

Principals' Management Support Practices for Enhancing Teachers' Performance in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper investigated principal's management support practices for enhancing teachers' performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design, the population comprised all the principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State totaling 5,083 (221 principals and 4862 teachers) out of which a sample of 1803 respondents were selected using propionate random sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire "Principals' Management Support Practice (PMSPQ) and Teachers' view on Management Support Practices Questionnaire (TVMSPQ) were the instruments used for data collection. The four research questions were answered using mean score statistics while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test. The result of data analysis showed that most school principals lacked supervisory skills and as a result entrusted academic supervision in the hands of external supervisors. Most principals feel reluctant to endorse in-service training for their teachers and teachers in turn hid their pursuit for higher degree from principals for fear of victimization. The result on motivation and welfare of teachers showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of both the principals and teachers. The findings will be beneficial to educational policy makers, school principals, teachers and researchers. Specifically, the school principals will be in position to use the findings as a guide in building a better, more efficient and result-oriented school environment that can facilitate higher teacher performance. In the light of the findings, recommendations were made.

Keywords: management support practices, supervision, welfare, professional growth, motivation and performance.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers at all levels of education are the foundation and bedrock of quality education in the society (Clark, 2006). In line with the above view, teachers need to manage both students and knowledge, monitor students' progress and provide guidance services. To guard the above position, teachers engage in research activities to adequately equip themselves for effective lesson delivery. Therefore, teachers' role and tasks is dependent on the kind of support given to them by the school principals. In the same vein, principals occupy a central position in management of secondary education in Nigeria as far as education of the child is concerned. Principals by virtue of their position are the managers and the quality of managerial functions determine to a large extent their success or failure (Odumodu, 2011). In this regard, principals should provide teachers with needed management supports to effectively function in this regard. Principals should as well provide teachers with needed management supports to effectively function in their schools (Castler, 2010). That is to say, principals should provide management supportive practices for teachers' work load and utilization of available professional and material resources. Management support practices in this context, implies the provisions of enabling work

environment for teachers to render the need services effectively in the school system. For Campbell (2007), management practices in secondary school revolve around putting in place all enabling environment by the principals to foster teachers' morale and commitment and professional development. Along the same line, Jefferson (2004) affirms that provision of management support practices to teachers involve giving supportive instructional supervision, adequate welfare, rewards, in-service education programme as and when due. In the same vein Akube (2002) also affirms that management support practices has to do with providing for teachers' welfare, professional growth, supportive supervision, giving rewards, counseling employees and organizational career planning.

Provision of management support practices by school principals are essential for teachers' performance in building sufficiently motivated and effective teachers. Put differently, it is the act of giving assistance, encouragement and stimulation to teachers by principals to enhance their performance and the achievement of the objective of the school system. Imperatively, teachers need supportive practices from their principals to be able to perform maximally. To this end what teachers teach their students is judged by them (teachers) to be worthwhile. To perform

maximally, teachers should try harder and demands more of himself thus achieving more, takes special joy in winning and does not need gratification in order to perform. Teachers' performance can be taken to be synonymous with teacher commitment and is a valid construct in school growth (Drayer, 2002). A teacher is judged performing if he is judicious in lesson preparation, disciplining of his pupils evaluating learning outcome, active participation in school activities such as planning school extra curricular and assisting school administrator.

Management support practices in literature abound, this study focused on the provision of supervision, motivation, professional growth, and welfare by school principals to teachers and factors that affect teachers' performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. The implications for these areas of emphasis justify the fact that in supportive supervision, the principal as internal supervisor leads the teacher (supervisee) to think along new ideas and improved ways of doing things. School principals' instruction is expected to possess a predisposition to change and must constantly promote improvement. Oraemesi (1997) cited in Ihebereme (2012:43) opined that "supervision promotes the professional growth of teachers". In other words, supervision ensures quality control through regular and continuous supervision of instruction and other educational services (FRN, 2004:56c).

Principals' management support supervision practices in this context can be interpreted in a two-way interactional process that requires both the principal and the teacher to consciously engage each other with the spirit of professionalism, respect, collegiality and open mindedness. Effective management supports in relation to workers do not only energize but workers put in their best to identify themselves with the goals of the school system. Professional growth or capacity building encourages staff development in the form of workshops, seminars as well as in-service-training (Adebola, 2006). All put together encourage teachers to be better equipped for effective delivery and performance in the school.

