

Principals' Competency Needs for Effective Schools' Administration In Nigeria

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Abstract

The issue of poor academic performance of students in Nigeria could be attributed to poor administrative skills of school administrators. This study investigated the competency needs of principals for effective schools' administration at secondary school level. This was carried out in South West Geo - Political Zone of Nigeria. Principal Administrative Skills Survey Questionnaire (**PASSQ**) was used to obtain information through a thirty (30) item questionnaire on instructional skills, personnel management skills and financial skills needed by principals for effective administration. Three research questions formulated to guide the study. Mean scores of principals' opinion were used to answer the research questions.

Key words: Principals, Competency needs, Administration, Secondary schools and Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Education in all countries of the world has been considered very important for personal and societal development. It is in view of the indispensable role of education in development of man and modern society that various declarations on education have been made at the global level and in Nigeria. Considering governments' huge investment in public education, its output in terms of quality of students, observable decline in students' performance, attitude and values have been at variance with government expenditure. It appears as if this unpleasant situation is not a reflection of the instructional quality in the schools. (Ukeje 2000) and (Ibukun 2003) attributed the failure of educational programmes in Nigeria to several factors. Among these factors are teacher factor (shortage of teachers, inadequate training and poor motivation of teachers). They also include lack of basic infrastructure, lack of leadership and administrative will, lack of adequate and accurate statistics. Also include are inadequate funding, embezzlement, bureaucratic bottle-neck of civil service and Nigerians' poor altitude to work.

Decision-making, as an integral of planning is a very crucial and indispensable aspect of management and very essential for the success of instructional management. It is therefore imperative that school principals be knowledgeable in decision making for effective school administration. Olele as cited in. (Peretomode, 1998) agreed that principals as the chief executive in secondary schools should possess skills for making right decisions that will benefit to the school need and the staff generally. .(Chukwu, 2003) posited that for a result oriented school; the teachers need to be motivated using democratic leadership skills by the head teacher, full involvement of the teachers in programme development, provision of adequate qualified teachers and adequate teaching materials. (Ngoka, 2000) and (Adegbemile, 2004) opined that workers will be more productive if they have the opportunity of meeting their needs why working in an organizations such as improved condition of work, payment of salaries as when due and provision of in service training among others. In addition, (Ibukun, 2003) asserted that communication skills, leadership skills and decision making skills are essential for effective personnel management. Managing funds is the one of the major tasks of principals.

The success of any school programme depends very much on the way of the financial inputs are managed. .(Ogbonnaya, 2000) stated that central purpose of the financial management is the raising of fund and ensuring that

the funds so mobilized are utilized in the most effective and efficient manner. He further outlines the following means through which schools could raise fund school fees, government grant, proceeds from school activities, community efforts, donation from individual, charity organizations, endowment funds.

2. Research Questions

The following research questions have been asked to guide the study:-

1. What are the instructional leadership skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration in South West Geo- Political Zone of Nigeria ?
2. What are the personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration in South West Geo- Political Zone of Nigeria ?
3. What are the financial management skills needed by principal for effective schools' administration in South West Geo- Political Zone of Nigeria?

3. Statement of the problem

Secondary education in Nigeria where youths are to be prepared for useful living and higher education has not been able to realize its objectives. It appears that the administrators charged with the task of utilizing the available scarce resources to attain the secondary school objectives are not competent. Hence, there is need to investigate the administrative needs of secondary schools principals.

4. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this is to

- Identify the instructional leadership skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration.
- Ascertain the personnel management skills needed by the principals for effective schools' administration.
- Find out the financial management skills needed by the principals for effective schools' administration.

5. Significance of the Study

This study becomes necessary as the outcome of this study would provide principals and other school heads useful information on the skills needed for the instructional leadership. It will help principal to update their personnel management skills and improve their personnel management competence which could reduce incidence of low morale job dissatisfaction and poor job performance among teachers in the secondary schools. The findings of the study will create awareness for the government on the need to appoint school principals strictly on the basis of their administrative competency.

6. Methods

6.1 Research Design

The study adopted a survey design.

6.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

100 secondary schools were selected by stratified random sampling from all the Junior Secondary Schools located in the six states in South West Geo- Political Zone of Nigeria. The principals in the 100 schools were the sample used for this study.

6.3 Instrument for Data Collection

The researcher developed a questionnaire called Principal Administrative Skills Survey Questionnaire (PASSQ) which served as the main instrument for data collection. The PASSQ consisted of two sections. Section A seeks information on the personal data while section B is a thirty (30) item questionnaire developed by the researcher with a four point rating scale. The questionnaire items were arranged in three clusters to elicit information regarding the administrative leadership skills needed by principals.

6.4 Validity of Instrument

The instruments were given to two specialists in Educational Management for validation with regard to terminology that was used to measure the intent of the study. Their corrections were used in the reconstruction of the instrument.

