?
2. What are the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities?
3. What is the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha significant level.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of administrators in state and federal universities on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of administrators in state and federal universities on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of ten federal and state universities in the zone comprising 106 administrative staff (Deans, Heads of Departments and Directors of institutes) in the Faculties of Education and Management Sciences. A sample size of 46 administrative staff was drawn from four universities (two state and two federal universities) using proportionate stratified random sampling technique, and this represented 43.4% of the population. They included 31 staff from federal and 15 staff from state universities. The instrument used was questionnaire tagged 'REAMHSUQ' developed by the researchers, which was validated. Instrument reliability was tested using test retest method and calculated with Pearson's product moment correlation, which yielded an index of 0.79. Mean scores, standard deviation, rank order and bar charts were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

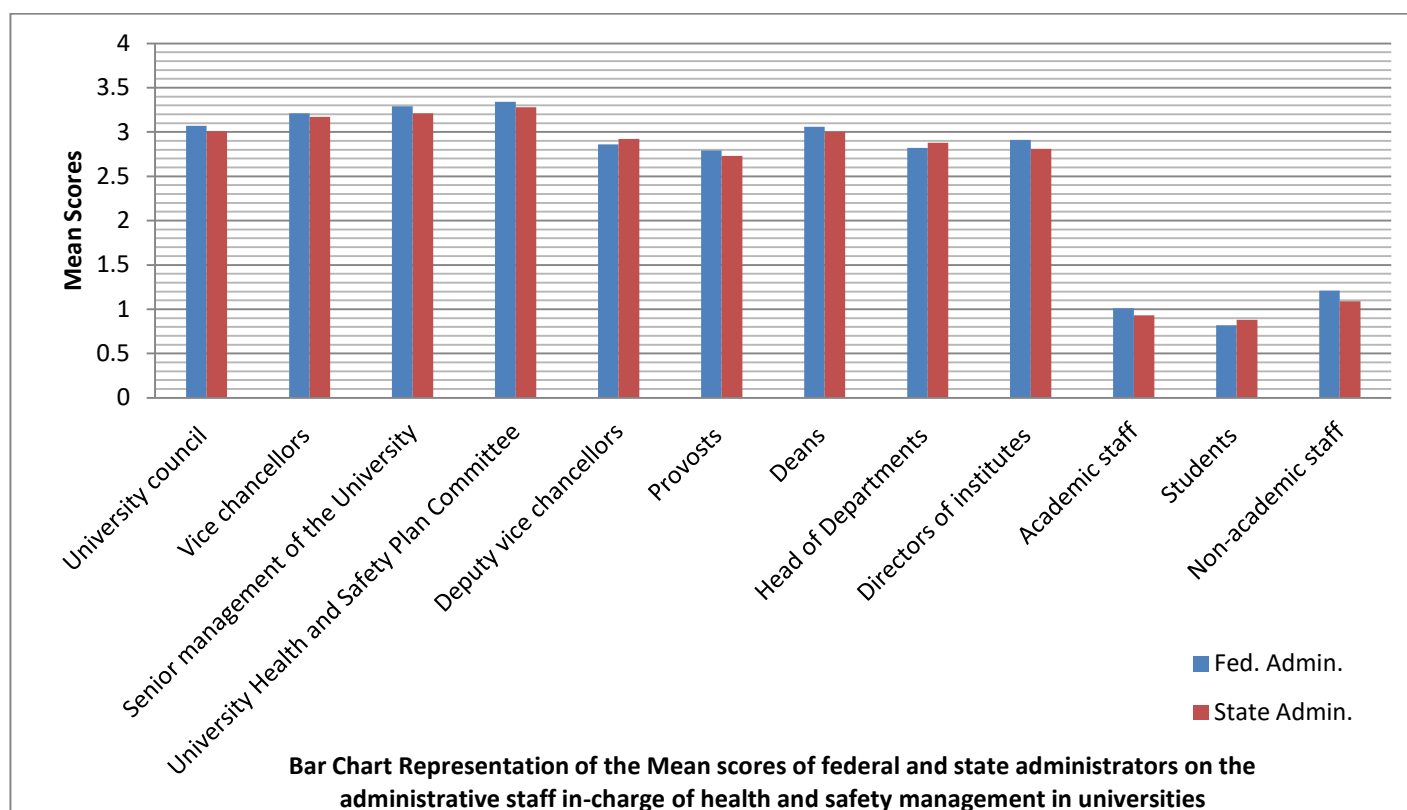
Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: Who are the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities?

