



**IN-SERVICE TRAINING AS DETERMINANT OF PRINCIPALS' PERSONNEL
ADMINISTRATION EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
OBOLLO AFOR EDUCATION ZONE OF ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administration effectiveness in public secondary schools in Obollo Afor education zone of Enugu State Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population for the study was 1,562 principals and teachers elicited from all the public secondary schools in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State. 20% of the population was used to get the sample of 312, made up of 17 principals and 295 teachers. An 18-item instrument titled in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administrative effectiveness questionnaire (ITDOPE) was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from Educational Management department and one from Measurement and Evaluation department, all from the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Agbani. Reliability co-efficient of .92 and .86, for clusters A and B and overall reliability of .89 were obtained. Data generated was analyzed using mean rating and standard deviation, while t- test was used to test hypotheses. Findings indicated that delegating authority and responsibilities to staff demonstrates principals' leadership effectiveness. Also, the study finding revealed that keeping every staff informed on matters affecting them is an indication of secondary school principals' effective personnel administration in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State. Among the recommendations was that the ministry of education in Enugu State through post primary school management board (PPSMB) should organize and encourage principals to undergo in-service training in order to update their knowledge in school personnel management for effective educational administration and the achievement of educational goals in the State.

Keywords: In-Service Training, Principalship, Personnel Administration, Secondary Education.

Introduction

Education has become a crucial aspect of human life, evolving over time. It is often defined as the process of acquiring knowledge through the act of teaching and learning. It is a socialization process that involves transmitting valuable ideas, skills, behavior and knowledge to those committed to learning, whether children or adults, aiming for self-improvement. Education improves the quality of life of a society through refinement of its potentials. It enhances the application of man's achievement towards improvement of his environment. In every known great nation, therefore, national development was preceded and accomplished by educational



advancement. Education has been seen as a vehicle for economic, socio-cultural and political development of nations and individuals (Obayan, 2016). Babatunde (2024) observed that education is a social process in which one achieves societal growth and individual competence. It is a dynamic institution that requires a continual attention to attain a standard of living within the society of man. There are different levels of education in the Nigeria school system, and they include pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Each level has its head who is the highest-ranking administrator. The head of pre-primary and primary is known as the headmaster or headmistress, while that of tertiary education is known as Vice Chancellor, Rector or Provost depending on the type of the institution, where as that of secondary school is known as the school principal.

The school principal is the head and highest-ranking administrator in secondary education. Offor (2017) noted that the school principal is the chief administrative officer of the school, who is either blamed or praised depending on the degree of his effectiveness in influencing others in and outside school to enhance teaching and learning, aimed at achieving school set objectives. Principals are driving force behind any school and it is argued that they are keys to the quality of the learning process (Igbokwe, 2023). The success of an administrator depends on his ability to discharge his managerial functions and make judicious use of his managerial skills (Eniola, 2016). They must therefore be equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to enable them function or perform their administrative job effectively and efficiently. It may be noted that knowledge and problem-solving skills are not innate, but can be learnt through training which in-service training is one of the major ways of acquiring such skills and competencies. To achieve effective teaching and learning in secondary school, the principal should be able to carry out effective personnel administration within the school

Personnel administration which is also known as human resource management can be seen as the design of formal systems in an organization to ensure effective and efficient use of human potentials to accomplish organizational goals. Personnel administration is a set of organizational activities directed towards attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce within the educational institution (Ugah 2019). Personnel Administration, handles a great many issues in the workplace. The primary functions of personnel administration are recruiting, selecting and hiring of new employees in an organization. Personnel administration is also responsible in seeing that workplace standards meet legal and ethical criteria, including the manner in which workers are treated by their supervisors. Employees who are new to the field do not always know the policies and procedures, even if they have incredible experience and skills set. Training is almost always necessary to let the newly employed workers have the knowledge of the policies and procedures in the work place. To equip principals with needed experiences to run the schools effectively, they should be retrained through in-service training programmes, workshops and seminars.

In line with the above statement, principals are required to update their managerial skills regularly in order to achieve the goals of secondary education. There are some managerial skills which secondary school principals are required to have in order to carryout effective personnel administration. In this study, organizing and communication skills are the core managerial skills that will be discussed.

