

# Principals' Performance in Supervision of Classroom Instruction in Ebonyi State Secondary Schools

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## Abstract

Effective principals use a variety of techniques to develop productive climates and to motivate students' learning. One of such techniques for effective classroom management is supervision of instruction. This study was therefore conducted to ascertain principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State secondary schools. A sample of 360 teachers completed a 12-item questionnaire designed for the study. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. The results of the study showed that the principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi State was effective. It was also found that there was a significant difference in the performance of principals in most of the instructional leadership functions in secondary schools in Ebonyi State based on location of schools, but there was no significant difference in the performance principals in most of the instructional leadership functions in secondary school in Ebonyi State based on gender. On the basis of the findings of this study, it was recommended among others; that principals as instructional leaders should give supervision of classroom instruction the place it deserves in their work.

**Key words:** Principal's performance, Supervision, Classroom, Instruction

## 1. Introduction

The school principal, according to Nzomiwu (1997), is primarily charged with the development of each and every student in the school. This is because the student is at the center of the educational process and all activities in the school should aim at developing his total personality to the fullest. This type of full development is not possible without a good school principal who has to coordinate activities within the school, including supervision of classroom instruction.

The principal as an instructional leader is responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of instructional programmes for the effective and efficient attainment of the set educational objectives of the school. Litchfield (2003) has identified the functions of the school principal as an instructional leader. These functions include managing curriculum and instruction and supervision of classroom instruction, among other functions. In managing curriculum and instruction, the principal must assume responsibilities and leadership functions concerning the curriculum that is foremost in establishing an effective instructional programme. The principal plays the role of the team leader in relation to curriculum development. Supervising classroom instruction involves the principal observing a teacher and analysing his or her classroom practice and the teaching and learning process. This is a situation where the teacher is working directly with the learners and the principal is present as a witness to observe systematically classroom events.

The quality and thoroughness in the instructional supervision may vary from person to person or even influenced by gender and the location of school. In other words male principals and female principals and those teaching in urban or rural secondary schools may have different temperaments and ingenuity in supervising instruction.

Experts (Glickman, 1995; Bowman, 2002; Anderson and Nicholson, 2007; Ploghoft and Perkins, 2008; Egwu, 2009) over the years have reported varying qualities of performance among secondary school principals with regard to their role in supervision of instruction. Unfortunately, these reports have concentrated on general instructional supervision and no study has specifically reported the performance of secondary school principals in the supervision of classroom instruction and the differences that might exist in the performance of principals with regard to gender and location of school, both in Ebonyi State and elsewhere. The study was therefore designed to ascertain the principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State secondary schools. Two hypotheses were postulated for the study thus:

1. there is no significant difference between the mean rating of rural and urban secondary school teachers on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State secondary schools, and

2. there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female secondary school teachers on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State secondary schools.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Subjects and Setting

Between September 2008 and January 2009, a descriptive survey was carried out among 630 (317 urban, 313 rural; 316 male, 314 female; randomly drawn from forty-five secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The secondary schools were selected from the three education zones in the state.

### 2.2 Instrument

The researchers used a self-developed questionnaire titled, performance in supervision of classroom instructions questionnaire (PPCIQ), which consisted of 12 items arranged in two sections; A and B. Section A, contained two items about the gender and location of respondents' schools. Section B, consisted of 10 items on principals' performance in the supervision of classroom instruction questionnaire.

Three experts in Measurement Evaluation and Educational Administration from Ebonyi State University were used for validating the PPCIQ. Thirty secondary school teachers (15 each from a rural and an urban school) of both genders in Enugu State were used for test of reliability. The data yielded a Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of 0.860. The reliability coefficient was higher than Ogbazi and Okpala's (1994) criteria of .60 acceptable for good instruments.

### 2.3 Procedure

Permission was granted from the principal of each secondary school included in the study prior to data collection. A consent note with the explanation for the research purpose, method of response and assurance of anonymity was attached to each copy of the PPCIQ. Thereafter, the researcher administered the 630 copies of the questionnaire on the respondents in their staff room during break period and some other time during staff meeting. The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and return same to the researcher immediately. This method ensured a 100% return rate of the questionnaire.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The completed copies of the PPCIQ were examined for completeness of responses and copies that had incomplete responses were discarded. Out of 630 copies of questionnaire distributed 606 (305 urban, 301 rural; 304 male, 302 female) copies, representing about 96.2% return rate, were used for data analysis. Data were analysed using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) score, standard deviation, and t-test. Mean was used to describe the data. A criterion mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 2.50 was set for the study. In this case a mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) score of 2.50 and above was adjudged effective performance in supervision of classroom instructions and a mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) score below 2.50 was adjudged ineffective performance in supervision of classroom instructions. Standard deviation was used to determine how the teachers' responses varied. Statistical differences between variables were tested using t-test statistic. An alpha level of 0.05 was set for the t-tests. All data analyses were done with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0 for Windows.

