



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2019; 5(5): 238-242
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 21-03-2019
Accepted: 25-04-2019

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Assessment of administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Ebonyi central education zone of Ebonyi state Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Ebonyi Central Education zone of Ebonyi State. Two areas of secondary school administration were covered, they include: Curriculum/Instruction Management and Human Resources Management. The research adopted a survey design which sought the opinions of 240 male and female public and private secondary school teachers on the administrative competence of principals in the zone. Thirty questionnaire items were constructed after a review of the related literature. The data collected were analysed with descriptive statistics involving the use of mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Results of analyses reveal no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in the mean ratings of the male and female teachers on the extent of the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in the zone. However the results show some lapses on the part of the principals as many areas of secondary school administration were neglected. As a matter of fact, crucial instructional roles of the principal were grossly neglected. In conclusion, provisions should therefore be made for in-service management training of serving principals to help them improve their managerial skills.

Keywords: administrative competence, private secondary, Ebonyi central, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The school is a fundamental and an essential guide to the child's developmental process (Ajadi T.O., Adedeji S.O., Adeyemi J. K., 2010) ^[5]. Thus, the extent to which the child's development is enhanced depends upon the quality and effectiveness and the administrative competence of the school administrators who are responsible for the planning and implementation of the educational programmes. The school principal as an administrator is vested with the duty of bringing together the available human and material resources, and allocating them effectively to accomplish the set educational objectives (Okoroma N.S., Ibam, E.C., Adeyemi J.K., Okonkwo U.M., Ajadi T.O., 2009) ^[16].

Administration generally consists of those activities that are related to the general administrative operations and services of an institution (Ajadi *et al*, 2010) ^[5]. These activities according to these authors include administration of personnel and programme facilities, communication and transportation services, purchase and maintenance of supplies, health and safety etc. In educational institution, it also includes the school financial management. Onwuka, (2004), also identified six task areas of school administration which include school community relationships, school curriculum and instructions, staff and students management, equipment and facilities maintenance as well as school financial management.

2. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to assess the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Ebonyi Central Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study will assess:

1. Administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Curriculum and Instruction Management.
2. Administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Human Resource management.

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3. Scope of the study

The study will be delimited to an assessment of the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Ebonyi Central Education Zone of Ebonyi State. This assessment will cover Curriculum/ Instruction Management and Human Resources Management

4. Research questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Curriculum and Instruction Management?
2. What is the level of administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Human Resources Management?

5. Research hypothesis

H₀:

1. There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on public and private secondary school principals on the extent of their administrative competence in curriculum and instruction management.
2. There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on public and private secondary school principals on the extent of their administrative competence in Human Resources Management.

6. Method of research

Research design

The study adopted a survey research design. A survey research according to Avwokeni, (2002) is one in which a group of people is studied by collecting data through the use of questionnaire on a few people considered to be representative sample of the entire group. The design was considered to be suitable for the study since it intends to seek for the opinions of secondary school teachers on their principal's administrative competence.

Population of study

The population for the study consisted of 240 respondents selected from the sixty (60) secondary schools in Ebonyi Central Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

Sample and sampling techniques

Two male and two female teachers were selected by stratified random sampling from each of the sixty participating secondary schools to give a total of 240 observations.

Instruments

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire identified as Administrative Competency Survey Questionnaire (ACSQ). The questionnaire items were generated after the review of literature on Curriculum and Instruction Management, and Human Resources Management skills. The questionnaire consisted of two sections (A and B. Section A solicited for personal information on the respondents, while section B sought information on the research questions which consisted of thirty(30) items on a four point rating scale of; strongly agree (4), agree(3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree(1).

Method of data analysis

Descriptive statistics involving the use of means and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the null hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The decision rule is that any item that has a mean value of up to 3.5 were regarded as "Strongly Agreed", mean values from 2.5 to 3.4 were regarded as "Agreed", while values from 1.5 to 2.4 were regarded as "Disagreed". Mean values of less than 1.5 were regarded as strongly disagree. For hypothesis, if the t-calculated is equal to or greater than the t-critical of 1.96, the hypothesis is said to be significant. But if the t-calculated is less than the t-critical of 1.96, the hypothesis is not significant and so the null hypothesis holds.

7. Results and Discussion

I. Research question 1

"What is the level of the administrative Competence of the principal in Curriculum and Instruction Management?"

Table 1a: Mean ratings male and female teachers on the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in curriculum and instruction management.

S. No	Items	Male Teachers (x)	Female Teachers (y)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.	2.1	2.3	2.2	0.14	Disagree
2	Principal has a file for past WAEC/NECO examination question papers	3.5	3.6	3.6	0.07	Strongly Agree
3	The principal is well informed of the current trends in curriculum and instruction.	2.0	2.1	2.0	0.07	Disagree
4	The principal appoints HODs	2.5	2.5	2.5	0.04	Agree
5	The principal convinces PTA to provide computerized Infrastructure for the school.	2.7	2.8	2.8	0.07	Agree
6	The principal encourages teachers to teach with computers	1.9	2.0	2.0	0.07	Disagree
7	The principal works with teachers and experts to implement ICT use in school.	2.0	2.2	2.1	0.14	Disagree
8	The school has prizes for the best performing students	1.9	2.0	2.0	0.71	Disagree
9	The school has quiz/debate or press club	2.1	2.2	2.2	0.85	Disagree

10	Principal inspects exam questions.	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.00	Disagree
11	Principal jointly with teachers select learning experience methods and procedures to employ in achieving the objectives.	1.9	2.0	2.0	0.71	Disagree
12	Principal assign subject and class to teachers according to qualification and competence.	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.00	Disagree
13	Principal supervises the teachers' lesson plan	3.2	3.3	3.2	0.07	Agree
14		2.4	2.4	2.5	0.00	Agree
15		3.1	3.3	3.3	0.14	Agree
	Total	2.2	2.3	2.3	0.07	Disagree

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of male and female teachers for principals in public and private secondary schools on their level of administrative competence in curriculum and instruction management. From the table, it can be observed that the teachers' ratings did not favour the principals on this particular subject matter. Although the respondents strongly agree that the schools have core instructional programme

with qualified teachers and challenging curriculum. They rated the principals low in most the items.

