



Impact of Principal's Managerial Skills on Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Benue State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of principal's managerial skills on effective administration of Public Secondary Schools in Benue State. The study was guided by two specific objectives. Also two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample size for the study was 370 principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Benue State. Structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Principal's Managerial Skills on Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (IPMSEAPSSQ) was used as instrument for data collection. Data were collected using the direct delivery and retrieval method. The collected data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and chi-square. Findings emanating from the study revealed that principal's conflict resolution and staff appraisal skills all have positive significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. The study therefore concluded that the managerial skills of principals significantly impact on the effective management of public secondary schools in Benue State. In view of the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended among others that there is need for the Government to increase reasonably the budgetary allocation for regular training of principals to enable them to keep abreast with the knowledge of personnel management in school.

INTRODUCTION

The unsatisfactory state of affairs in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria, was indicated by mismanagement of school funds, personnel, community relations, conflict resolution skills, and staff appraisal. These factors call for an immediate response, which involves determining the principals' managerial skills. By developing competencies and skills that can make them more sustainable and effective, capacity building helps public secondary school principals fulfill their potential to become administratively effective, improve the lives of their students, and find solutions to the most difficult social issues (Mawoli & Olanrewaju, 2021). Education is viewed as the most powerful instrument for socio-economic development. It also plays an important role in economic growth with the quest for technological and scientific development in the world. Education lies at the heart of every society. This is because, it plays a significant role in the lives of individuals and in national development (Muhammad & Bolatito, 2022). Education is the acquisition of knowledge, the aggregate of all the processes through which a person develops ability, attitude and other forms of behavior with positive values in the society (FGN 2013). Secondary school education is the phase of education students receive after primary school and before the tertiary level. It also links primary and tertiary education and also provides opportunity for a primary school graduates to acquire additional knowledge, skills and traits beyond the primary level. Secondary education helps to inspire students with the desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence, raises a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others and respect the dignity of labour (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

To achieve the objectives of secondary education, there must be constant and continuous training and retraining of school administrators for effective school administration. School administrators popularly referred to as school principals, the school heads in secondary schools that are at the helm of school administration. Manga (2016) defines school administrators as those individuals who had undergone vigorous educational training with requisite qualification in educational administration and planning for effective management of educational institutions. School administrators can be defined as individuals or groups of individuals with requisite qualification, skills experience and knowledge in administration to direct affairs and school activities towards accomplishment of the stated goals of the schools. Thus, a high premium is placed on their contributions, because they have a great role to play in the development of the entire educational system and the country at large. Indeed, the quality of the leader is more important than any single factor that determines the success or failure to accomplish set goals in a school.

Effective school administration or management is the outcome of utilization of the available resources in the school. Olorunsola and Belo (2018) define effective school management as the ability of principal to optimally utilize both human and material resources available to school in order to achieve educational goals. According to Adeyemi (2011), effective school management is concerned with ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the available human, physical and financial resources together with the ability to combat any constraints that might hamper the achievement of the objectives. Effective management of human, material, time and financial resources is highly crucial for institutional sustainability and the development of school

action plan (Umar, 2019). There are many indicators of effective school management. Olorunsola and Belo (2018) pointed out that effective school management is evident when a principal is; responsive to teachers' needs as at when due, give room feedback from members of staff, discourage teachers from supporting students in examination malpractices, ensure proper record keeping, maintain healthy relationship with students and teachers, encourage punishment of misbehaved students, encourage participatory supervisory system, ensure timely communication of decisions and listen well to staff's ideas.

