

Original Article

SKILL ACQUISITION AND JOB EFFECTIVENESS OF PRINCIPALS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated principals' application of video surveillance, camera as security management practices in the administration of secondary schools in Enugu state. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study was 8,816 respondents. It comprised 295 principals and 8,521 teachers in the public secondary schools in Enugu state. The sample size of the study consists of 338 respondents, consisting of 47 principals and 291 teachers in Enugu state public secondary schools, as at the time of this study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire which contained 5 items. The instrument was faced-validated by three experts; one from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education and two from Department of Educational Management; all from the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha and overall reliability coefficient of 0.95 was obtained, which indicates that the instrument was reliable and therefore, considered appropriate for data collection. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants who were briefed on the method of administering and retrieving of the instruments. Statistical tools used for data analysis for the study were Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test statistics. The findings revealed that the extent to which principals, use video surveillance cameras, as security management practice is to a low extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that, the governments through the federal, state Ministries of Education and the Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) should organize workshops and seminars that will expose principals on the latest technological tools such as video surveillance, cameras for ensuring security in their schools.

Keyword: Skill Acquisition, Job Effectiveness, Principals, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Education is a vital social service that primarily focuses on developing the workforce of a nation and promoting knowledge for the betterment of society and economic progress. Chukwu (2009) describes education as the guiding light that prevents the world from falling into darkness. It is universally recognized as a tool for national development and transformation (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013), serving as the foundation for positive and proactive changes in economic, social, and political aspects of a society. Education is the key to empowering individuals and entire nations (Olawolu and Kaegon, 2012).

Secondary education plays a critical role in the overall educational system. It acts as a connecting link between primary education and higher education. Secondary schools, including those in Nigeria, are significant institutions in implementing the educational policies of a country. According to Ogba (2011), the necessity to bridge the educational gaps that arise from primary education and prepare students for specialized fields of study imposes new responsibilities on the administrators of secondary education. Secondary schools operate as formal organizations with bureaucratic administrative structures, governed by established rules and regulations. They aim to provide educational opportunities and foster the growth of both students and staff members, typically under the leadership of a principal (Wilson, 2017).

A principal holds a distinct position within the administrative structure of a secondary school. Similarly, in Nigeria, principals play a central role in managing secondary education and are crucial for the child's educational experience. The success or failure of principals largely depends on their managerial skills and the quality of personnel they oversee (Odumodu, 2011). Soni (2012) views principals as both teachers and leaders of the school, emphasizing their dynamic nature, belief in change, and ability to cultivate future leaders while equipping them with necessary skills for success. To accomplish these goals in Enugu

State's secondary schools, principals must effectively employ administrative skills and manage the school's resources, both material and human.

Despite the Nigerian government's commitment to eradicating illiteracy and promoting universal basic education over the past five decades, concerns have been raised regarding declining education standards and deteriorating morals. Some attribute this decline to students' poor performance in internal and external examinations. Teachers have also faced blame for not being as dedicated and committed to education as their predecessors in the 20th century. Conversely, teachers as a collective group tend to place blame on parents and children for these issues (Adebayo, 2015). In summary, stakeholders have pointed out instances of ineffective job performance by principals, including in secondary schools in Enugu State. This study aims to investigate the skill acquisition and job effectiveness of principals in these schools. The declining quality of education in public secondary schools in Enugu State, attributed to poor personnel management, suggests that principals lack the necessary skills to effectively carry out their job responsibilities. The role of the principal as the administrative head is crucial, and job effectiveness is a critical aspect addressed in this study.

Job effectiveness refers to the degree to which objectives are achieved and problems are solved. It is a vital factor in determining organizational outcomes and success. Johnson and Meade (2010), explain that job effectiveness involves task performance and individual activities that contribute to the value of the organization. These activities can be direct or indirect, depending on the staff's status and the organizational activities they are involved in under the direction of the leader. In the secondary school system, all tasks are carried out by school staff, whether academic or non-academic, and their job effectiveness is evaluated based on their activities as directed by the principal. Chukwu (2009) emphasize that

relevant skills are essential for principals to achieve job effectiveness in secondary schools.

Skill acquisition refers to the process of learning and acquiring specific abilities. It entails the development of new skills and the practice of particular approaches or methods, usually gained through training or experience (Chukwu, 2009). The success of an organization, such as a secondary school, relies on the application of these skills in the administration of the school, which ultimately enhances job effectiveness. Principals play a vital role in achieving the school's vision and goals. According to Chukwu (2009), principals can acquire various skills that contribute to effective job performance in a secondary school system, including people-oriented skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, and leadership skills.