Organizing in an organization however is the process of arranging and allocating work, authority and resources among organization workforce for the pursuit of the way to achieve



specific goals. Nwani (2023) observes that organizing in schools is an administrative process of having a structure and assigning people to the posts for the purpose of performing specific duties. It is sometimes seen as a process on which an administrator identifies and groups the work to be done in smaller units, and assigns people to the various units with relevant materials, information and authority. Organizing in schools enables the principal to assign duties to academic and nonacademic staff according to competence and it tends to minimize conflict in schools, since each person knows what to do. Organizing helps the principal to coordinate the various organizational activities; since he is aware of the various assignments given to individuals. Oyedeji (2022) defined organizing to relate to the grouping of people and activities into specific unit and trying to establish relationship between them. In this regard, the internal organization and control of the schools depend largely on the principals. The principals however, should make effective use of the organizational skill to put the right person in the right place to do the right thing at the right time. It is the process of engaging two or more people in working relationship in a structural way. It is obvious that even with adequate planning and organizing without proper communication, the set goals will either not be achieved or achieved haphazardly. It is obvious that during organizing process, tasks are divided into units and individuals on the basis of their knowledge and skills are made to man these tasks. That is departmentalization of tasks according to knowledge and ability. The principals obviously will want to know if these tasks are being effectively and efficiently carried out. Also, the subordinate or the workforce needs to adequately inform the principal on what they are doing and the challenges they are having in the process of carrying out the tasks. To achieve this, communication between the principal and the subordinate or the school workforce becomes imperative. On the other hand, there is no other means through which a secondary school principal can get both staff and students informed on the happenings in the school system if not through effective communication.

Communication is the life blood of any organization. No institution can meet the need of its people without proper communication. Information has to flow from the school management to the staff and students. Heads of department must be briefed by the principals before disseminating the news to other members of the staff and students. The importance of communication skills in administrative effectiveness of the principals cannot be over emphasized. Perhaps, Onuh, (2023) observed that; possibly the most vital and fundamental element in the management process is based on working with people, which is done through some forms of communication. He stated further that the success of managerial actions depends to a large extent on the effective use of communication to relate to members of an organisation. Nwankwo (2019) also stated that keeping everyone informed is a positive way of ensuring effective leadership, co-operation, co-ordination, support and commitment. To explain the influence of communication skill on administrative effectiveness of principals therefore, Scott and Mitchell (2016) mentioned four (4) major functions of communication as follows:

Communication gives employees the opportunity of expressing their feelings and also serves as medium of resolution of conflicts, reducing tension and refining direction for individuals. It serves as motivational function of encouraging achievement in subordinates. It provides the necessary information for decision making. It is used to control the activities in an organization (school).

There are other managerial skills such as planning, supervision and other skills that are not mentioned here which principals apply in order to achieve set goals of education. As it is obvious



that there is a great deal of change in educational sector in response to dynamic nature of the society, there is the need that principals in order to cope with these changes, the principals should have the knowledge of managerial skills and see themselves as agents of change by updating their knowledge to meet up with demand of the time. It is in this regard that this study investigates in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administration effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Going further, in-service training can be defined as an integral part of staff development programme, which is organised for the staff while in service. In service training of principals is an ongoing training of practicing principals typically arranged by the school board that employed them. According to Uche (2023) in-service training programme is a process for continuous updating of knowledge, skills and interests in a chosen field. With the above definitions, one can draw conclusion that the benefits of in-service training to the principals cannot be over emphasized, as it does not only promote their professional growth but also helps them to get abreast with recent changes in the system thereby enhancing effective personnel administration. Up till now, the secondary school system in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu state does not take administrative qualification and criteria into consideration for appointment into leadership positions in schools. The aim of this work is to take a look on in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administration effectiveness in public secondary schools in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Secondary school is a place where individuals are prepared for useful living and for higher education to drive national development and social changes in the society. These objectives have not been fully realized, because the administrators charged with the responsibility of utilising the available but scarce resources to achieve these laudable objectives are not adequately equipped with the required skills, knowledge and technical competence necessary for the job. Specifically, the recruitment of in-experienced principals and non-provision of in-service training programmes for them have contributed to the decline in principals' job performance in the study area. Considering the fact that appointment of principals in the study area is mostly based on years of experience, the principals in Enugu state post primary schools require in-service training to update their knowledge and skills. Presently, most of these principals are not conversant with modern managerial and administrative techniques needed for effective school administration. These inefficiencies and lapses among post primary school administrators (principals) in the area are often attributed to lack of requisite training on the managerial skills needed by them for effective personnel administration. The importance of regular training of principals for effective personnel administration led to the conception of this study. The problem of this study is therefore, to investigate in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administration effectiveness in public secondary schools in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria.

