

Staff Personnel Management of Principals as a Predictor of Classroom Practices of Teachers in Secondary Schools: Implication for Early Childhood Development

Denis Chukwujiekwu Agbo¹, Victor Sunday Ezema^{2*}, Lambert Kenechukwu Ejionueme³

Abstract

This study sought the predictive power of staff personnel management of principals on classroom practices of teachers in secondary schools in South East, Nigeria. A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study using a sample of 794 teachers. Staff Personnel Management Questionnaire and Classroom Practices Questionnaire were used for data collection. The items of the instruments demonstrated good internal consistency reliability indices of 0.89 and 0.75 respectively. The estimates were obtained through a trial testing using Cronbach alpha method. Data collected were analysed using simple regression analysis to answer the research question and the corresponding hypothesis. The finding of the study revealed that staff personnel management of principals had significant ($p < .05$) positive prediction of classroom practices of teachers. This finding implicates early childhood development in that when the staff personnel management of the preschool headteachers is effective, the preschool teachers will better cater for the development of the children. Based on the findings the researchers recommended that principals should be exposed to management training and retraining programme to enable them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for their effective functioning; principals should be appointed based not only on qualification and experience but also on management acumen of individuals, and that Federal and State Ministries of Education should redesign staff personnel management and instructional leadership training of principals to emphasize what they mean and not what the individual thinks.

Keywords: Classroom practices, Prediction, Secondary schools, Principals' staff personnel management

¹ Queen of the Rosary Secondary School, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

² Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria

³ Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria

I. Introduction

Staff personnel management is an essential part of the administration of any establishment more especially the school system. In the light of the above, the effectiveness of any organization, educational institution inclusive, depends on those who plan and supervise those who execute the plan to achieve the set goals. Those who plan and supervise as well as those who execute the plans are staff personnel of the organization. In order to succeed in any educational programme with a view to achieving the educational objectives, management of staff is of paramount importance. Management is conceived as the process concerned with creating, maintaining, stimulating, controlling and unifying formally and informally with a unified system designed to accomplish predetermined objectives. Management is the process of getting things done with particular reference to the process of planning, staffing, organizing, stimulating and evaluating the human and material resources. In the school these activities are geared towards the effective implementation of educational programmes with a view to achieving the educational objectives through effective coordination of available human (staff personnel) and material resources. According to Nwankwo (2020), the personnel are the most potent weapons in the hands of the school manager in school setting that help in achieving individual goals and objectives. Continuing, Nwankwo maintained that personnel deal with the hiring and utilization of person intended to facilitate the realization of the objectives/aims of the school system.

In secondary schools, staff personnel are both the teaching, and the non – teaching staff such as the principals, teachers, bursars, clerks, watchmen, cooks, labourers, laboratory attendants, cleaners among others. It is the function of staff personnel management to arrange human resources together so that the schools' objectives especially the classroom practices of the teachers are met. Thus, the classroom practices of the teachers depend on the quality of the staff personnel management. In the global context, several studies have shown the nature of the relationship between staff personnel management and teachers' classroom practices.

Toropova, Myrberg and Johansson (2021) found that teacher job satisfaction correlates positively with teacher workload and classroom practices. Classroom observation technique and Workshop technique had significant positive relationship with teachers' job performance in secondary schools (Chukwemeka et al., 2021). Instructional leadership practices as aspects of staff personnel management correlate positively teachers' classroom practices (Ma & Marion, 2021). Lemos et al. (2019) revealed that personnel management quality is significantly related to independent measures of teaching practice, as well as school productivity measured by student value added. Some human resource management practices are significantly correlated with the school's strategic planning and individual teacher needs (Tuytens et al., 2021). Mduma and Mkulu (2021) revealed that training the teachers has most significant impact on improvement of teaching strategies, improvement of teachers' effectiveness and overall teacher's personnel. Foundational practices of the school and classroom contribute significantly to teachers' classroom effectiveness (Simón et al., 2021). Thien and Adams (2021) indicated leadership support, leadership supervision, cohesive team leadership, and participative decision-making had significant positive effects on affective commitment of teachers to change.

Human resources policies in schools are significantly related to improvement of teacher well-being and educational performance (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2021). Gladys et al. (2020) found that involving teachers in decision making, teacher motivation, good leadership, assigning teachers with official responsibilities are related

to teachers' classroom practices. Principals' management practices positively facilitate a significant change in several diverse components of teachers' classroom instruction (Bellibaş et al., 2020). Dilekli and Tezci (2016) found that teachers self-efficacy induced by effective staff personnel management was a meaningful predictor of teachers' teaching thinking practices. Revealed that there was a very high positive relationship of ($r = 0.86$) between principals' classroom visitation technique and teachers' job performance.

The foregoing showed that a lot of work has been done on the relationship between staff personnel management and teachers' classroom practices. Despite the above empirical studies on the subject matter, none of the studies was conducted in Enugu state Nigeria. Besides, all the reviewed studies concentrated on the nature of the relationship between the variables without considering the predictive power of the predictor variable on the criterion variable. These gaps in literature necessitated the present study. Thus, the researchers sought to find out the predictive power of staff personnel management on classroom practices of teachers in secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. The research question posed for the study was: What is the predictive power of staff personnel management of principals on classroom practices of teachers in secondary schools in South East, Nigeria? Based on that, it was hypothesized that the predictive power of staff personnel management of principals on classroom practices of teachers in secondary schools is not significant ($p > .05$).

II. Method

Design of the Study

The design of the study is correlational survey. A correlational survey research design, according to Nworgu (2006), involve studying a group of people or items by collecting and analysing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. This design has been used by Achagh et al. (2020), Eya et al. (2020), Ezema et al. (2019), Gana et al. (2019), Okenyi et al. (2019), Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020), and Ugwuanyi et al. (2020a, b, c, d) in similar studies.