In practical terms, Maslow 1943 in Tabotndip (2009) propounded that people are motivated by five step hierarchy of needs: psychological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization needs. Therefore, government and stakeholders in the education industry need to revisit teachers' fate in the direction of motivation. Look at motivational cue according to Tabotndip (2009:654) is responsible for brain drain especially where retirement and prospect are bleak for teachers. Maslow's ideology need to be revisited by concerned authorities to give the education system a boost as illustrated below:

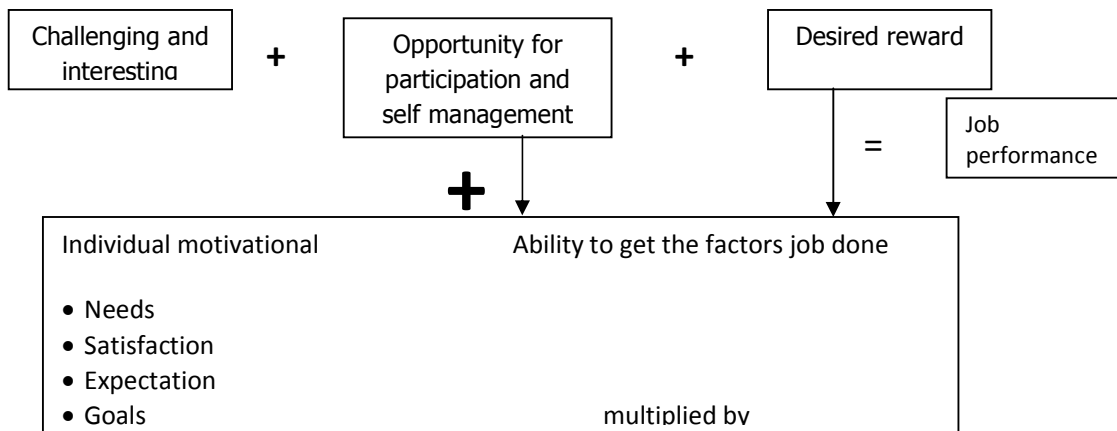


Fig. 1. Motivational cure and job performance
Source: Boston Houghton Mafflin Company

The motivational cue as illustrated above also challenges teachers to put in their best towards attainment of the objective of education system in Nigeria.

Teachers' welfare determines to an extent the nature of their output. In other words, if their welfare are adequately taken care of invariably their outputs are likely going to be high all things being equal. Studies have shown that workers who have access to welfare

services such as medical counseling, end of year bonus, accommodation services etc could be highly motivated. According to Arikewuyo (2006), teachers in Nigeria consider their prompt payment of salary, recreational facilities, classroom and offices, instructional facilities; accommodation as well as staff performance appraisal as prime importance for effective performance of their job.

A good teacher will continue to be a learner and can be at his best where he continuously acquires

necessary skills through principals' management support practices for his professional growth or capacity building services. According to Adebola (2006:233) teachers capacity building can be in form of workshop, seminars as well as in-service or on the job training". The implication is that teachers develop themselves and students are developed as well.

Therefore the presence of principals' management support practice or absence in schools invariably affects teachers' performance. For Gwaro & Gortha (2001) absence of enabling work environment and organizational climate to support teachers' performance sometimes results in crisis. Crisis in the school system may be attributed to poor and inadequate management support practices in secondary school in Nigeria. The problems that face schools are partly blamed on absence or non-functional support for teachers' performance, the study is posit to investigate the extent of principals' management support practice for teachers' performance in Nigeria secondary school system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

School principals are under pressure and expected to provide enabling working environment for teachers' high productivity through management support practices. There is growing fears in the minds of stakeholders in the Nigeria secondary education system with regard to the negative signals coming from the system over poor performance of teachers on instructional delivery. The poor performance seemed to mean that principals are not working up to expectations. It may appear that principals do not effectively and efficiently provide management support practices to teachers in areas of supervision, motivation, staff welfare and professional growth for maximum productivity, this may be the reasons for lapses of teachers' negative attitude to work in schools. This worry has necessitated the investigation of the extent of principal's application of management support practices in enhancing teachers' performance in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to ascertain the extent of principals' management support practice for teachers' performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to establish:

Extent of principal's management support practice for supervision for enhancing teachers' performance in secondary schools.

Extent of principals' management support practice for teachers' professional growth in schools.

Extent of principal's management support practice for teachers' motivation in schools.

Extent of principals' management support practice in teachers' welfare in schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised.