Purpose of study

The main purpose of this study is to examine in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administration effectiveness in public secondary schools in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out;

1. the organizing skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration.



2. the communication skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration

Research questions

In order to give direction and focus to the study, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the study;

1. What are the organizing skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria?
2. What are the communication skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria?

Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the organizing skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the communication skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration.

Research Method

The research design adopted for this study was a survey research design. A survey research is one by which a group of people or item is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people considered to be representative of the entire group (Uche et al 2023). Area for the study includes all the public secondary schools in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State. The population for the study is 1,562. Simple random sampling was used to sample 20% of the population which consisted of 17 principals and 295 teachers across the study area. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled in-service training as determinant of principals' personnel administrative effectiveness questionnaire (ITDOPEQ). The validation of the instrument was done by three experts from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Agbani Enugu. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability indices. Reliability index of .89 was established for the entire instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions where hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at .05 level of significant.



Results

Results of the study are presented in tables below according to research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: what are the organising skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration?

Table 1: Mean ratings of principals and teachers on the organising skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration are.

S/N	Item Statement	Principals		Teachers		Decision
		□	SD	□	SD	
1.	Holding meeting with staff before implementing any new policy	2.89	0.55	3.19	0.75	Agreed
2.	Assigning duties to staff based on area of specialization and competence	3.40	0.75	2.71	0.68	Agreed
3.	Forming committees to implement school programmes involving teaching and non-teaching staff	3.28	0.63	3.24	0.86	Agreed
4.	Organizing periodic workshop for staff	2.77	0.54	3.20	0.85	Agreed
5.	Delegation of authority and responsibilities to staf	3.50	0.76	3.27	0.89	Agreed
6.	Organizing orientation and refresher courses for new and old staff	3.19	0.57	2.76	0.69	Agreed
7.	Organising sendoff party for outgoing staff	3.27	0.64	3.13	0.72	Agreed
8.	Harnessing both human and material resources to achieve the set objectives of the school	2.92	0.92	3.03	0.67	Agreed
9.	Organizing teaching aids for all the teachers	3.05	0.71	3.10	0.77	Agreed
	Grand Mean and SD	314.	0.67	3.07	0.76	Agreed

Table 1 shows that all items in the table have mean score above 2.50. This indicates that both principals and teachers agreed that all the items in the table 1 are organizing skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration in secondary schools. With a grand mean of 3.14 principals and 3.07 for teachers, principals and teachers are of the believe that all the items are organising skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration. The low standard deviation of 0.67 for principals and 0.76 for teachers evidenced that there is a little variance in the opinions of principals and teachers on the organising skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration.



Research Question 2: what are the communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration?

Table 2: Mean response of principals and teachers on the communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration are.

S/N	Item Statement	Principals		Teachers		Decision
		□	SD	□	SD	
10.	Creating whatsapp platform for easy communication with teachers	3.42	1.07	3.44	0.93	Agreed
11.	Passing across messages using humane tone	3.33	0.81	3.14	0.86	Agreed
12.	Giving prompt feedback to teachers	2.98	0.73	3.12	1.03	Agreed
13.	Keeping every staff informed on matters affecting them.	3.47	0.87	3.25	0.93	Agreed
14.	Sampling the opinion of teachers on certain programmes of the school	3.51	1.16	3.15	0.76	Agreed
15.	Keeping personal issues of staff private	2.99	0.67	3.42	0.77	Agreed
16.	Having regular meeting with staff.	3.24	1.07	2.68	1.16	Agreed
17.	Using circulars and memos to pass information to staff	2.75	0.68	2.89	1.05	Agreed
18.	Correcting teachers in an honourable manner	2.75	1.02	3.39	0.87	Agreed
	Grand Mean and SD	3.19	0.90	3.16	0.93	Agreed