6.5 Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a test-re-test technique was employed. A pilot study was carried out by administering the (ASSQ) instrument at intervals of two weeks on 20 non participating Secondary School Principals from Ondo State. The reliability test was calculated using the person product moment correlation. A correlation coefficient of 0.88 was obtained.

6.6 Data Collection

The researchers administered and collected the instrument from the respondents during the principals' meetings. This technique helped the researchers to reduce the chances of the questionnaire being misplaced or not returned by the respondents. However, out of the hundred copies of the questionnaire distributed, ninety eight were collected. This amount to 98% return rate.

6.7 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics involving the use of Mean and Standard Deviation was used to answer the research questions.

7. Results

Research Question I

What are the instructional leadership skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration?

The study revealed that principals perceived all the items as instructional leadership skills needed for effective schools' administration as all the items had mean scores above the 2.50 cutoff point on a four-point likert scale. Item 6 had the highest mean scores of 3.83. This implies that the principal considering it a very instructional leadership skill for effective schools' administration.(See Note 1)

Research Question 2

What are the personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration?

The study revealed that all the personnel management skills in the table are needed by principals for effective schools' administration. Each of the skills had a mean score above the 2.50 cut-off point on a four-point likert scale. Items 5 and 11 had equal and highest mean score of 3.83 each showing that the principals perceiving the skills as very essential personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration.

On the other hand, items 7, had the lowest mean score of 2.76 indicating that the principals considering the skill less important personnel management skill needed by principal for effective schools administration. (See Note 2)

Research question 3:

What are the financial management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration?

The study revealed that all the financial management skills are needed by the principals for effective schools' administration. Each of the items had a mean score above the 2.50 cut-off points on a four point likert scale. Items 9 had the highest mean score of 3.87, showing that this financial management skill is highly needed by the principals for effective schools' administration. However, the table also shows that the principals did not consider items 1, a very essential management skill needed by the principals for effective schools' administration as the item had lowest mean score of 2.68.(See Note 3)

8. Discussion

The analysis of research question one (Table 1) indicated that the instructional leadership skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration include: principal co-operation with teachers in defining objectives for the

school, selecting learning experiences, methods and procedures to achieve the objectives; assigning subjects and classes according to qualification and competence, allocating time to subjects; making facilities accessible to all teachers according to need. The skills also included are: principal ensuring that all staff work co-operatively for the common goal of the schools, supervising lesson plan, teaching and learning activities, evaluating the plan and implementation of curriculum programmes and assisting teachers to try new findings.

These findings are not surprising because the success of any human endeavour depends on the competencies and skills possessed by the personnel who perform the tasks necessary for the achievement of purpose or objectives. The findings of this study agreed with (Mgbodile, 2003) reported that for effective schools' administration, school administrators must possess and employ planning and decision-making skills, leadership competencies, supervisory skills and skills for school climate management.

On research question two, (Table 2) showed the personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration to include: principal identifying what motivates his staff, recognizing the efforts of his staff, motivating the staff, involving staff in decision-making on matters concerning them, communicating effectively with the staff, delegating duties and authorities to capable staff, encouraging appropriate staff professional development. These findings equally are not unexpected as indeed successful administrators are those who know how to motivate their staff to make them co-operative and loyal. These findings agreed with (Ibukun, 2003) who affirmed that there is no amount of capital injection into Educational System without a change of altitude, better skill acquisition and overt commitment on the part of the teaching force that can produce the much-desired change in school performance. These findings agreed with (Adegbemile, 2004) who reported that encouraging staff professional development help teachers to improve on their weaknesses. Other personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration, as revealed in the results of the study are: principal modeling behaviours expected from others, principal defusing tense situation and negotiating solutions, not taking side in conflict resolution. These findings agreed with (Ngoka, 2000) who reported those behaviours that demonstrate leadership competency and conflict management skills which include among others: sets expectations, models behaviours expected from others, does not take side, negotiates to achieve resolutions while timely resolution of conflicts brings harmony, co-operation, unity, job satisfaction and good job performance.

It was the opinions of the principals (Table 3) that the financial management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration are: prioritizing financial allocation according to needs, ensuring that budgets reflects agreed goals and objectives, delegating the mechanism of financial matters to capable staff, keeping close check on financial matters delegated to staff, working within the constraints of the school budget, planning and sourcing for funds for school development, keeping accurate financial information about the school and giving true and fair view of financial position of the school. These findings ought to be so, because such financial management skills are needed by the school principals to make them effective in planning, sourcing and utilization of school funds.

9. Conclusion

The major objective of this study was to investigate the administrative competency needs of principals for effective schools administration at secondary school level in South West Geo – Political Zone of Nigeria. The study revealed that the instructional leadership skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration include among others: principal co-operating with teachers to define objectives, principal providing facilities, supervising lesson plans, teaching and learning activities, evaluating curriculum plan and implementation. It was also shown from the results of the study that the major personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration are: principal motivating staff, encouraging staff professional development, communicating affectively with staff, resolving conflicts.