## 3. Results

Table 1 shows that each of the items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions obtained a mean score above 2.50. Item 8 however, obtained mean score below 2.50. The above results imply that the respondents rated principals' performance in items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 as effective while in item 8, the respondents rated principals' performance as ineffective. The grand mean score is 2.99, which is above the criterion of 2.50 set for the study. This result implies that principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions in secondary schools in Ebonyi State is effective.

Table 1: Mean rating of principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions (n = 606)

| Item              | Statement  | $\bar{x}$   | SD          | Decision |
|-------------------|--|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 1.                | Principal meets regularly with entire teaching staff to discuss instructional improvement or lack of it                      | 3.14        | 0.70        | E        |
| 2.                | Principal delegates vice principal to visit classes during lesson  | 3.14        | 0.69        | E        |
| 3.                | Principal monitors lesson plan and notes of lesson to ensure that they are well prepared to achieve instructional objectives | 3.05        | 0.79        | E        |
| 4.                | Principal meets with graduate teachers to set standard goals and bench mark for instructional progress                       | 3.07        | 0.69        | E        |
| 5.                | Principal observes classroom instruction to ensure that instructional and curriculum goals are being followed                | 3.15        | 0.72        | E        |
| 6.                | Principal encourages teachers to utilize supervisors suggestions   | 3.02        | 0.77        | E        |
| 7.                | Principal instruct vice principal to inspect student notes in order to ensure that the scheme of work is covered each term   | 3.14        | 0.69        | E        |
| 8.                | Principal uses incentive to encourage teachers to reach instructional goals  | 2.01        | 0.70        | IE       |
| 9.                | Principal uses appropriate supervisory techniques like classroom visitation to ensure improved teaching and learning         | 3.15        | 0.68        | E        |
| 10.               | Principal meets with student directly to discuss instructional techniques  | 3.06        | 0.68        | E        |
| <b>Grand mean</b> |  | <b>2.99</b> | <b>0.46</b> | <b>E</b> |

Key: E = Effective, IE = Ineffective

Table 2 shows that each of the t-calculated values for all the items is greater than t-critical value of 1.96. Since each of the t-calculated values is greater than the t-critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural secondary school respondents on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State.

Table 2: t-test analysis of urban and rural secondary school teachers' mean rating on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions

| Item | Statement  | Location | N   | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | df  | t-cal. | t-tab. | Dec.   |
|------|--|----------|-----|-----------|------|-----|--------|--------|--------|
| 1.   | Principal meets regularly with entire teaching staff to discuss instructional improvement or lack of it                      | Urban    | 305 | 3.39      | 0.51 | 604 | 9.80   | 1.96   | Reject |
|      |  | Rural    | 301 | 2.88      | 0.77 |     |        |        |        |
| 2.   | Principal delegates vice principal to visit classes during lesson  | Urban    | 305 | 3.40      | 0.49 | 604 | 9.99   | 1.96   | Reject |
|      |  | Rural    | 301 | 2.88      | 0.77 |     |        |        |        |
| 3.   | Principal monitors lesson plan and notes of lesson to ensure that they are well prepared to achieve instructional objectives | Urban    | 305 | 3.29      | 0.67 | 604 | 8.05   | 1.96   | Reject |
|      |  | Rural    | 301 | 2.82      | 0.77 |     |        |        |        |
| 4.   | Principal meets with graduate teachers to set standard goals and bench mark for instructional progress                       | Urban    | 305 | 3.32      | 0.48 | 604 | 9.65   | 1.96   | Reject |
|      |  | Rural    | 301 | 2.82      | 0.77 |     |        |        |        |
|      |  | Urban    | 305 | 3.49      | 0.50 |     |        |        |        |