Table 2 indicates that all the items in the table have mean score above 2.50. This shows that both principals and teachers were of the opinion that all the items in table 2 are communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration in secondary schools. The grand mean of 3.19 for principals and 3.16 for teachers is an indication that both principals and teachers agreed that all items in table 2 are communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration. The low standard deviation of 0.90 for principals and 0.93 for teachers show that there is a little variance in the opinions of principals and teachers on the communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the organizing skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration.

Table 3: t-test analysis of difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the organizing skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration are presented thus:

Subject	N	□	SD	Df	P	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
principals	17	3.14	0.67					
Teachers	295	3.07	0.76	310	p>0.05	0.10	1.96	Not rejected

Table 3 shows that mean score of principals is 3.14 with a standard deviation of .67, while teachers recorded a mean score of 3.07 with a standard deviation of .76. Thus at 310 degree of freedom, .10 t-calculated was not significant at .05 level of confidence, because it was less than 1.96 t-critical. The hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significance difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the organizing skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration in secondary schools.



H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the communication skills needed by school principals for effective personnel administration.

Table 4: t-test analysis of difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration in secondary school

Subject	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	P	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
principals	17	3.19	.90	310	$p > .05$	.10	1.96	Not rejected
Teachers	295	3.16	.93					

Table 4 shows that mean score of principals is 3.19 and a standard deviation of .90, while teachers recorded a mean score of 3.16 and a standard deviation of .93. Thus at 310 degree of freedom, .10 t-calculated was not significant because it was less than 1.96 t-critical. The hypothesis was therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the communication skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that the major organizing skills needed by secondary school principals is delegating authority and responsibilities to teachers. This finding agreed with Uche (2023) who noted that one of the fundamental steps involved in organizing is that works are divided into tasks to be carried out by individual with appropriate skills and competency, and with authority necessary to control behavior in attempt to drive the achievement of the organizational set goals. This finding is not unexpected as delegation of duties and authorities to staff according to capabilities will encourage appropriate staff professional development. Therefore, principals should undergo in-service training to improve on the organizing skills with special regards on delegation of duties according to qualifications and competence for easy administration of the school system.

However, findings on principals' communication skills need, results show that sampling the opinion of teachers on certain programmes of the school is one of the major approaches to effective communication needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration. This finding is in agreement with the observation of Ugah (2019) who stated that keeping everybody informed is a positive way of ensuring effective leadership co-operation, co-ordination, support and commitment. Ugah further noted that sampling the opinion of staff helps to promote team work, reduce conflict in a bid to achieve organizational goal at work place. This is so because keeping every staff informed on matters affecting them simply means carrying them along and this will enhance sense of belonging in them. The staff will be motivated to contribute to the growth of the school.

The result of hypothesis 1 shows that there is no significant different between the mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the organizing skills needed by secondary school principals for effective personnel administration. This is very apparent because the two means are not statistically different and the calculated t- value indicated no significant difference.

The result of hypothesis 2 shows that there is no significant different between the mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the communication skills needed by secondary school



principals for effective personnel administration. This is very apparent because the two means are not statistically different and the calculated t- value indicated no significant difference.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that both new and old serving principals need to undergo in-service training in order to update their knowledge in organizing and communication skills needed for effective personnel administration. Their knowledge in these managerial skills will go a long way helping to achieve the stated educational goals of the school system in Obollo Afor Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study above, the following recommendations were made;

1. That ministry of education through the post primary school management board (PPSMB) should organize and encourage principals to undergo in-service training in order to update their organizing skill necessary for secondary school administration in this twenty first century.
2. it is also recommended that through school community relationship, host communities should assist schools with modern communication gargets to aid the principals' effort at effectively communicating with both teachers, students and parents on the happenings within the school and timely.

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