In secondary schools, like every other organization, variables such as principals' leadership styles, principals' change management strategies and principals' conflict resolution strategies may be potential causes of conflict and they may significantly relate to teachers' job effectiveness. Bartol and Martine in Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem and Odigwe (2014) submit that poor recognition of teachers' autonomy, lack of objectivity, inadequate flow of information and perception of issues of interest are causative agents of school-based conflict. With such conflicts, teachers cannot contribute meaningfully to teaching - learning process which is central to the provision and actualization of qualitative education and goals of education as enshrined in the Nigerian National Policy on Education. This further leads to increase loitering by students, increase in the level of noise making in classrooms, poor evaluation of students' class work and delay in submission of students' assessment scores to relevant authority. These problems that attribute to poor teachers' job effectiveness may be linked to many variables including ineffective principals' conflict resolution strategies. Such conflicts if not resolved amicably can disrupt the school system and may lead to poor teachers' job effectiveness. Only happy and emotionally satisfied teachers to a great extent show a positive attitude that contributes to improved students' academic success and achievement of educational goals.

Apart from conflict resolution, the principals also need to build their capacity in the area of staff appraisal, such as orientation for new and old staff to facilitate their adjustment to modern administrative life; performs individual and group counselling; provides assistance to staff on finance, food and housing; provide variety of co-curricular activities and classification of staff towards enhanced effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. In other words, staff appraisal system is a standard rating procedure adopted by managers to regularize behaviour. Appraisal is therefore a process of letting people know what is required or expected of them, assessing how they are doing, reviewing this with them regularly and agreeing with them what happens next. Performance appraisal is a widely used tool for monitoring the performance of personnel employed in public schools (Dominic, Mulwa & Gideon, 2020). In view of the forgoing, this study intended to find out the expected Impact of principals' managerial skills on Effective Administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times effective administration of public secondary schools in Nigeria has become a great challenge. The deplorable state of schools and low standard of education in many public secondary schools in Nigeria is said to be the outcome of ineffective administration, poor leadership, mismanagement of resources and poor planning of school activities among other issues. This has thus informed stakeholders such as teachers, parents and students, and indirect roles of the education sector to recommend the introduction of capacity building programme for school principals in secondary schools.

In Benue State however, it is observed from a non-empirical approach that there are still a lot of concerns about the administrative in effectiveness of principals of public secondary schools in Benue State. This has created doubts as to whether principals of public secondary schools in Benue State have been exposed to different managerial skills ranging from conflict resolution and staff appraisal needs of school teachers.

In addition, what is not empirically known is the extent to which these managerial skills have the tendency to impact on effective administration of principals in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. These problems are further exacerbated by nearly absence of empirical evidence in relation to public secondary schools in Makurdi. It is against this background that the researcher is spurred to investigate extensive of impact of managerial skills of principals on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of principal's managerial skills on effective administration in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. ascertain the impact of principal's conflict resolution skills on effective administration of public secondary schools.
2. establish the impact of principal's staff appraisal skills on effective administration of public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study:

1. What is the impact of principal's conflict resolution skills on effective administration of public secondary schools?
2. What is the impact of principal's staff appraisal skills on effective administration of public secondary schools?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principal's conflict resolution skills have no significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools.
2. Principal's staff appraisal skills have no significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a survey research design. The study was carried out in Benue State, Nigeria. The population of the study is 4888 principals and teachers in all the public secondary schools in Benue State. The population is made up of 301 principals and 4587 teachers (TSB, 2023). The sample size is 370 respondents. This was gotten by the use of Taro Yamane formula. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the study and this was because each stage involves different sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Principal's Managerial Skills on Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (IPMSEAPSSQ) was used for this study. The questionnaire is a 14-item questionnaire with items that elicited information relating to the objectives of the study. An overall reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained for the instrument. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to 370 respondents using the direct delivery and retrieval approach. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analyses. Specifically, Mean and Standard Deviation were used in answering the research questions. In answering the research questions, a criterion mean of 2.50 was established such that items with mean values of 2.50 and above were considered agree while items with mean values below 2.50 were considered disagree. Also, a mean range was established for each of the clusters such that a cluster mean of 2.50 and above signifies *positive impact* while a cluster mean below 2.50 signifies *negative impact*. Chi-square goodness of fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level. When the Sig. value is less than or equal to the set Alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and when the Sig. value is greater than the set Alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Chi-square goodness of fit was used because the researcher has only one set of variable with number of levels of category variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the data obtained from the field. It also highlights the major findings and discussion of findings.

