

Extent of Principals' Provision of Effective Leadership in the Management of Secondary Schools in Anambra State

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Abstract

This study determined extent of Principals' provision of effective leadership in the management of public secondary schools in Anambra State. One research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. From a population of 5512 a sample of 1313 participants made up of 263 principals and 1050 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Principals' Provision of Effective Leadership Questionnaire (PPELQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundation (Measurement and Evaluation) all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Internal consistency coefficient of 0.88 was obtained for the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha method. Data were analyzed using mean for the research question and t-test for the hypothesis. The p-value was used to determine the significance of difference at 0.05 significant level. The result revealed that Principals to a high extent ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that for Principals to ensure greater effective leadership in the management of their schools, they should always supervise school programmes and their implementation. Principals should also optimally utilize available human and material resources to improve all areas of the school.

Keywords: Effective leadership, leadership, school management.

Introduction

Education is seen as a crucial tool for national and personal development in every country. This is because the level of a nation's literacy determines her extent of development. In Nigeria, Education is seen as an instrument per excellence for national development (Federal Ministry of Education (FME) 2014). Therefore, if education in Nigeria would play its role as an instrument par excellence for national development, then it must have quality, that is fitness for purpose.

The need to attain quality education has informed the advocacy by researchers and scholars like Bua and Ada (2013); Ogunnaike, Sholarin and Ezeugwa (2014) for quality assurance at all levels of the Nigerian educational system. Assuring quality in secondary schools is indispensable if excellence is required for the human resources base needed to develop Nigeria. Thus, quality secondary education is needed for national development.

The increase in demand for secondary education and the involvement of the private individuals in the provision of secondary education in Nigeria has raised a question of the extent to which quality is being assured in the system. Ensuring that quality education is handed down to the student has thus become one of the central issues accorded priority in the recent educational reform going on worldwide. Quality assurance therefore seems to have become the mechanism used in achieving quality education (Olagboye, 2017). Quality assurance is about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right, first time and every time.

One of the mechanisms for quality assurance in secondary education is effective leadership by the principal. Effective Leadership according to FME (2015) is concerned with how well the Principal utilizes available human and material resources, sets clear and achievable targets regarding school development and improvement, maintains school facilities and supervises instruction for achieving quality teaching and learning. It also deals with the extent to which Principals

prevent and respond promptly to incidences of violence, harassment and abuse in the school and report these appropriately, and how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination is tackled in the school so that all learners can achieve as much as they should.

Federal Ministry of Education (2014) provided that effective school leadership is concerned with how effectively the school utilizes human and material resources to improve learning outcomes; how effectively the school leadership clearly directs improvement and sets clear priorities; the extent to which the school leadership promotes the well-being of learners through high quality care, education and training. This component is also concerned with how Principals are made accountable for their different roles in the school.

Principals by virtue of their position as the chief executives of secondary schools are responsible for directing, stimulating and controlling both human and material resources within the school to enhance the delivery of quality secondary education. Principals ought to be knowledgeable in the functions and principles of management such as directing, stimulating, and controlling both human and material resources to enhance the delivery of quality secondary school education (Uzoechina, 2016). Other functions of management enumerated by Uzoechina included planning, organizing, coordinating, communication, evaluation, decision making and leadership. The common objective of quality education is to improve teaching and learning, being well grounded in these management functions may increase Principals' effectiveness in the mechanisms adopted in their schools to ensure the provision of quality education.

Observable situations in public secondary schools in Anambra State appear to suggest that Principals are not performing optimally in the achievement of quality secondary education. They seem to be grappling with management challenges such as poor learning environment, lack of teamwork, poor communication skill, poor instructional supervision, poor monitoring of students' academic progress and poor students' evaluation (Duze 2018).

Furthermore, some public secondary schools in Anambra State seem to be characterized by obsolete school equipment and outdated books. The environment of most schools runs short of aesthetic appeal without appropriate beautifying. Most often, the schools are overgrown with grasses which are dangerous for both staff and students. Principals seem to let their managerial roles overshadow their duties as instructional leaders, thereby limiting their much needed visible presence in their schools. These problems which appear to have emanated from poor implementation of effective leadership in the school necessitated this study.