Table 1: Mean Scores of State and Federal Administrators on the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities

S/N	Administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management include:	Fed. \bar{x}	State \bar{x}	Mean Set	Rank Order	Decision
1	University council	3.07	3.01	3.04	4th	Agreed
2	Vice chancellors	3.21	3.17	3.19	3rd	Agreed
3	Senior management of the University	3.29	3.21	3.25	2nd	Agreed
4	University Health and Safety Plan Committee	3.34	3.28	3.31	1st	Agreed
5	Deputy vice chancellors	2.86	2.92	2.89	6th	Agreed
6	Provosts	2.79	2.73	2.76		Agreed
7	Deans	3.06	3.00	3.03	5th	Agreed
8	Head of Departments	2.82	2.88	2.85	8th	Agreed
9	Directors of institutes	2.91	2.81	2.86	7th	Agreed

10	Academic staff	1.01	0.93	0.97	10th	Disagreed
11	Students	0.82	0.88	0.85	12th	Disagreed
12	Non-academic staff	1.21	1.09	1.15	11th	Disagreed



Data on table 1 and bar chart presented the mean scores of federal and state administrators on the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities. The respondents agreed on items 1-9 in the table with mean scores above the mean criterion of 2.5 and disagreed on items 10-12 in the table with mean scores lower than the mean criterion of 2.5. Based on this, the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities include: university councils, vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, university health and safety plan committee, provost, deans, head of departments, and directors of institute.

Research Question Two: What are the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of State and Federal Administrators on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities

S/N	Roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices include:	Fed.		State		Mean Set	Rank Order	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD			
13	Integrating health/safety education programmes in the curriculum of school system	3.11	0.75	3.03	0.86	3.07	5th	Agreed
14	Providing waste bean at all corners of their institutions	3.05	0.77	3.01	0.87	3.03	8th	Agreed
15	Introducing health/safety clubs in the school system	3.09	0.76	3.03	0.86	3.06	6th	Agreed

16	Promoting sound health/safety management policies and practices throughout the institution	3.26	0.64	3.14	0.75	3.20	3rd	Agreed
17	Promoting awareness by educating staff and students on the various health/safety related issues	3.32	0.55	3.22	0.71	3.27	2nd	Agreed
18	Educating staff and students on the ways of reducing/preventing pollution	3.16	0.73	3.04	0.86	3.10	4th	Agreed
19	Monitoring staff and students on health/safety programmes that can assist them as well as the society in life.	3.06	0.77	3.02	0.87	3.04	7th	Agreed
20	Proper management of the available health and safety facilities in schools for individual and school development	3.41	0.46	3.31	0.62	3.36	1st	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		3.18	0.68	3.10	0.80	3.14		Agreed

Data in table 2 present the mean scores and standard deviation of State and Federal Administrators on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the mean criterion of 2.5 following the rank order from 1st to 8th. The aggregate mean score of 3.14 showed that the respondents agreed on the items in the table. Therefore, the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities include: integrating health/safety education programmes in the curriculum of school system, providing waste bean at all corners of their institutions, introducing of health/safety clubs in the school system, promoting sound health/safety management policies and practices throughout the institution, promoting awareness by educating staff and students on the various health/safety related issues, educating staff and students on the ways of reducing/preventing pollution, and monitoring staff and students on health/safety programmes that can assist them as well as the society in life.

Research Question Three: What is the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of State and Federal Administrators on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities

S/N	Impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities include:	Fed.		State		Mean Set	Rank Order	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD			
21	Proper management of health and safety in schools helps to keep the environment conducive for staff and students	3.11	0.75	3.05	0.87	3.08	5 th	Agreed
22	It creates opportunity for greater success in the achievement of school set goals and objectives	3.09	0.76	3.03	0.86	3.06	6 th	Agreed
23	It keeps the staff healthy to carry out their administrative and instructional activities effectively	3.03	0.78	3.07	0.87	3.05	7 th	Agreed
24	Keeps the students healthier to concentrate on their studies	3.23	0.65	3.21	0.71	3.22	2 nd	Agreed

25	Makes the school health and safety facilities more functional	3.28	0.61	3.24	0.68	3.26	1 st	Agreed
26	Increases the growth of the institution in terms of admitting and graduating the students	3.18	0.71	3.06	0.87	3.12	4 th	Agreed
27	It makes the school premises lively for academic purposes	3.05	0.77	3.01	0.85	3.03	8 th	Agreed
28	It equips the educational administrators with better skills and knowledge to handle other management and administrative functions	3.21	0.66	3.17	0.74	3.19	3 rd	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		3.15	0.71	3.11	0.81	3.13		Agreed

Data in table 3 present the mean scores and standard deviation of State and Federal Administrators on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the mean criterion of 2.5 following the rank order from 1st to 8th. The aggregate mean score of 3.13 showed that the respondents agreed on the items in the table. Therefore, the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities include: helping to keep the environment conducive for staff and students; creating opportunity for greater success in the achievement of school set goals and objectives; keeping the staff healthy to carry out their administrative and instructional activities effectively; keeping the students healthier to concentrate on their studies; making the school health and safety facilities more functional; increasing the growth of the institution in terms of admitting and graduating the students; making the school premises lively for academic purposes; and equipping the educational administrators with better skills and knowledge to handle other management and administrative functions.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities.

Table 4: t-test on the difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities

Category	N	Mean	St. Dev.	df	t-calculated value	t-critical value	Decision
Federal Admin	31	3.18	0.68	44	0.32	±2.00	Accepted
State Admin.	15	3.10	0.80				

Data in table 4 presented the summary of t-test on the difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities. The analysis showed that the t-calculated value of 0.32 is less than the t-critical value of ±2.00 at 0.05 alpha significant level. This shows that the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities.

