

## PRINCIPALS' APPLICATION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

By

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### Abstract

*This research investigated the principals' application of personnel management skills in Secondary Schools in Enugu State. The population of this study comprised of all the principals from the government secondary schools in Enugu State. Respondents were taken from two education zones randomly sampled from the six education zones of the state. Two (2) research questions and one (1) null hypothesis guided the study. The research questions were answered using a four-point modified Likert's scale while the null hypothesis was tested using the 't' test. The result revealed that the principals applied the personnel management skills for effective staff orientation and staff professional development only to the least extent. It was further revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of application of personnel management skills for the effective staff professional development by less experienced and more experienced principals. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the principals themselves be trained in the skills for personnel management through seminars and workshops. It was further recommended that the principals be supervised on a more regular basis in order to discover other areas where they need more attention.*

**Key words:** principals, application, personnel, management, secondary, skills

### Introduction

Personnel refer to all the people who are involved in planning and execution of organizational plans. Ebuoh (2012) refers to personnel simply as employees. In educational institutions such as the school, we have the staff personnel as well as students' personnel. Teachers are responsible for the academic activities of the school. Students are the key beneficiaries. Management is about the integration of all the various necessary resources to bring about the desired institutional

goals and objectives. These resources, especially human must be available for management to be effective (Nwandu, Ani and Agbo 2003). Effectiveness in management is influenced by a high degree of participation by employees which encourages the growth of the subordinates and their ability to accept responsibilities (Oyewole and Alonge, 2012). Management is the body of knowledge of getting things done in the most effective and efficient manner (Ani, Olofin and Chukwuma, 2005). The term management is used

interchangeably with administration.

Personnel management is the effective mobilization of human resources in order to achieve the organizational laid-down goals and objectives (Ogunsaju, 2006). The success of an organization is not only determined by the quality of personnel available but also by how well these human resources are harnessed and coordinated towards realizing the goals of the organization (Owojori and Asaolu, 2010). Such services as staff orientation and training for professional competence are necessary.

The principal is the administrative head of the school. He is expected to apply some competencies and skills to provide effective leadership in schools (Sharma, 2010) and to cope with his complex role (Fullan, 2000). Specific skills are needed to cater for the problems that may arise from even the teachers due to individual differences (Luo, 2004). Skills for effective orientation and staff professional development are some of such skills. Orientation is an essential aspect of personnel management.

It is better not to assume that newly posted staff already know what they have to know even if they are not newly employed. New teachers are likely to feel insecure in their new places. They may have to deal with changes in culture as they change environment. Proper orientation clears all these doubts and gets them emotionally set for duty. Orientation programmes go beyond those that affect the school and extend to those that affect the community or locality (Edem, 2006). This is to avoid falling into any community problems especially those that have to do with their culture. Accepted life styles may differ from locality to locality. Knowledge of existing facilities is helpful, example, shopping centers

and markets, health facilities, recreational centers, workshop centers and so on. Information on the school landmarks and need areas help new teachers condition their minds. Oboegbulem (2004) notes that the strength of orientation is in its ability to help staff have good impressions of the school and the entire environment, thereby boosting their willingness to maximize efforts towards performance.

Staff professional development is a means of imparting knowledge and skills into people. Training concerns itself with developing employees' skills and exposing them to new methods, techniques and procedures for performing their jobs effectively, while development is a broad-based knowledge acquisition (Eze and Anoh, 2004). Training helps to update teachers with current methodologies and ensures that at the end, students receive quality education. In-service training is one of the factors that have direct influence on the attitude of teachers to work (Udofia and Ikpe, 2012). It is an on-going type of training that helps teachers to improve their knowledge and competences (Aitken, 2004).

The principals have some roles to play in the training of teachers for professional growth and development. Well equipped school libraries are useful for updating teachers' knowledge. Principals can also provide useful references such as the newspaper, periodicals, journals and internet services. Sponsoring teachers to seminars and workshops outside their school environment provides them the opportunity to share ideas with their colleagues. Professionals can also be invited to the schools to train the teachers. The problem of the study is the effect of the non professional attitudes of most teachers. They are regularly late to school and when they are in school they are busy selling

their wares in the staff rooms. They deny students teaching and learning. Such teachers aid students to pass examinations through malpractices in order to cover up. This is of great concern.

The purpose of this study was therefore, to determine the extent of the principals' application of the skills for effective orientation and staff professional development. The following research questions and null hypothesis were used:

1. To what extent do principals apply personnel management skills for effective staff orientation?
2. To what extent do principals apply personnel management skills for effective staff professional development?