People-oriented skills refer to patterns of behavior and interactions with others. Principals must interact with a diverse range of individuals, including students, teachers, parents, and school board officials. To accomplish the school's goals, a principal needs to work collaboratively with all these groups (Chukwu, 2009). Acting as a leader to teachers, the principal should establish clear objectives to provide them with guidance. Additionally, the principal should be approachable, creating an environment where both adults and children feel comfortable expressing themselves. It is crucial to maintain a professional and authoritative demeanor as the head of the school while fostering open communication to achieve positive job effectiveness.

Communication involves the transmission of information and ideas between individuals, where one person conveys a message to another person. It plays a crucial role in effectively implementing school programs and goals. For principals, having strong communication skills is essential. They need to effectively communicate instructions and expectations to the school staff, ensuring clarity and understanding. Additionally, principals must engage in communication with external individuals and organizations to advocate for the school. When interacting with students,

principals should demonstrate patience and proficiency in communicating with children and young adults, aiming for job effectiveness. These skills are relevant for principals in all public secondary schools in Enugu State, regardless of their gender.

Gender encompasses the societal and cultural aspects that define and represent the concepts of being male or female. It encompasses the distinguishing characteristics that differentiate organisms based on their reproductive roles as males or females (Abubakar and Uboh, 2010). In Enugu State's secondary schools, there are both male and female principals who serve as the administrative heads. The field of school administration has become increasingly complex due to factors such as population growth in secondary schools, insufficient teaching staff, indiscipline, and involvement in cult activities. Consequently, principals need to possess specific skills to effectively handle these challenges. This research aimed to address this gap by focusing on enhancing the job effectiveness of principals, taking gender into consideration.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of principals' job performance in public secondary schools, particularly in Enugu State, Nigeria, has become a significant concern. This issue has resulted in the underperformance of students in both internal and external examinations, as well as a decline in the quality of teaching by the educators. Various stakeholders in secondary education have attributed these challenges to the ineffective coordination by principals. The overall poor performance suggests that principals are not meeting the expected standards of job effectiveness. It seems that principals lack the necessary skills required to positively impact their job performance. These skills encompass being people-oriented and possessing effective communication abilities, which are crucial for influencing job effectiveness. Hence, the research problem can be framed as follows: To what extent does the acquisition of skills by principals influence job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which principals' skill acquisition influences their job effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent to which principals' people oriented skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State;
2. Examine the extent to which principals' communication skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:-

1. To what extent do principals' people oriented skills influence their job effectiveness in the area of personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. To what extent do principals' communication skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at .05 level of significance:

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which principals people oriented skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on

the extent to which principal's communication skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Method

A descriptive survey research design was utilized in this study, which was conducted in Enugu State. The study involved a population of 295 individuals, consisting of 201 male principals and 94 female principals. Data was collected using a researcher structured questionnaire called the "Skills Acquisition and Job Effectiveness of Principals Questionnaire (SAJEPQ)." In order to ensure the questionnaire's validity, it was reviewed by two experts in Educational Management and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Education at Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The instrument's reliability was assessed by conducting a test for internal consistency using Cronbach alpha, resulting in reliability coefficients of .79 and .81 for clusters 1 and 2, respectively. The overall reliability index was determined to be .80. The researcher, aided by three research assistants, administered the questionnaire to the respondents. The research questions were answered using mean with standard deviation, and the hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistic at a significance level of .05.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals' people oriented skills influence their job effectiveness in the area of personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' people oriented skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State

S/N	ITEMS	Male Principals			Female Principals		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
	The following principals' people-oriented skills influence their job effectiveness:						
1	Openness.	3.01	.81	GE	3.04	.81	GE
2	Encourages innovation.	2.95	.82	GE	3.02	.80	GE
3	Empowerment of the staff and students.	2.99	.81	GE	2.92	.82	GE
4	Creating job satisfaction.	2.92	.81	GE	3.02	.80	GE
5	Having the spirit of teamwork.	2.99	.84	GE	2.96	.83	GE
6	Supervising the school activities.	2.90	.83	GE	2.99	.79	GE
7	Mentoring the staff.	3.11	.80	GE	3.03	.82	GE
	Grand Mean	2.98	.81	GE	3.00	.81	GE

The table above presents the average ratings given by male and female teachers regarding the impact of principals' people-oriented skills on their effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State. Male teachers' ratings ranged from 2.90 to 3.11, while female teachers' ratings ranged from 2.92 to 3.05. Both groups had overall average ratings of 2.98 and 3.00 respectively, with standard deviations of 0.81 for both. The similar standard deviations suggest that

the respondents had similar responses. Consequently, the responses from both male and female teachers indicate a significant influence of principals' people-oriented skills on their job effectiveness in personnel management in Enugu State secondary schools.