Hypothesis analysis and results: A t-test of significance was used to test the first hypothesis on the teachers' mean rating of the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in curriculum and Instruction management

Table 1b: Hypothesis Results

	Male Teachers' Mean Rating of Principals	Female Teachers' Mean Rating of Principals	X	SD	T-Tab	T-Cal	Decision
Grand Mean	2.2	2.3	2.3	0.07	1.96	0.31	Accepted

From Table 1b above, the t-calculated is 0.31. This is far less than the t-critical of 1.96 in all the twenty items. Thus the hypothesis is not significant and so the null hypothesis holds. Therefore there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of the administrative competence of public and private

secondary school principals in Curriculum and Instruction Management.

II. Research QUESTION 2

“What is the level of the administrative competence of the principal in Human Resources Management?”

Table 2: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in human resources management.

S/N	Items	Male Teachers (x)	Female Teachers (y)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	The principal allows equal opportunity/affirmative action for all staff to develop his/her potentials	2.7	2.7	2.7	0.00	Agree
2	The principal makes provision for employee health and safety	1.6	1.6	1.6	0.00	Disagree
3	The principal shares leadership and decision-making with staff members	3.0	3.1	3.1	0.07	Agree
4	Principal creates opportunity for incentives and benefits to members of staff;	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.00	Disagree
5	Communicates effectively with staff and students (interviewing, counseling and discipline).	2.6	2.7	2.6	0.07	Agree
6	The principal engages in training and developing of future managers;	2.6	2.7	2.7	0.07	Agree
7	The principal builds employees commitment	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.00	Disagree
8	Principal ensures that the staff in different units and work position work cooperatively and not antagonistically for the common goal of the school	2.8	2.8	2.8	0.00	Agree
9	Principal in co-operation with his teachers define objective for the school and each department and unit	2.3	2.3	2.3	0.00	Agree
10	Principal model behaviors he expects from others	2.8	2.9	2.9	0.07	Agree
11	Principal recognizes the effort of his staff.	2.5	2.5	2.5	0.00	Agree
12	Principal delegates duties and authority to capable staff.	2.0	2.1	2.0	0.07	Disagree
13	Principal praise in public, criticizes only in private	2.6	2.6	2.6	0.00	Agree
14	Principal encourages and enable appropriate professional development of staff	3.6	3.6	3.6	0.00	Strongly

15	Principal defuses tense situations and negotiates a solution.	2.9	2.8	2.9	0.07	Agree Agree
	Principal does not take side in conflict resolutions.					
	Grand Mean	2.6	2.6	2.6	0.00	Agree

Table 2 presents the opinion of teachers on the administrative competence of principals in Human Resources Management. It can be observed that the respondents gave the principals good ratings on human resources management as most of them agreed with most of the items.

Hypothesis Analysis and Results

A t-test of significance was used to test the second hypothesis on the teachers' mean rating of the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Human Resources Management.

Table 2b: Hypothesis Results

	Male Teachers' Mean Rating of Principals	Male Teachers' Mean Rating of Principals	X	SD	T-Tab	T-Cal	Decision
Grand Mean	2.6	2.6	2.6	0.00	1.96	0.00	Accepted

Here, the t-calculated of 0.00 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 in all the twenty items. Thus the hypothesis is not significant and so the null hypothesis holds. Therefore there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of the administrative competence of public and private secondary school principals in Human Resources Management.

8. Discussion of Findings

Table 1 reveals poor instructional leadership competence of the principals as most of the key instructional roles were largely neglected. This finding is in consonance with (Aghadiuno, 2008) who reported that head teachers in Anambra State did not engage in instructional leadership practices. This finding also confirms the reports of Ajibola, (2008) who found school principals wanting in a range of curriculum pedagogy skills. This finding is disappointing because school principals are expected to provide leadership in curriculum and instruction management. The fact that the principals did not provide high level of curriculum and instructional leadership may have adverse effect on curriculum and instruction in education for all. This is because where principals who are supposed to pay more attention and direct teachers on curriculum issues neglect it, there is also the tendency for teachers to also neglect it. Where this situation persists, less is achieved in terms of curriculum delivery in schools. The implementation and use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the schools were almost zero despite the reports of some renowned educationists like (Spillane, 2005) who noted that the use of ICT is crucial for the implementation of curricular reform process. And without ICT implementation in schools, the schools are not being lead in a way to position the staff and students for effective curricular reforms.

Table 2 reveals a commendable rating for the school principals in most of the areas of human resources management which include sharing leadership and decision making with staff, appraising staff and students' performance, effective communication with staff and students, improvement of employee commitment, delegation of authority and fairness in administrative duties. The principals were however rated low in the provision of employee health and safety, creation of incentives and benefits to staff, training and development of future managers and provision of opportunities for teachers to strengthen their subject matter knowledge. These findings

are not encouraging as successful administrators are those who know how to motivate their staff to make them co-operative and loyal. Also affirm that there is no amount of capital injection into educational system without a change of attitude, better skill acquisition and overt commitment on the part of the teaching force that can produce the much desired change in school performance. Report that good leadership skills of effective communication, participatory decision making and delegation of authority are essential to effective personnel management.

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