### **Null hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers with regards to less experienced and more experienced principals on the extent of personnel management skills for staff professional development.

### **Method**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Nworgu (2015) opines that this design is effective for collecting data on, and describing systematically the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. This design was used to investigate the application of personnel management skills by principals of secondary schools in Enugu State. The area of study covered all the six (6) education zones in Enugu State namely: Agbani, Awgu, Enugu, Nsukka, Obollo Afor and Udi. The population was made up of all the 293 principals from the 293 Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) secondary

schools in the State. Teachers from two education zones randomly sampled from the six provided information about the principals. Simple random sampling technique provides every member of the group equal opportunity of being included in the sample (Nworgu, 2015). The questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. It was designed to obtain information on aspects of personnel management as stated in the research questions. The questionnaire instrument was validated by three (3) experts in the area of Educational Administration and Planning and one (1) expert in the area of Measurement and Evaluation, all of the Faculty of Education of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was computed using the Cronbach Alpha co-efficient and the result was positive. The researcher worked with two research assistants to administer and retrieve copies of the instrument. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The 't' test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 significant level.

### **Results**

The data collected from the respondents formed the basis for analysis. The results derived from the responses to the questionnaire were presented in tables according to research questions and hypothesis.

#### **Research Question One**

To what extent do principals apply personnel management skills necessary for achieving effective orientation of teachers?

**Table 1: Mean ratings of teachers on the principals' extent of application of personnel management skills for effective staff orientation.**

ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARKS
New teachers are introduced to old teachers and students	2.47	0.37	Least Extent
Introduction of new teachers is made in a cordial atmosphere	2.12	0.42	LE
School rules and regulations are made known to new teachers	2.23	0.46	LE
New teachers are helped to get accommodation	1.94	0.39	LE
Information on general organizational structure is provided to new teachers	2.12	0.40	LE
The philosophy and goals of the school are explained to new teachers	2.13	0.44	LE
New teachers are introduced to all records of the school	2.08	0.31	LE
New teachers are provided with clear job descriptions	2.09	0.30	LE
Information is provided on all aspects of school programmes	2.11	0.26	LE
Ethics of the teaching profession are made known to new teachers	2.11	0.32	LE
New teachers are provided with work schedules	2.14	0.49	LE
Procedures of operation are made known to new teachers	2.15	0.30	LE
Service load to new teachers is based on qualification	2.13	0.31	LE
New teachers are familiarized with the school layout and boundaries	2.10	0.32	LE
Information is provided on general characteristics of students	2.13	0.29	LE
Information is provided on the students' expectations	2.16	0.35	LE
Induction courses are organized to make new teachers familiar with the job	1.19	0.34	LE
Community expectations are explained to new teachers	2.10	0.30	LE
The culture of the community is explained to new teachers	2.14	0.27	LE
New teachers are taken to places of interest in the community	2.16	0.31	LE
All of the questions that new teachers have are answered	2.35	0.27	LE
<b>CLUSTER MEAN=</b>	<b>2.15</b>		<b>LE</b>

It is shown in Table 1 that all the personnel management skills in the area of staff orientation are applied only to the least extent by the principals. Each of the skills has a mean score below the 2.50 cut-off point on a four-point modified Likert's Scale. Even item 1 with the highest score of 2.47 indicates a least extent application level. Item 17 has the lowest mean score of 1.19 showing that the principals give the least consideration to induction courses to teachers. A cluster means of 2.15 shows that the

principals apply personnel management skills in the area of orientation only to the least extent. That means they rarely or do not conduct orientations for their teachers.

### Research Question Two

To what extent do principals apply personnel management skills necessary for providing effective staff professional development to teachers?

**Table 2: Mean ratings of teachers on the principals' extent of application of personnel management skills for effective staff professional development.**