What is the extent of principal's management support practice for supportive supervision for enhancing teachers' performance in secondary schools?

What is the extent of principals' management support practice for teachers' professional growth in schools?

What is the extent of principals' management support practice for teachers' motivation in secondary schools?

What is the extent of principals' management support practice for teachers' welfare in schools?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 α level for the study:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals' and teachers on the extent of management support practices for supervision for enhancing teachers' performance in schools.

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of management support practice for teachers' professional growth in schools.

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the management support practice for teachers' motivation in schools.

There is no significant in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of management support practice for teachers' welfare in schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey study which sought the opinion of the respondents on principal's management support practices for teachers' effective performance in secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The choice was necessary because it interprets what is and concerned with relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing (John and James, 2008).

The study was conducted in three (3) Educational Zones of Ebonyi State: Abakaliki, Onueke and Afikpo Zone. The population of the study comprised all the public(Government) secondary school principals and teachers totaling 5083 (221 principals and 4862 teachers) in the three education zones. The

population distribution according to the zones indicated that there are 78 principals and 2030 teachers in Abakaliki zone. Onueke Zone with 64 principals and 1453 teachers, and Afikpo zone, 79 and 1600 principals and teachers respectively (Secondary Education Board, SEB 2014).

The sample of 1803 was selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The schools were stratified according to education zones in the state and 34% of the principals and teachers in each stratum were selected. The researcher developed questionnaire titled ‘‘Principals’ Management Support Practices Questionnaire’’ (PMSPQ) and Teachers’ View on Management Support Questionnaire (TVMSQ) were instruments for data collection. The instrument was validated in Ebonyi State University by specialists in Educational Foundations and one expert in Measurement and

Evaluation. The aim was to make sure that the items were actually soliciting information on management support practice. The reliability of the instruments was determined by the test retest and had a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.84 and 0.73 indicating high level of internal consistency of the items. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The choice of z-test is in line with the recommendation of Howith and Cranner (2011) who advocated the application of z-test for the population sample from 40 and above.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The results of the study were based on four hypotheses that aided the study.

Table I: Z-test Summary of Principals and Teachers on Principals’ Management Support Practices for Teachers’ Supportive Supervision in Schools (N = 1803)

Category	Number	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit.	P	Decision
Principals	75	1.80	1.90	1081	2.80	1.96	>.05	Reject H ₀
Teaches	1728	1.90	1.52					

Table 1 showed that the mean (\bar{x}) score of principals was 1.80 with Standard Deviation of 1.90 while teachers recorded a mean (\bar{x}) score of 1.90 with a Standard Deviation of 1.52. The z-cal (2.80) is greater than the z-crit (1.96) at 1801 degree of

freedom and .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference between the principals and teaches on supervision support practices in schools.

Table 2: Z-test Summary of Principals and Teachers on Principals’ Management Support Practices for Professional Growth in Schools (N = 1803)

Category	Number	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit.	P	Decision
Principals	75	2.56	1.06	1081	2.80	1.96	>.05	Reject H ₀
Teaches	1728	2.26	1.03					

Table 2 showed that the mean (\bar{x}) score of principals was 2.56 with Standard Deviation of 1.06, while teachers recorded a mean (\bar{x}) of 2.26 with Standard Deviation of 1.03. The z-cal 2.28 is greater than z-crit (1.96) at 1801 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of

significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and concluded that there is a significance difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on management support practices for professional growth.

Table 3: Z-test Summary of Principals and Teachers on Principals’ Management Support Practices for Teachers’ Motivation in Schools (N = 1803)

Category	Number	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit.	P	Decision
Principals	75	2.75	1.97	1081	0.34	1.96	<.05	Accept H ₀
Teaches	1728	2.83	1.93					

Table 3 shows that the mean (\bar{x}) score for principals was 2.75 with SD of 1.97, while teachers recorded 2.83 with a SD of 1.93. Thus the results show that z-

cal (0.34) is less than z-crit value (1.96) at 1801 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Table 4: Z-test Summary of Principals and Teachers on Principals’ Management Support Practices for Teachers’ Welfare in Schools (N = 1803)

Category	Number	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit.	P	Decision
Principals	75	2.33	1.07	1081	1.25	1.96	<.05	Accept H ₀
Teaches	1728	2.25	1.04					