It was equally revealed from the findings of the study that the financial management skills principals needed for effective schools' administration among others include: principal preparing budget jointly with the management staff, sourcing for funds, keeping accurate financial information, giving true and fair financial position of the school.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it is recommended tha:- 1.Principals must define objectives with teachers as teachers would be committed in their job to ensure that the objectives are achieved as they participated in deciding the objectives.

2. Principals must keep accurate financial information of the school. By giving true and financial position of the school would serve as “curtain raiser” for the non-governmental organizations, PTA, individuals and government to give out funds for school development.

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Notes

Note 1

Table 1: Mean sores on instruction leadership skills needed by principals for effective schools’ administration

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Principal in co-operation with his teachers define objective for the	3.35	1.08	Agreed

	school and each department and unit			
2	Principal jointly with teachers select learning experience method and procedures to employ in achieving the objective	3.14	0.99	Agreed
3	Principal assign subject and class to teachers according to qualification and competence.	3.72	0.70	Strongly agreed
4	Principal allocates time to subjects	3.31	0.80	Agreed
5	Principals makes available facilities accessible to all teachers	3.68	0.61	Strongly agreed.
6	Principal makes ensures that the staff in different units and work position work co-operatively and not antagonistically for the common goal of the school	3.83	0.39	Strongly agreed
7	Principal supervises the teachers' lesson plan	3.29	0.83	Agreed
8	Principal supervises teaching and learning activities, in the class room	3.52	0.55	Strongly agreed
9	Principal evaluates the planning and implementation of curriculum programmes.	3.10	1.06	Agreed
10	Principal assist teachers to try new research findings.	3.21	1.01	Agreed.

Table 1: above shows that the principals perceived all the items as instructional leadership skills needed for effective schools' administration as all the items had mean scores above the 2.50 cutoff point on a four-point likert scale. Item 6 had the highest mean scores of 3.83. This implies that the principal considering it a very instructional leadership skill for effective schools' administration.

Note 2

Table 2: mean scores on personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Principal model behaviours he expects from others	3.81	0.50	Strongly agreed
2	Principal identifies what motivates his staff.	3.71	0.51	Strongly agreed
3	Principal communicates effectively with his staff.	3.81	0.46	Strongly agreed
4	Principal recognizes the effort of his staff.	3.77	0.47	Strongly agreed
5	Principal delegates duties and authority to capable staff.	3.83	0.45	Strongly agreed
6	Principal involves staff in decision-making and matters concerning them.	3.63	0.49	Strongly agreed
7	Principal praise in public, criticizes only in private	2.76	0.89	Agreed
8	Principal motivates, encourage and cajoles his staff.	3.41	0.55	Agreed
9	Principal encourages and enable appropriate professional development of staff.	3.39	0.51	Agreed
10	Principal defuses tense situations and negotiates a solution.	3.63	0.49	Strongly agreed

11	Principal does not take side in conflict resolution.	3.83	0.45	Strongly agreed
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It shown in table 2 above that all the personnel management skills in the table are needed by principals for effective schools' administration. Each of the skills had a mean score above the 2.50 cut-off point on a four-point likert scale. Items 5 and 11 had equal and highest mean score of 3.83 each showing that the principals perceiving the skills as very essential personnel management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration. On the other hand, items 7, had the lowest mean score of 2.76 indicating that the principals considering the skill less important personnel management skill needed by principal for effective schools administration.

Note 3

Table 3: mean scores on financial management skills needed by principals for effective schools' administration.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Principal jointly with the management staff and heads of departments and units, prepares budget for the school	2.68	1.03	Agreed
2	Principal priorities financial allocation according to needs	3.29	0.71	Agreed
3	Principal plans and sources for funds for school improvement.	3.27	0.81	Agreed
4	Principal ensures that budget reflect agreed goals and objectives	3.49	0.54	Agreed
5	Principal delegates the mechanism of financial matters to capable staff	3.14	0.76	Agreed
6	Principal keeps close check on financial matters delegated to staff	3.43	0.58	Agreed
7	Principal works within the constraints of the	3.63	0.58	Strongly

	school budget			agreed
8	Principal keeps accurate financial information about the school	3.75	0.52	Strongly agreed
9	Principal give true and fair view of the financial position of the school	3.87	0.52	Strongly agreed

Table 3 above shows that all the financial management skills in the table are needed by the principal for effective schools' administration. Each of the items had a mean score above the 2.50 cut-off points on a four point likert scale. Items 9 had the highest mean score of 3.87, showing that this financial management skill is highly needed by the principals for effective schools' administration. However, the table also shows that the principals did not consider items 1, a very essential management skill needed by the principals for effective schools' administration as the item had lowest mean score of 2.68.

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