N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARKS
	Newspapers, journals, periodicals etc are provided for teachers' references	2.24	0.34	LEAST EXTENT
	School staff seminars are organized to enable teachers share new ideas	2.16	0.29	LE
	The school library is well equipped to help teachers update their knowledge	2.23	0.33	LE
	Teachers are encouraged to attend workshops/seminars outside the school environment	2.04	0.34	LE
	Professionals are invited to the school to help teachers update their knowledge on current trends	2.04	0.38	LE
	Teachers' performances are evaluated regularly	2.01	0.32	LE
	Desiring teachers have chance to attend sandwich programmes without hindrances	2.50	0.33	LE
	Study leave with pay is recommended where deserved	2.14	0.29	LE
	Study leave without pay is recommended for those who opt for it	2.21	0.28	LE
	Reinstatements after study leaves are willingly recommended	2.20	0.35	LE
	Acquired additional certificates are readily forwarded to the Board for recognition	2.24	0.31	LE
	Evaluation reports are used to correct teachers	2.17	0.29	LE
	Internal supervision reports are used to update teachers' professional competence	2.14	0.33	LE
	Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional competitions outside the school	2.18	0.28	LE
	Creativity in teachers' area of specialization is encouraged	2.21	0.37	LE
	Teachers are encouraged to use the internet for updating information	2.11	0.34	LE
	<b>CLUSTER MEAN=</b>	<b>2.15</b>		<b>LE</b>

In Table 2, it shows that only item 28 has a mean score up to the 2.50 cut-off point on the Likert's Scale. This shows that the principals do not hinder the teachers from attending sandwich programmers. However, each of the other items has a mean score below the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.15 implies that the principals apply the personnel management skills necessary for effective staff professional development only to the least extent.

**Hypothesis** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers with regards to less experienced and more experienced principals on the extent of application of personnel management skills for effective staff professional development.

**Table 3: Summary of 't'-test (items) analysis of mean ratings of less experienced and more experienced principals' application of personnel management skills necessary for achieving effective staff professional development.**

ITEMS	X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	T-cal	Decision
Newspapers, journals, periodicals etc are provided for teachers' references	2.27	0.42	2.24	0.32	0.50	Accepted
School staff seminars are organized to enable teachers share new ideas	2.21	0.27	2.15	0.29	1.16	Accepted
The school library is well equipped to help teachers update their knowledge	2.11	0.33	2.24	0.33	-2.07	Accepted
Teachers are encouraged to attend workshops/seminars outside the school environment	2.04	0.37	2.10	0.33	-.81	Accepted
Professionals are invited to the school to help teachers update their knowledge on current trends	1.98	0.43	2.04	0.37	-.90	Accepted
Teachers performances are evaluated regularly	1.93	0.43	2.03	0.30	-1.68	Accepted
Desiring teachers have chance to attend sandwich programmes without hindrances	2.11	0.29	2.05	0.33	0.96	Accepted
Study leave with pay is recommended where deserved	2.17	0.28	2.14	0.30	0.45	Accepted
Study leave without pay is recommended for those who opt for it	2.11	0.32	2.22	0.27	-2.15	Accepted
Reinstatements after study leaves are willingly recommended	2.22	0.33	2.19	0.36	0.45	Accepted
Acquired additional certificates are readily forwarded to the Board for recognition	2.15	0.28	2.25	0.31	-1.25	Accepted
Evaluation reports are used to correct teachers	2.18	0.31	2.17	0.29	0.22	Accepted
Evaluation supervision reports are used to update teachers' professional competence	2.16	0.29	2.13	0.34	0.51	Accepted
Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional competitions outside the school	2.18	0.23	2.18	0.28	-.00	Accepted
Creativity in teachers' area of specialization is encouraged	0.29	0.41	2.22	0.36	-1.95	Accepted
Teachers are encouraged to use the internet for updating information	2.00	0.46	2.12	0.31	-2.00	Accepted

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers with regards to less experienced and more experienced principals' application of personnel management skills necessary for achieving effective staff professional development. The 't'-scores for each of the skills in the Table is less than the critical value of 't'. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld.



**Table 4: Group analysis of hypothesis**

Groups	No	X	SD	df	Sign. Level	T-cal	Critical value	DECISION
Less Exp	32	33.91	2.61					
More Exp.	221	34.48	2.31	2.51	0.05	-2.68	1.97	Accepted

The above group analysis of hypothesis (Table 4) shows that at a degree of freedom 2.51 and significant level of 0.05, the calculated 't'-value of -2.68 is less than 1.97 critical value of 't'. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers with regards to less experienced and more experienced principals' application of personnel management skills necessary for achieving effective staff professional development.

### Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the study are that:

1. The principals' level of application of personnel management skills for staff orientation and professional development is very low.
2. The principals' application of personnel management skills for staff professional development is not based on their experiences.

### Recommendations

These recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1. The Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) should urgently begin to train their principals in the skills for personnel management.

2. The Zonal and Area Inspectors should supervise the principals regularly to find out the areas they need help.

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