

Principals' Application of Personnel Management Skills for Staff Motivation and Delegation of Duties in Secondary Schools in Enugu State in Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era

Udeani, Justina Ngozika

Department of Early Childhood Care and Primary Education, Institute of Ecumenical Education, Enugu Nigeria

Abstract

The study inquired into the principals' usage of the skills for motivation and delegation to influence the performance of teachers in the area of study. All 293 school principals constitute the population. Five (5) Local government areas were randomly selected for the study and their teachers were the respondents. Two research questions provided a guide to the study. A "Questionnaire of Motivation and Delegation skills of Principals" was adopted to obtain information from the respondents. A modified Likert's four-point rating scale was used to rate the instrument, with 2.50 as an accepted mean score. Mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) were used in answering the research questions while the 't' test was used for the hypothesis at a significant level of 0.05. As revealed by the results, principals apply the skills for motivation and delegation of duties to a very low level. Furthermore, the result shows that the difference in the mean ratings of the respondents for urban and rural principals is not significant. These prompted the recommendation for training of principals on the skills for management of staff especially for motivation and delegation of duties. Government should also make use of supervision reports to enhance performance.

Keywords: principal, secondary school, personnel, skills, motivation, delegation

Introduction

Principals are the people to whom the state government gives the authority to direct the affairs of the schools at the secondary level. Simply put, they are the custodians of education at this level who apply administrative competences to manage their staff and students (Sharma 2010). These assist them to perform difficult roles (Fullan, 2000). Okenwa et al (2013) attach importance to education management as it benefits all stakeholders.

The major objective of education at secondary school level is to train youths for independent living after school and education beyond this level for those who may have the opportunity for higher education. Principals need people to work with to be able to actualize these. All those concerned

with mapping out actions and carrying them out in an organization are simply referred to as personnel. Ebuoh (2012) calls them employees.

In the secondary schools, teachers are the main instruments for the task execution and attainment of the expected outcomes. They make up school staff personnel. Principals need to be able to manage them effectively to be able to use them meet their targets. The ability to effectively mobilize various individuals to attain an established goal is referred to as personnel management (Ogunsaju, 2006). Dealing with human beings requires basic skills.

Skills are needed to be able to harness the human resources and coordinate same in the interest of an organization (Owojori et al, 2010). Teachers are human beings with individual differences that usually give rise to some administrative problems. Principals need the basic skills to cope with such differences (Luo, 2004). Such skills include those for staff motivation and delegation of duties.

Motivation is a key to success. Principals need to apply the appropriate skills to influence in the teachers' level of commitment, energy and drive to teach effectively. Motivation increases the will of the teachers to perform. Teachers can be motivated in various ways including paying them their wages appropriately and timely, rewarding teachers not just for achievements but equally for efforts, awarding prizes to the best teachers and keeping records of teachers' outstanding performances. Other forms of teachers' motivation include providing the personal needs of teachers that affect their jobs, encouraging teachers even when they fail, promoting teachers that deserve to, providing teachers with adequate materials to make their works easy, giving them opportunities to function, appreciating teachers for useful contributions and more importantly, making the entire environment generally conducive for teaching and learning activities. Motivation moves human resources to action (Cole, 2002). It brings out the best in teachers and makes them effective and efficient (Edem, 2006).

Delegation of duties points to the process of assigning of duties and tasks to various individuals. It reduces stress. Principals need to delegate duties appropriately to save time, and achieve better.

Teachers feel carried along and this makes their relationship cordial. Mgbodile (2004) suggests that certain guidelines be followed for proper delegation of duties in secondary schools to achieve efficiency. It should be clear what duties to delegate and to whom. Directives should be clear enough to avoid doubts. Personal qualities and traits should be considered. There should be room for feedbacks. Delegated duties need to be supervised by the principal to ensure compliance with the desired goals. It is important to give authority in writing. Cole (2002) describes delegation as a process of power sharing through which an administrator or a leader transfers part of his or her power to another who may be a junior person. It gives chance to the delegate to apply his or her skills in a planned way. When backed up with support, it is very effective.

A variable of interest in this study is location. Some of these schools are located in more developed areas while others are in less developed areas. The urban areas of Enugu state are the places within Enugu Metropolis which are more developed. The rural areas refer to the areas outside Enugu Metropolis which are less developed. Ordinarily, it would be assumed that those in the urban areas have an advantage and so would do better. The simple argument is that they are closer to the sources of essential educational materials and other amenities for the comfort of human beings. Closeness to their superior authorities from the relevant ministry, boards and agencies is also anticipated to make them perform maximally.