Participants

The participants for this study comprised 794 teachers sampled from a population of teachers in Ebonyi and Enugu states. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed in drawing the sample for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select two states out of the five states in the zone. It was used to draw 5 percent of all the teachers in the two states.

Measures

The instruments for data collection are Staff Personnel Management Questionnaire and Classroom Practices Questionnaire. The Staff Personnel Management Questionnaire had two sections, A and B. Section A deals with the demographic data of the respondents while section B had 10 items which elicited information from the respondents on staff personnel management. The response pattern of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (VE), Little Extent (LE) and Very Little Extent (VLE) were adopted for the questionnaire.

Classroom Practices questionnaire had 28 items with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The two instruments were face validated by three experts, in Educational Administration and Planning, and Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education,

University of Nigeria Nsukka. The experts were requested to study the items of the instrument and assess the suitability of the language, adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions, bearing in mind the purpose of the study. Their corrections and suggestions were used to modify the instruments. The instruments were trial tested on 15 teachers in five secondary schools in Kogi State. Kogi State is outside the area of study but contiguous to the area of study. The secondary schools are considered to have similar characteristics with the schools in the area of study. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the scores from the 15 teachers in the trial testing of the instrument were used to establish the internal consistency reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha method. This method was considered appropriate because the items in the instrument were not dichotomously scored. The internal consistency reliability estimate yielded 0.87 for staff personnel questionnaire and 0.75 for classroom practices questionnaire.

Data collection procedure

The direct delivery and retrieval methods were applied to administer the instrument to the respondents. The researcher employed the services of nine trained research assistants. A research assistant assisted the researcher in each Education zone of the two states used for the study. This ensured high return rate of the instrument. The research assistants were instructed on the purpose of the study, on how the respondents were expected to fill the instruments, and the specific information being sought with each item of the instruments.

Data Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer the research question and test the hypothesis at $p < 0.05$. While the coefficient of determination aspect of the regression analysis was used to answer the research question, the t-test aspect of the regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis.

III. Results

What is the predictive power of staff personnel management on classroom practices of teachers?

Table 1

Table showing relationship between staff personnel management and classroom practices of teachers

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.648	.420	.423	.57405

Predictors: (constant), staff personnel management

Table 1 showed the correlation coefficient for the relationship between staff personnel management and classroom practices of teachers is 0.648. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between staff personnel management and classroom practices of teachers with a coefficient of determination of 0.420. This implies that 42% of the change observed in teachers' classroom practices was as a result of staff personnel management.

There is no significant predictive power of personnel management on classroom practices of teachers

Table 2

t-test analysis of the predictive power of staff personnel management on classroom practices of teachers

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
1(constant),	Staff	2.453		13.49	.000
personnel management		.255	.648	11.06	.000

a. Dependent variable: teachers classroom practices

Data on Table 2 show that staff personnel management significantly predict classroom practices of teachers, $t = 11.06$, $p < .05$. This is for the fact that the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The calculated t-value of Thus, the null hypothesis that staff personnel management does not significantly predict classroom practices of teachers was rejected.

IV. Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that staff personnel management of principals significantly predict classroom practices of teachers. Classroom practices exhibited by teachers in their schools depend on staff personnel management and instructional leadership qualities of their principals. Thus, principals in South East Nigeria make efforts to identify the staff needs of their schools, set standard for each teacher’s job, and provide the necessary resources needed for effective classroom interactions. Moreover, the principals make serious efforts to get the adequate number of teachers for their schools, organize orientation for new teachers, and supervise teachers effectively. This implies that what the teachers exhibit in their different classrooms depend on principals’ personnel management and instructional leadership qualities.

Buttressing these findings, Thien and Adams (2021) indicated leadership support, leadership supervision, cohesive team leadership, and participative decision-making had significant positive effects on affective commitment of teachers to change. Human resources policies in schools are significantly related to improvement of teacher well-being and educational performance (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2021). Gladys et al. (2020) found that involving teachers in decision making, teacher motivation, good leadership, assigning teachers with official responsibilities are related to teachers’ classroom practices. Principals’ management practices positively facilitate a significant change in several diverse components of teachers’ classroom instruction (Bellibaş et al., 2020). Dilekli and Tezci (2016) found that teachers self-efficacy induced by effective staff personnel management was a meaningful predictor of teachers’ teaching thinking practices. Revealed that there was a very high positive relationship of ($r = 0.86$) between principals’ classroom visitation technique and teachers’ job performance.

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V. Educational Implications of the finding

The result of this study has obvious educational implications to the principals, staff and the students. The results of this study have provided empirical evidence that staff personnel management and instructional leadership qualities of principals predict classroom practices of teachers. These findings suggest the need for principals to provide effective and efficient staff personnel management and instructional leadership in order to facilitate teaching and learning process. This will help them to achieve the objectives of the school as school principals.

This finding implies that frantic efforts should be made by secondary school administrators to ensure that teachers put in their best in the classroom interactions with the students through the provision of adequate staff personnel management. This finding also implicates early childhood development in that when the staff personnel management of the preschool headteachers are effective, the preschool teachers will better cater for the development of the children.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researchers concluded that staff personnel management of principals in South East predict classroom practices of teachers. Thus, it was recommended that:

1. Monitoring teams should be instituted to checkmate the activities of principals and teachers with regard to staff personnel management, instructional leadership and classroom practices.
2. Principals should be exposed to management and leadership training and re-training programmes which will enable them to acquire skills and knowledge necessary to perform their functions well.

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