Research Question 1

What is the impact of principal's conflict resolution skills on effective administration of public secondary schools?

To answer this research question, the mean and standard deviation of the responses of the respondents were computed and presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses of the respondents on the impact of principal's conflict resolution skills on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Principals' ability to organize seminar talks on conflict resolution and its effect on teaching and learning enhances their effective administration	370	2.79	0.60	Agree
2	Principals' ability to instruct teachers on how to resolve conflict through dialogue positively affects their effective administration	370	3.12	0.90	Agree
3	Principals' ability to explain the cultural values of the host community to students facilitates effective administration of public secondary schools	370	3.05	0.85	Agree
4	Principals' ability to recommend incentives at the end of the year for teachers who are not involved in conflicts enhances their effective administration	370	2.59	0.67	Agree
5	Principals' ability to sanction individual teachers who are always involved in conflicts influences their effective administration positively	370	2.87	0.73	Agree
6	Principal's ability to provide solutions to problems among staff enhances effective administration	370	2.95	0.84	Agree
7	Principals' ability to ensure that conflict resolution mechanism in the school are in good conditions to enhance the quality in school management	370	2.99	0.92	Agree
	Cluster Mean		2.91		PI

PI= Positive Impact, SD= Standard Deviation

Result presented on Table 1 shows that all the 7 items had mean scores that are above the mean benchmark of 2.50 and this implies that the respondents agree on all the items. The result shows a cluster mean of 2.91 which is also above the mean benchmark of 2.50. This is an indication that principal's conflict resolution skills have positive impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. The standard deviation as shown on Table 1 ranges from 0.69 to 0.92 and this implies that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

Research Question 2

What is the impact of principal's staff appraisal skills on effective administration of public secondary schools?

To answer this research question, the mean and standard deviation of the responses of the respondents were computed and presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses of the respondents on the impact of principal's staff appraisal skills on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	School administrators' use staff evaluation to assess deficiencies in work behaviour at schedule intervals improves effective administration of public secondary schools	370	2.75	0.66	Agree
2	Principals' ability to use appraisal information for recommendation for promotion (salary step decision, and merit pay) impact effective administration of public secondary schools	370	3.41	0.98	Agree
3	Principals' ability to use staff appraisal in planning the staff members' abilities through in-service training influence effective administration of public secondary schools	370	2.78	0.62	Agree
4	Principals use of staff appraisal as a guide for recognizing and rewarding good job performance influences effective administration of public secondary schools	370	3.02	0.83	Agree
5	Use of staff appraisal by principals as a control measure to establish a standard for all staff in the school organization enhances effective administration	370	2.84	0.74	Agree
6	School administrators' use staff evaluation to assess deficiencies in work behaviour at schedule intervals improves effective administration of public secondary schools	370	3.36	0.96	Agree
7	Ensuring that teachers teach according to prescribed curriculum by principals enhances quality	370	3.27	0.91	Agree
	Cluster Mean		3.06		PI

PI= Positive Impact, SD= Standard Deviation

Result presented on Table 2 shows that all the 7 items had mean scores that is above the mean bench mark of 2.50 and this implies that the respondents agree on all the items. The result shows a cluster mean of 3.06 which is also above the mean bench mark of 2.50. This is an indication that principal's staff appraisal skills have positive impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. The standard deviation as shown on Table 2 ranges from 0.62 to 0.96 and this implies that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

Research Hypothesis 1

Principal's conflict resolution skills have no significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state.

To test this hypothesis, Chi-square Goodness of Fit was used and presented on Table 3

Table 3: Chi-square goodness of fit on the impact of Principal's conflict resolution skills on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state

	Observed N	Expected N	df	Asymp. sig	Sig. value	Remark
SD	61	92.5	3	0.00	0.05	S, Reject H ₀₄
D	74	92.5				
A	93	92.5				
SA	142	92.5				
Total	370					

df= degree of freedom, S= significant

The result presented on Table 3 shows that the Asymp. Sig value of 0.00 is less than the set significant value of 0.05 and this shows that the test of hypothesis is significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Principal's conflict resolution skills have significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state

Research Hypothesis 2

Principal's staff appraisal skills have no significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state.