Of great concern is the fact that annually, the secondary schools produce sets of young boys and girls who do not have the capacity to assist themselves to earn a living since there are no government jobs. They lack the abilities for independent life. This is a pointer to the fact that the major essence of education at this level is not achieved. If not checked, this may turn to be a national disaster. The situation creates doubts in the minds of many, as to whether the principals motivate and delegate duties to teachers enough to influence them positively to give the students what it takes to achieve the desired expectation of coming out of schools prepared for life in the society, hence this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent of the principals' application of the skills for personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Specifically, the research sought to figure out:

1. The level to which the principals apply the skills for motivation of staff.
2. The extent to which the principals practice delegation of duties.

Research Questions

The study was guided by these questions.

1. To what extent do the principals apply the skills for motivation of teachers?
2. To what extent do the principals practice delegation of duties?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis guided the study:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers with regards to urban and rural principals' application of staff motivation skills.

Method

The survey research design was used by the researcher to carry out this study in Enugu State. The population was made up of 293 principals of all schools owned by the state government. These schools are spread in the seventeen (17) local Government areas of the state. The researcher selected five (5) of the local government areas with 29 urban and 69 rural principals using a simple random sampling technique which is highly recommended by Nworgu (2015).

Teachers from the selected local government areas were the respondents from whom the researcher elicited information concerning the school administrators. Questionnaire of motivation and delegation Skills of Principals" created by the researcher was her instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was created to get information concerning those skills mentioned in the research questions. A modified four-point Likert's scale was used to the scales of Very Great Extent (VGE,

4), Great Extent (GE, 3), Least Extent (LE, 2), Not at All (NA, 1). The reliability co-efficient was computed using the Crombach Alpha. A positive result of 0.83 was gotten. This shows that the questionnaire was quite reliable. It was subjected to validation by three (3) specialists in the area of Educational Administration and one with specialty in Measurement and Evaluation, all of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

To answer the research questions, mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) were used. Mean scores of 2.50 were considered positive and upheld. Those below 2.50 were considered negative and declined. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using the “t” test and results were presented in tables.

Results

The responses of the staff to the questionnaire provided the results of the research questions and the hypothesis of no difference that guided the study. These are presented in tabular forms accordingly.

Research Question 1

To what extent do the principals apply the skills for motivation of teachers?

Table 1

Mean ratings of teachers on the principals’ application of skills for motivation of teachers.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	URBAN	REMARKS	__RURAL	REMARKS
				X ₂	SD ₂		
1.	Teachers’ salaries and allowances are paid on time	2.21	0.31	LE 2.29	0.37	LE	
2.	Principals reward teachers’ outstanding performances adequately	2.15	0.26	LE 2.11	0.23	LE	
3.	Principals reward teachers’ efforts and not only achievements	2.23	0.26	LE 2.17	0.29	LE	

4.	Principals award prizes to the best staff	2.13	0.32	LE	0.30	LE
				2.14		
5.	Records of outstanding performances of teachers are kept in the school	2.14	0.25	LE	0.29	LE
				2.08		
6.	Teachers personal needs that affect their jobs are provided	2.16	0.29	LE	0.26	LE
				2.16		
7.	Teachers are encouraged even when they fail	2.13	0.29	LE	0.30	LE
				2.06		
8.	Deserving teachers are promoted on time	2.07	0.26	LE	0.25	LE
				2.06		
9.	Teachers are provided with the desired working materials	2.15	0.32	LE	0.33	LE
				2.12		
10.	The entire school environment is conducive for teaching activities	2.16	0.32	LE	0.27	LE
				2.12		
11.	Every teacher is given equal opportunity to function	2.24	0.31	LE	0.30	LE
				2.17		
12.	Praises go to deserving staff	2.11	0.42	LE	0.31	LE
				2.16		
13.	Teachers are appreciated for useful contributions	2.29	0.39	LE	0.36	LE
				2.24		
CLUSTER MEAN			2.16	0.31	LE	2.14
LE						0.30

Table 1 shows that all the skills (items 1-13) for staff motivation are rarely applied by the school heads. Each of the items had a mean score below acceptance range of 2.50 on a four-point Likert's scale. The items which have the highest mean score of 2.29 in this table also fall within the least extent level. Some mean scores are as low as 2.06. This implies that the principals give the least attention to encouraging teachers when they fail, and to recommendation of deserving teachers for promotions. The low cluster mean scores of 2.16 and 2.14 indicate that principals' lack or fail to apply the skills for motivation of staff.

Research Question 2

To what extent do the principals apply the skills for delegation of duties?