Table 4 shows that the mean (\bar{x}) score for principals was 2.33 with a SD of 1.04, while teachers recorded 2.25 with a SD of 1.04. The result indicated that the z-cal is less than the z-crit at 1801 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study in table 1 showed that the calculated z-value is greater than the critical z-value at 1081 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore reflected. This showed that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of management support practices for supportive supervision for enhancing teachers' performance in schools. The significance was due to administrative duties of the principals who are so occupied with office works, they hardly have time to regularly supervise their teachers. The findings also revealed that some school heads (principals) lack supervisory skills and as a result entrust academic supervision in the hands of external supervisors from Secondary Education Board (SEB) and Ministry of Education (MOE). This result is consistent with the findings of Cakiroglu (2003), Dibia (2013) and Ikechi (2010), who in their separate studies discovered that principals are so occupied with office works, have little or no time to supervise teachers' instructional activities in the classroom. Ikechi (2010) also affirmed that vanguards of obstacles hinder effective use of supervisory techniques by school heads.

The findings in table 2 revealed that the z-cal (2.25) is greater than z-crit (1.96) at 1801 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significance was therefore rejected. The difference may be due to the principals' reluctance to arrange inter-school visitation, organize inter-school seminars and workshops. Findings also indicated some principals refuse to endorse in-service training for teachers with higher qualifications. The findings corroborates Castler (2010), Adebola (2006) and Okoye (2001), that most teachers do not let their school heads know about their higher degree pursuit for fear of victimization in office.

The findings in table 3 show that the z-calculated (0.34) is less than z-critical value (1.96). This shows that, there is no significant difference in the opinion of principals and teachers on principal's management support practices for teachers' motivation. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. This implies that motivation through prompt and regular payment of salaries, rewards and other incentives induce greater commitment of teachers to their work. The finding is in agreement with Ayeni (2005). However, the findings is inconsistent with Ubom (2007), who discovered that when salaries are

not paid on time and non-motivational incentives, workers (teachers) display unpatriotic and indiscipline behaviour at work place. The gap between the present finding and Ubom (2007) might be difference in time fame and information communication or area of the study.

The findings on table 4 show that the z-cal (1.25) is less than the z-crit (1.96) at 1801 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. This implies that principals and teachers ratings on principals' management practices for teachers' welfare do not differ significantly. The result indicated that principals encourage setting up of welfare committee and cooperative society to enable teachers take short term loans with minimal interest. Provisions of various welfare services by principals encourage positive relationship and job performance. The findings are also in agreement with Ejiogwe (1998) and Nnamdi and Nwite (2014) who discovered that setting up committees to take care of teachers' welfare do not only enhance teachers' welfare but as a source of job satisfaction for the teachers. Nnamdi and Nwite (2014) also stated that the extent of performance in school is determined by the recognition and attention given by the principals to their staff needs and how such needs are solved.

CONCLUSION

Principals' management supportive practice is a pivot ground which effective staff job performance in secondary schools revolves. In this exposition, an attempt has been drawn on the importance of principals' management supportive practices for the teacher development and better job performance. Supervision of instructions are mostly needed in schools for teachers to be more efficient and effective in class notwithstanding principals' other administrative functions. Various facets of principals' management support practices in secondary schools such as teachers' motivation, welfare and professional growth were explored in the context of present day education development in Nigeria for effective classroom management and teachers' job performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and discussions, the following recommendations are made:

Principals should always embark on in-school or other in-service training programmes such as in-school seminars, workshops or demonstration of new pedagogical skills for teachers' professional growth.

Ministry of Education and Secondary Education Board should encourage both principals and teachers to form properly managed cooperative societies to

enable teachers take short term loans to enhance teachers' welfare for better outputs.

The Ministry and School Board should provide management support conditions under which principals' and teachers work in their schools for improved performance in schools.

LIMITATIONS

The administrative burden of the principals and classroom activities of the teachers and scattered location of schools used for the Study delayed the collection of the questionnaire items. The delay must have affected the findings in one way or the other.

The study was conducted only in Ebonyi State out of 36 states of Nigeria and such, the findings may not be generalized to all other Secondary Schools in Nigeria. The same study in other state of the Country may yield different result.

The gender, experience and qualifications and area of Study of the principals were not studied or included. These variables also have the potentials to influence principals' use of MBO.

The investigation was based on responses to researcher-made structured questionnaire items. There was no way of determining the degree of honesty in filling the questionnaire items. Some of the Principals could have ticked items because they wanted to hide some areas of MBO application by the principals and teachers.

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