|     |   |       |     |      |      |     |       |      |        |
|-----|---|-------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|------|--------|
| 5.  | Principal observes classroom instruction to ensure that instructional and curriculum goals are being followed                                       |       |     |      |      | 604 | 13.39 | 1.96 | Reject |
|     |   | Rural | 301 | 2.81 | 0.74 |     |       |      |        |
|     |   | Urban | 305 | 3.29 | 0.56 |     |       |      |        |
| 6.  | Principal encourages teachers to utilize supervisors suggestions  |       |     |      |      | 604 | 9.02  | 1.96 | Reject |
|     |   | Rural | 301 | 2.74 | 0.89 |     |       |      |        |
|     |   | Urban | 305 | 3.47 | 0.53 |     |       |      |        |
| 7.  | Principal instruct vice principal to inspect student notes in order to ensure that the scheme of work is covered each term                          |       |     |      |      | 604 | 14.29 | 1.96 | Reject |
|     |   | Rural | 301 | 2.80 | 0.63 |     |       |      |        |
|     |   | Urban | 305 | 1.94 | 0.75 |     |       |      |        |
| 8.  | Principal uses incentive to encourage teachers to reach instructional goals   |       |     |      |      | 604 | 2.67  | 1.96 | Reject |
|     |   | Rural | 301 | 2.09 | 0.64 |     |       |      |        |
|     |   | Urban | 305 | 3.37 | 0.49 |     |       |      |        |
| 9.  | Principal uses appropriate supervisory techniques like classroom visitation to ensure improved teaching and learning                                |       |     |      |      | 604 | 8.41  | 1.96 | Reject |
|     |   | Rural | 301 | 2.94 | 0.76 |     |       |      |        |
|     |   | Urban | 305 | 3.32 | 0.55 |     |       |      |        |
| 10. | Principal meets with student directly to discuss instructional techniques Principal meets with student directly to discuss instructional techniques |       |     |      |      | 604 | 10.25 | 1.96 | Reject |
|     |   | Rural | 301 | 2.80 | 0.69 |     |       |      |        |

Table 3 shows that the t-calculated for each of items 1-7 and 9 and 10 is less than t-critical value of 1.96. Since the t-calculated is less than t-critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted for items 1-7 and 9 and 10. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in secondary schools in Ebonyi State for the given items. On the other hand, the t-calculated for item 8 is greater than t-critical of 1.96. Since the t-calculated is greater than the t-critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected for item 8. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents in principals' performance in secondary schools supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State reference to item 8.

Table 3: t-test analysis of male and female teachers' mean rating on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction

| Item | Statement  | Gender | N   | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | Df  | t-cal. | t-tab. | Dec.   |
|------|--|--------|-----|-----------|------|-----|--------|--------|--------|
| 1.   | Principal meets regularly with entire teaching staff to discuss instructional improvement or lack of it  | Male   | 304 | 3.14      | 0.67 | 604 | 0.02   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.14      | 0.73 |     |        |        |        |
| 2.   | Principal delegates vice principal to visit classes during lesson  | Male   | 304 | 3.14      | 0.66 | 604 | 0.10   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.14      | 0.73 |     |        |        |        |
| 3.   | Principal monitors lesson plan and notes of lesson to ensure that they are well prepared to achieve instructional objectives                           | Male   | 304 | 3.06      | .074 | 604 | 0.37   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.04      | 0.77 |     |        |        |        |
| 4.   | Principal meets with graduate teachers to set standard goals and bench mark for instructional progress   | Male   | 304 | 3.07      | 0.72 | 604 | 0.05   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.06      | 0.66 |     |        |        |        |
| 5.   | Principal observes classroom instruction to ensure that instructional and curriculum goals are being followed  | Male   | 304 | 3.16      | 0.71 | 604 | 0.32   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.14      | 0.72 |     |        |        |        |
| 6.   | Principal encourages teachers to utilize supervisors suggestions   | Male   | 304 | 3.07      | 0.69 | 604 | 1.76   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 2.96      | 0.87 |     |        |        |        |
| 7.   | Principal instruct vice principal to inspect student notes in order to ensure that the scheme of work is covered each term                             | Male   | 304 | 3.13      | 0.65 | 604 | 0.14   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.14      | 0.69 |     |        |        |        |
| 8.   | Principal uses incentive to encourage teachers to reach instructional goals  | Male   | 304 | 2.12      | 0.74 | 604 | 3.73   | 1.96   | Reject |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 1.91      | 0.65 |     |        |        |        |
| 9.   | Principal uses appropriate supervisory techniques like classroom visitation to ensure improved teaching and learning                                   | Male   | 304 | 3.15      | 0.65 | 604 | 0.32   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.17      | 0.71 |     |        |        |        |
| 10.  | Principal meets with student directly to discuss instructional techniques<br>Principal meets with student directly to discuss instructional techniques | Male   | 304 | 3.04      | 0.58 | 604 | 0.78   | 1.96   | Accept |
|      |  | Female | 302 | 3.07      | 0.77 |     |        |        |        |

#### 4. Discussion

The present study ascertained principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions in Ebonyi State secondary schools. Results of the study demonstrated that nine out of the ten principals' functions in supervision of classroom instructions had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 (Table 1). These results could imply that principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions in secondary school in Ebonyi State was effective. This was evident from the grand mean score of 2.99 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50 set for the study. The operation of the school enterprise lies on the classroom environment and all other activities are supportive and this makes the principal first and foremost classroom supervisor. Therefore, the findings that principals were performing their functions in respect to the supervision of classroom instruction were expected and plausible enough to be acknowledged.