Table 2

Mean rating of teachers on the principals' application of skills for delegation of duties to teachers

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}	SD	REMARKS
14.	Directives are made clear enough to eliminate doubts	2.14	0.26	Least Extent
15.	Not too many responsibilities are assigned at a time	2.18	0.34	Least Extent
16.	Large jobs are broken down into manageable units	2.15	0.30	Least Extent
17.	Delegation of duties is free from unnecessary interferences	2.10	0.32	Least Extent
18.	Delegated duties are supervised	2.16	0.26	Least Extent
19.	Limits of authority are clearly defined	2.15	0.27	Least Extent
20.	Assignments are handed down in writing	2.17	0.38	Least Extent
21.	Assignment of duties is free from favouritism	2.13	0.26	Least Extent
22.	Responsibilities are assigned to capable persons	2.19	0.31	Least Extent
23.	Teachers are given challenging assignments to make them work harder	2.17	0.30	Least Extent
24.	Periodic meetings are held to discuss the progress of the work delegated to teachers	2.17	0.28	Least Extent
25.	Delegated duties are marched with appropriate authorities	2.17	0.32	Least Extent
26.	Responsibilities are handed down in a caring manner	2.16	0.33	Least Extent
27.	Teachers who seek classifications on their assignments get satisfactory responses	2.16	0.29	Least Extent
28.	Teachers' new ideas and suggestions on how to do the work assigned to them are appreciated	2.15	0.23	Least Extent
29.	Mistakes from delegated duties are not used to punish teachers	2.09	0.28	Least Extent
Cluster Mean		2.15		

In table 2, the skills necessary for delegation of duties, are applied by the principals only to the least extent. Each item has a mean score below the 2.50 which is the acceptance score. Item 22 has the highest mean score of 2.19 while item 29 has the lowest. Both indicate poor assignment of duties and punishment of teachers for mistakes from delegated duties respectively. A low cluster

mean of 2.15 again means that principals fail to practicalize the skills of delegating duties to teachers.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers with regards to urban and rural principals' application of staff motivation skills.

Table 3

Group Analysis of Hypothesis

Groups	No	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Sign. Level	T-cal.	Critical value	Decision
Urban	29	28.14	2.00	251	0.05	1.61	1.97	Accepted
Rural	69	27.89	1.70					

Above table (table 3) indicates that at 251 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated t-value of 1.61 is less than the critical t-value of 1.97. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld and accepted. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers on urban and rural principals' application of the skills for staff motivation.

Summary of Result

The study set out to determine the extent to which the principals use their competencies for staff motivation and delegation of duties. In addition, it equally investigated the possible influence of the schools locations on the principals' performance level. Some schools are located in either urban or rural areas.

Discussion

From the analysis of the two research questions as presented in tables 1 and 2, there is the indication that the principals do not do enough regarding staff motivation. They do not do enough to make teachers do the work with utmost dedication. They equally do not engage their staff in

delegating of duties. They do not assign responsibilities to them-Testing the hypothesis also shows that location does not affect the capabilities of the principals so it doesn't really matter where the school is located.

There is an indication that these principals do not apply the skills which Owojori et al, (2010) emphasise their needs to be able to harness the human resources and coordinate same to be able to make success. Inadequate application of the desired skills denies the teachers the opportunity to develop their competences, demonstrate their creativities and show love for their jobs. It also means that the outstanding performances of the teachers are not rewarded. They are not encouraged even when they fail. They may not always be recommended for promotions when they are due. Principals need to appreciate useful contributions of teachers and provide them equal opportunity to function.

Assigning burdensome activities to teachers without making available the necessary facilities interferes with teaching responsibilities (Iworisha, 2002). More praises to teachers can go a long way to boost their morale. Making sure that the entire environment is conducive for teaching-learning activities is a great form of motivation for teachers. The absence of these skills to a reasonable extent no doubt affects teachers' general attitude to duty and level of productivity type.

Boosting the morale of people is not expensive. It does not have to do with financial expenditures. It is rather driven by the will to treat subordinates with human considerations. A pat on the back does a lot of wonders. Verbal expressions do some magic. All it takes is the zeal to make them realize that someone cares. In return, the boss gets the full cooperation of his workers. The result is an improved output. The fact that duties are not adequately delegated down the line shows that those at the apex do not carry others along. They do not give others the sense of participation but exercise absolute authority. This places reasonable stress on them and performance suffers. In all of these situations, the students who are at the receiving end suffer the blunt. Enough is not impacted into them. They come out of school not prepared for future life. Many are not

employable. There is nothing they can do to help themselves and the society rather, they constitute societal nuisance. This situation calls for intervention.

Ordinarily, one would expect that the urban principals would do significantly better, considering the fact that the urban environment has more of the basic amenities that enhance a friendly environment. They are closer to the ministry, boards and agencies that are responsible for the schools. This result differs from the finding of Agwagah (2002), that management of nursery schools in Awka Education Zone was better in the urban area.

Conclusion

The study therefore concludes that:

1. The level at which the principals motivate and delegate duties to teachers is very low.
2. Location does not influence the principals' level of staff motivation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Constant training of principals on the use of the vital and relevant skills is necessary.
2. There should be regular schools supervision and implementation of supervision reports.
3. Government needs to engage teachers with motivational programmes to boost their interest.

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