Table 5: t-test on the difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities

Category	N	Mean	St. Dev.	df	t-calculated value	t-critical value	Decision
Federal Admin	31	3.15	0.71	44	0.17	±2.00	Accepted
State Admin.	15	3.11	0.81				

Data in table 5 presented the summary of t-test on the difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities. The analysis showed that the t-calculated value of 0.17 is less than the t-critical value of ± 2.00 at 0.05 alpha significant level. This shows that the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that the administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities include: university councils, vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, university health and safety plan committee, provost, deans, head of departments, and directors of institute. These administrative staff participate in the planning, provision and maintenance of health and safety facilities in schools and as well carry out health and safety practices for school development and individual growth. This was represented on a bar chart showing that academic staff, non-academic staff and students are not part of the staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities. The findings agreed with Health and Safety Services (2013) that the role of administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities is to set the strategic health and safety aims and objectives of the university to ensure that adequate resources are allocated and to monitor and review performance by means of periodic written reports from the Officers of the University. They are responsible for ensuring that the university's health and safety policy is implemented effectively at all levels within the University and across all its operations as well as making available the necessary resources for the safe operation of University activities. They ensure that the university's health and safety policies are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, to reflect compliance with all statutory obligations. They equally ensure that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned and promote active acceptance of this responsibility throughout the university as well as work to secure effective communications and a culture of active engagement with health and safety issues.

The findings equally revealed that the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities include: integrating health/safety education programmes in the curriculum of school system, providing waste bean at all corners of their institutions, introducing of health/safety clubs in the school system, promoting sound health/safety management policies and practices throughout the institution, promoting awareness by educating staff and students on the various health/safety related issues, educating staff and students on the ways of reducing/preventing pollution, and monitoring staff and students on health/safety programmes that can assist them as well as the society in life. The findings are

in line with Ukaigwe and Mba (2016) who found that strategies utilized by principals in managing school safety and health include: educating staff on how to maintain health and safety, and principals encouraging good health practices such as maintaining clean environment. With adequate support outside the school environment, the create a conducive atmosphere needed for proper teaching and learning as well as create better school administration within the environment. Educational administrators set clear leadership examples and promote high degree of health and safety awareness among staff and students in an educational institution. They take responsibilities on safety management within the School/Service/Department/ Units. They contribute to the development of, and approve of University policies, procedures and standards on health, safety and welfare. They equally monitor health and safety performance and compliance, including receiving reports on the outcomes of health & safety audits, accident and incident investigations, reports of inspection visits by regulatory authorities. They promote effective two-way communications on health & safety between the Officers of the University and Heads of School/Service. The test of hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the roles of educational administrators in managing health and safety practices in universities. In line with the findings, Health and Safety Services (2013) revealed that educational administrators in-charge of health and safety encourage consultation and co-operation between the University authorities, its employees and students and promote best practice in matters relating to health and safety.

The findings finally revealed that the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities include: helping to keep the environment conducive for staff and students; creating opportunity for greater success in the achievement of school set goals and objectives; keeping the staff healthy to carry out their administrative and instructional activities effectively; keeping the students healthier to concentrate on their studies; making the school health and safety facilities more functional; increasing the growth of the institution in terms of admitting and graduating the students; making the school premises lively for academic purposes; and equipping the educational administrators with better skills and knowledge to handle other management and administrative functions. The test of hypothesis two showed that there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of administrators in state and federal universities on the impact of proper management of health and safety on the development of universities. Health and safety management practices create an avenue for staff to carry out their duties effectively, and students to participate/focus on their studies. This can be achieved through proper management of health and safety practices in universities by educational administrators. Effective management of school health and safety facilities as stated by Hargreaves, Earl, Moore and Manning (2011), leads to managerial and administrative perspective where the administrators act as leaders in all aspects of the school curricula; imparting and enforcing on the intellectual and emotional development of the teachers, changing the instructional climate of the school, and affecting and transforming the students learning as well as behavioural and attitudinal achievement. A good understanding of the basic underlying principles of effective health and safety programme ensures that practitioners develop confidence in their respective duties for school development (Ewens, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study has shown that educational administrators play important roles in managing health and safety in universities through proper planning, provision and maintenance of the available facilities and proper management of staff and students for

quality improvement. They ensure that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned and promote active acceptance of this responsibility throughout the university as well as work to secure effective communications and a culture of active engagement with health and safety issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. Administrative staff in-charge of health and safety management in universities should actively participate in the planning, provision and maintenance of health and safety facilities in schools and as well carry out health and safety practices for school development and individual growth.
2. Government should ensure that adequate resources are allocated for health and safety practices and monitored to review performance by means of periodic written reports from the Officers of the University.
3. Educational administrators should ensure that the university's health and safety policy is implemented effectively at all levels within the University and across all its operations.
4. Educational administrators should ensure that the university's health and safety policies are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, to reflect compliance with all statutory obligations.
5. They should equally ensure that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned to promote active acceptance of this responsibility throughout the university as well as work to secure effective communications and a culture of active engagement with health and safety issues.
6. Educational administrators should be equipped with better skills and knowledge to handle other management and administrative functions.

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