To test this hypothesis, Chi-square Goodness of Fit was used and presented on Table 4

Table 4: Chi-square goodness of fit on the impact of Principal's staff appraisal skills on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state

	Observed N	Expected N	df	Asymp. sig	Sig. value	Remark
SD	62	92.5	3	0.00	0.05	S, Reject H_{05}
D	76	92.5				
A	98	92.5				
SA	134	92.5				
Total	370					

df= degree of freedom, S= significant

The result presented on Table 4 shows that the Asymp. Sig value of 0.00 is less than the set significant value of 0.05 and this shows that the test of hypothesis is significant. This implies that Principal's staff appraisal skills have no significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue state. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that Principals' conflict resolution skills have positive and significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. The findings revealed that; Principals' ability to organize seminar talks on conflict resolution and its effect on teaching and learning enhances their effective administration; Principals' ability to instruct teachers on how to resolve conflict through dialogue positively affects their effective administration; Principals' ability to explain the cultural values of the host community to students facilitates effective administration of public secondary schools; Principals' ability to recommend incentives at the end of the year for teachers who are not involved in conflicts enhances their effective administration. The study also found that; Principals' ability to sanction individual teachers who are always involved in conflicts influences their effective administration positively; Principal's ability to provide solutions to problems among staff enhances effective administration; Principals' ability to ensure that conflict resolution mechanism in the school are in good conditions to enhance the quality in school management. This finding implied that principals who have expertise skills in conflict resolution have the capacity to positively improve the effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. This is because they will be able to resolve conflicts within the school and their immediate community for greater effectiveness. This finding correlates with the study of Aniefiok, Uduak and Williams (2017) who investigated the relationship between Principals' conflict resolution strategies and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State and found that cause identification and integration strategies had significant relationship with teachers' job effectiveness in terms of classroom teaching, maintenance of classroom discipline and supervision of students' academic activities.

The findings revealed that Principals' staff appraisal skills have positive and significant impact on effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. The findings revealed that; School administrators' use staff evaluation to assess deficiencies in work behaviour at schedule intervals improves effective administration of public secondary schools; Principals' ability to use appraisal information for recommendation for promotion (salary step decision, and merit pay) impact effective administration of public secondary schools; Principals' ability to use staff appraisal in planning the staff members' abilities through in-service training influence effective administration of public secondary schools; Principals use of staff appraisal as a guide for recognizing and rewarding good job performance influences effective administration of public secondary schools; Use of staff appraisal by principals as a control measure to establish a standard for all staff in the school organization enhances effective administration; School administrators' use staff evaluation to assess deficiencies in work behaviour at schedule intervals improves effective administration of public secondary schools; Ensuring that teachers teach according to prescribed curriculum by principals enhances quality. This finding implies that principals who appraise the performance of their teachers and reward them with appropriate rewards positively improve the effective administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. This is because performance appraisal helps to motivate employees to put in their best efforts, which thus contribute to the success of the administration of public schools for greater effectiveness. This finding correlates with the study of Isaac, Anthony and Fredrick (2020) ascertained the capacity-building needs of principals for conflict resolution and staff appraisal in secondary schools in Anambra State and found that principals need capacity-building on the use of staff appraisal to promote staff commitment to the school organization and they need capacity-building on the use of staff appraisal to evaluate the staff strengths and weaknesses.

Conclusion

The study based on the findings concluded that principal's managerial skills impact positively on the effective management of public secondary schools in Benue State.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school principals require more strength of leadership capacities in school vision, capacity building, curriculum leadership, school discipline, managing time, and resourcefulness to help curtail conflicts arising from various interest.
2. Principals in public senior secondary schools should consider capacity building in terms of performance appraisal very seriously, as it affects the effective management of their schools.

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