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals' communication skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' communication skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State

S/N	ITEMS	Male Principals			Female Principals		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
	The following principals' communication skills influence their job effectiveness:						
8	Using telephone to communicate with teachers.	2.94	.80	GE	2.96	.79	GE
9	Using eye contact to communicate with staff.	2.94	.83	GE	2.98	.82	GE
10	Nodding of heads to show approval of certain actions.	3.02	.81	GE	3.02	.83	GE
11	Use of school magazines to communicate with the teachers.	2.97	.85	GE	2.99	.81	GE
12	Use of pamphlet to communicate with teachers.	2.99	.85	GE	3.06	.82	GE
13	Providing feedback to the teachers.	3.05	.80	GE	3.01	.82	GE
14	Direct face to face communication with teachers.	3.04	.81	GE	2.99	.82	GE
	Grand Mean	3.00	.82	GE	3.00	.82	GE

The table above displays the average ratings of male and female principals regarding the impact of

their communication skills on their effectiveness in managing personnel in secondary schools in Enugu

State. Male principals received ratings ranging from 2.94 to 3.07, while female principals' ratings ranged from 2.96 to 3.06. Both groups had overall average ratings of 3.00 and standard deviations of 0.82. The small standard deviations indicate that the respondents' responses were similar. Consequently, the responses from male and female principals indicate that communication skills significantly influence their job effectiveness in

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principals on the Extent to which People Oriented Skills Influence their Job Effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Enugu State

Group	n	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male Principals	201	2.98	.81	293	2.152	.014	Ho ₁ not rejected
Female Principals	94	3.00	.81				

The results from Table 3, which examined the impact of people-oriented skills on job effectiveness among male and female teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State, can be summarized as follows: The analysis yielded a calculated value of 2.152 at 573 degrees of freedom, with a p-value of 0.0146. This p-value is lower than the significance level of 0.05. Based on these findings, we reject the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference between the average

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to which Communication Skills Influence their Job Effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Enugu State

Group	n	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male Principals	201	3.00	.82	293	.208	.049	Ho ₂ not rejected
Female Principals	94	3.00	.82				

The results from Table 4, which displays information about male and female principals in secondary schools in Enugu State, demonstrate that communication skills play a role in their effectiveness on the job. The statistical analysis showed a computed value of 0.208 with 573 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.049. This p-

personnel management in Enugu State secondary schools.

Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which principals' people oriented skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

ratings of male and female teachers regarding the influence of people-oriented skills on their job effectiveness in Enugu State's secondary schools.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' communication skills influence their job effectiveness in personnel management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

value is lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. As a result, we can reject the null hypothesis, which suggests that there is no significant distinction in the average ratings of male and female principals concerning the impact of communication skills on their job effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the results of data analyzed are discussed below:

The study's findings indicated that the people-oriented skills of principals greatly affect their effectiveness in managing personnel. The results clearly demonstrated that principals' skills, such as being open-minded, promoting innovation, empowering staff and students, fostering job satisfaction, fostering teamwork, and overseeing school activities, have a significant impact on their job effectiveness. These findings align with the research conducted by Edet, Benson, and Williams (2017), who suggested that principals' openness, which is a component of people-oriented skills, positively affects their job effectiveness. Additionally, when examining the hypothesis, the findings revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers' average ratings regarding the influence of people-oriented skills on their job effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State.

The study's discovery indicated that the communication skills of principals greatly impact their effectiveness in personnel management. The evidence from the study highlighted various aspects of principals' communication skills, such as using the telephone to communicate with teachers, employing eye contact when interacting with staff, nodding to express approval of certain actions, and utilizing school magazines to communicate with teachers, among other methods. These communication skills have a significant influence on the job effectiveness of principals, which aligns with the findings of Muraina (2014) who emphasized the significant relationship between principals' communication skills and administrative effectiveness. Additionally, Edet, Benson, and Williams (2017) discovered that principals' job performance depends to a large extent on factors such as their communication strategies and available resources, further supporting the study's findings. However, the tested hypothesis revealed no noteworthy difference between male and female teachers in terms of the extent to

which communication skills influence their job effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Conclusion

The research investigated the process of acquiring skills and the impact on job performance for secondary school principals in Enugu State. Based on the study's results, the following deductions were made: the effectiveness of principals in secondary schools in Enugu State is influenced by their ability to interact with people and communicate effectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that maintaining these skills will improve the administrative effectiveness of principals in schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made in the light of the findings.

1. Principals must endeavour to keep a high level of professional spirit and good moral standard of the schools by adopting problem solving skills.
2. The State Ministry of Education should organize regular inspection to schools to monitor the communication skills used by principals that could enhance their effective job performance in the school.

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