Purpose of the Study

The study determined extent of Principals' provision of effective leadership in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. To what extent do Principals ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and teachers on the extent to which Principals ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. One research question guided the study and one hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 5512 respondents, consisting of 263 Principals and 5,249 teachers in all the State government owned secondary schools in the six education zones of the State, a sample of 1,313 respondents (263 Principals and 1050 teachers) was drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. A Questionnaire instrument titled Principals' Effective Leadership Questionnaire (PELQ) which

was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a four point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficient of 0.88. Mean was used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. For the research question, a mean rating of 2.50 and above was interpreted as high extent while mean rating of less than 2.50 was interpreted as low extent. The null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value associated with the t-cal was less than 0.05 whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where the p-value was greater than 0.05.

Result

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent to which Principals Ensure That Effective Leadership Is Provided In Public Secondary Schools In Anambra State

S/N	To what extent do Principals:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	utilize human and material resources to improve learners' outcomes.	2.63	.93	HE
2.	set clear priorities and targets regarding school development.	2.67	.84	HE
3.	regulate staff and students' truancy in the school.	2.60	.73	HE
4.	promote well-being of learners in the school.	2.85	.73	HE
5.	promote equality of opportunity for learners to achieve as well as they can .	2.73	.77	HE
6.	resolve conflicts among staff promptly.	2.62	.72	HE
7.	delegate duties to staff in order to ease workload.	2.77	.74	HE
8.	keep statutory records in the school for decision making.	2.69	.76	HE
9.	involve the community in school development	2.57	.72	HE
10.	monitor classroom instruction for effectiveness.	2.71	.86	HE
11.	empower staff to perform leadership roles in order to improve their leadership capacity	2.69	.84	HE
12.	conduct performance appraisal of staff focusing on bringing about improvement	2.60	.73	HE
13.	use school funds appropriately to bring about improvement	2.70	.70	HE

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Cluster Mean	2.68	.77	HE
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Results in the above table shows the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which Principals ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The cluster mean of 2.68 and standard deviation of .77 indicate that Principals to a high extent ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The analysis of the items indicates that the respondents rated all the 13 items to a high extent with mean ranging from 2.57 to 2.85. The standard deviation scores for items ranged from .72 to .93 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings for the items were homogeneous.

Table 2: t-test Comparison of Principals and Teachers Mean Ratings of The Extent to which Principals Ensure That That Effective Leadership Is Provided in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	261	2.95	.33	1118	10.58	.000	Sig
Teachers	859	2.60	.50				

Table 2 shows that the mean score for Principals ($M=2.95$, $SD=.33$) was significantly greater than that of the teachers ($M=2.60$, $SD=.50$); $t(1118) = 10.58$, $p=.000$. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which Principals ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

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The study indicated that Principals to a high extent ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding was not surprising to the researcher because the desire of every Principal is to achieve effective leadership. All Principals work hard not to fail in the area of provision of effective leadership. This finding is consistent with that of Adebule and Adebule (2014) that secondary school Principals display effective leadership to a high extent.

The finding of this study is contrary to that of Olatunji (2001) and Ojoba (2007) who found that there was communication gap between the Principals and their personnel in secondary schools as well as poor funding of schools by government which led to poor management and leadership ineffectiveness of secondary school Principals. The finding of the corresponding hypothesis indicated that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and teachers on the extent to which ensure that effective leadership is provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that Principals rated themselves significantly higher than they were rated by the teachers in terms of ensuring the provision of effective leadership. As stated earlier, this difference may also be attributed to difference recorded in self-rating situation where by people rate themselves higher in terms of possession or exhibition of positive traits and behavior than others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that Principals to a high extent provide effective leadership in the management of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The researchers recommended that though Principals make appreciable efforts to ensure effective leadership in the school, they should increase the level by always supervising school programmes and their implementation.

Principals should also optimally utilize available human and material resources to improve all areas of the school.

2. Another recommendation is that the State Government should increase the funds that are allocated to public secondary schools so as to empower Principals to carry out their duties more efficiently in order to sustain effective leadership in secondary schools in the State.

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