The findings were in line with those of Hanghey and MacElwain (2007) who reported that supervision of instruction was a fundamental component of instructional leadership viewing the role as imperative to improve instruction. Whittakers (1997) emphasized that the principal must create a visible presence in the daily school activities. He further stated that the effective principal must make it a priority to visit the classroom each day. Lending credence to the above view, Weller (2001) indicated that if schools are to progress, the principals cannot allow daily duties to interfere with their instructional leadership functions. Bryce (1988) also supporting the above view stated that the principal cannot exercise leadership without classroom experience and without a thorough grounding in the realities of the classroom or else the principal will continue to feel uncomfortable and inadequate in educational leadership.

The above views could succinctly imply that principals should devote more time supervising classroom instructions through the help of vice principals. This will improve teaching and learning process thereby fostering curriculum implementation. However, Flath (1999) argued that although the role of the principal as instructional leader is widely advocated, it is seldom prejudiced according to him, and the principal's role is still primarily that of a manager.

Results of the study on Table 2 showed that the t-calculated of all the ten instructional functions of principals in supervision of classroom instructions based on location were greater than t-critical value of 1.96. These results revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools in principals' performance in classroom instruction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with respect to all the functions of principals in the supervision of classroom instructions. The differences found between urban and rural schools in respect to supervision of classroom instructions could be attributed to the principals' supervisory dispositions. In urban schools, it could be that principals are busy with a lot of administrative work especially as it concerns attending to visitors and admission; that principal have no time to visit the classroom. On the other hand, principals in rural schools might be confronted with rural challenges and politics therein to the detriment of supervising classroom instructions. This situation should not be since all schools, including those in urban and rural settings; have the same aims and objectives to accomplish. In line with the above Tyler (1989) reported that schools in the inner part of the city are very different in many respects from those located in affluent suburb. He reported that many variations were found in thousands of schools he studied.

Results of the study on Table 3 showed that the t-calculated of nine out of the ten instructional functions of principals in supervision of instruction in respect to gender were less than the t-critical value of 1.96. These functions include: meeting regularly with teaching staff to discuss instructional improvement, delegating vice principals to visit classroom, monitoring lesson plan and notes of lesson, meeting with graduate teachers to set goals and bench mark for instructional progress, observing classroom instruction, encouraging teachers to utilize supervisors' suggestions, inspecting students' notes, using classroom visitation to ensure improved teaching and learning, and meeting with students to discuss instructional techniques. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted for the nine functions. These results imply that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers in principals' performance with respect to gender. However, principals' functions of using incentives to encourage teachers to reach instructional goals showed that the t-calculated was greater than the t-critical value therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of teachers with respect to male and female principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions relating to the use of incentives to encourage teachers to reach instructional goals.

The results agreed with the assertions that the operation of the school enterprise lies on the classroom environment and that supervision of classroom instruction is a fundamental component of instructional leadership. Therefore, for principals to become effective instructional leaders; they must make classroom visitation a top priority. Principals might carry out these functions through help of vice principals.



## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

One important way of improving classroom instruction in the education industry is through effective supervision of teachers by principals of schools in their bid to exhibit instructional leadership functions. When teachers are provided with effective supervision, they are likely to perform better on their job and consequently making teaching results oriented. The findings of this study demonstrated that principals' performance in supervision of classroom instructions in Ebonyi State secondary schools was effective. However, while there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school teachers in principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction, there was no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers in principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction in Ebonyi State secondary schools.

Though the performance of the principals in supervision of classroom instruction was effective, it was recommended that principals as instructional leaders should give supervision of classroom instruction the place it deserves in their work. This is because supervision of classroom instruction is a fundamental component of instructional leadership.

The results of the study may not be extrapolated to other population teachers in Nigeria who may differ substantially in cultural and socio-economic status. The teachers surveyed represent an important group of the Nigerian population and information generated will be useful in the planning of future supervision programmes in secondary schools in Ebonyi State and other states in Nigeria.

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