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Management Support Practices for Teacher Supervision in Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the extent of principals' management support practices for teacher supportive supervision in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study population comprised all the 252 principals and 5,761 teachers in the 252 state government owned secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample of 1,803 respondents made up of 75 principals and 1,728 teachers comprising 30% of the entire population was studied. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in composing the sample. Two instruments were used for data collection. The instruments were duly validated by experts. The Cronbach Alpha was used for the reliability test, which yielded reliability indices of 0.80 and 0.81 for the instruments respectively. The reliability indices were considered high enough making the instruments adequate for the study. The researcher, together with six trained research assistants, collected data for the study. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was among others found out that the level of principals' support practices for teacher supervision was low in secondary schools in Anambra State; that principals, to a very low extent, organize in-school seminars and workshops for their teachers to help them grow professionally and that they neither organize group supervision, peer supervision nor clinical supervision for their teachers. The recommendations of the study included that principals should use in-school seminars, workshops and adequate supervision to enhance teachers' supportive supervision in schools. Conclusions were made and implications of the findings drawn.

Keywords: Management support; supportive supervision; secondary schools

Introduction

Teachers at all levels of education are the bedrock of the education process. They implement school programmes and educate the students. In the course of educating students, teachers prepare lesson notes, teach, administer tests, monitor students' progress and provide guidance services. All these point to the broad range of duties carried out by teachers in any given school system.

It is a truism that no educational system or programme can rise above the level of its teachers. This is in line with the view of Clark (2006), that teachers are the foundation of quality education. In order to maintain the above position, teachers in most cases, and as posited by Firestone (1993) engage in research activities so as to adequately equip themselves for efficient and effective lesson delivery. However, the teachers' role or task in most cases, seem to depend greatly on the kind of support given to them by their principals (Azih, 2001, Eziuzo, 2014).

Principals occupy a central position in the management of secondary education in Nigeria. According to Green (2009), principals by virtue of their positions are managers and the quality of their managerial functions determines to a large extent their success or failure in schools. This, in part, means that principals are very important for the achievement of educational goals or objectives. Starratt, (2003), similarly observed that principals should provide teachers with needed management support in order to effectively function in their schools. This observation leads to the idea of management support practices as discussed in this work.

Management support practices include the provision of enabling working environment for teachers to effectively render the needed services in schools (Tiedt, 1999). Again, Castler (2010:18), explained principals' management support practices as "the provision of school organizational climate that boosts teachers' morale and enhances their commitment to their jobs as well as guarantees their professional development". This corroborates the view of Campbell (2007) that management support practices in secondary schools include all enabling environments put in place by the principals to foster teachers' morale as well as commitment and professional development. Thus, providing management support practices in relation to teachers involves giving them supportive supervision, providing them with rewards, taking care of their welfare, supporting them to take part in in-service training programmes and promoting them as and when due (Jefferson, 2004). One can understand from the above that management support practices can take different forms.

Orikpe (2002), highlighted forms of management support practices to include providing for teachers' welfare, professional growth, supportive supervision and motivation. All these forms of management support practice are crucial to teachers' performance. Thinking along the same line, Azih (2001) and Marriette (2004) stressed that providing these forms of management support practices are crucial in building sufficiently motivated and effective teachers. From the above, one can understand management support practice in the secondary school system to mean the assistance, encouragement or help given to teachers by their principals to enhance their performance.

Although there are many forms of management support practice in literature, this study focused only on supportive supervision of teachers as a factor that affects teachers' performance in secondary schools. Justification for emphasis on this area includes the fact that teachers' need supportive supervision in schools to be able to perform maximally. In supportive supervision, the supervisor leads the supervisee to think about new and improved ways of doing things (Akpa,

1998). The role of the supervisor, according to Oliva and Pawlas (2004,24) is “to effect a democratic environment in which the contributions of each participating member is valued”. A school principal who applies supportive supervision is expected to possess a predisposition to change and must constantly promote improvement (Snowden & Gorton 2002). Thus, a supportive supervisor needs to convey the attitude of valuing and seeking the ideas of others while not appearing to have answers to all the problems that teachers face.

Supportive supervision is a learning situation for both teachers and their supervisors. It often means unlearning old ideas and learning new ways of thinking and doing things (Guskey,2001). Supervisors have to learn to trust the eyes and ears of teachers while teachers have to trust that supervisors will use the information gathered to help teachers help themselves. The results will often be seen in more friendly, collegial relations between supervisors and teachers and a better understanding of classroom behaviour by applying both the systematic and methodical approach to supportive supervision as explained below.

The systematic approach to supportive supervision involves three steps:

1. Information: Supervisors can use individual and group conferences with teachers to learn more about what is happening in their classroom. This must happen in stages. However, as trust and friendship develop, new and deeper problems will be identified and addressed in the supervising conferences.
2. Problem identification and management: Since the aim of supportive supervision is to place teachers at the centre of their own problem identification-resolution cycle, it can be organized around helping methods and Ego psychological research.
3. Ongoing and cumulative feedback. The supportive supervision method enables supervisors to know how they are doing in their efforts to aid and assist teachers. Using periodic feedback sessions, helps supervisors to identify which of their behaviours are helping and which are not.

On the other hand, the methodical approach to supportive supervision involves five steps:

1. Learn about human personality theories, with a special emphasis upon Ego psychology and its use on problem solving efforts and therapy.
2. Gain an understanding of situational analysis and the structural and relational features that develop.
3. Practice and develop initial skills in having seminars with friends at home or in school. Here the learner can realize her mistakes and correct them in a non threatening environment.
4. Use new conferencing and problem solving skills under the supervision of skillful supervisors.
5. Acquire a continual commitment to self development and learning. Those who commit themselves to supportive supervision must constantly upgrade their skills and insights, using their new experiences and those of others who are working in the same field with them.

Through interaction with teachers, good supportive supervisors learn that mistakes are normal and that providing support is a process that constantly introduces new variables into the supervising relationship (Oliva & Pawlas 2004). Common sense suggests that supportive supervision works best when supported by a motivational school organizational climate (Snowden & Gorton, 2002).

According to Azih (2001), the management of secondary schools in Anambra state leaves much to be desired in terms of desirable school organizational climate. Personal observation and interviews with principals and teachers in the state confirm that some principals communicate with their staff as if they are slaves and not colleagues whose efforts are also needed in achieving the schools objectives. In addition, some school principals are known to molest their staff by

shouting at them, criticizing them even in front of students, and some others go to the extent of even abusing them outrightly.

In a similar vein, it is not rare to see teachers using rude words in response to principals' directives and even demanding resources from principals in defiant, rude and abusive language. Given all the aforementioned management challenges observed in some secondary schools in the state, the study therefore seeks to ascertain the extent of principals' management support practices for supportive supervision of teachers' in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study, to wit:

1. What are the management support practices necessary for supportive teacher supervision in secondary schools?
2. What is the extent of principals' management support practices for teacher supervision in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the extent of management support practices for supervision for enhancing teachers performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

This study utilized the descriptive survey design and was conducted in Anambra State. In a descriptive survey research design, data are collected from a sample of the population in order to find out the relative opinion, belief, attitude and status of that population about a phenomenon Akuezuilo & Agu (2003), Nworgu (2014). This design is therefore appropriate for this study since the researcher collected data from the respondents through a few representatives and analyzed them in order to ascertain the principals management support practices for teachers supportive supervision in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

The state is bounded in the north, south, east and west by Delta, Abia, Enugu and Imo States respectively. The study covered all the public secondary schools in the six education zones in the state. The education zones include; Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha.

There are 252 public secondary schools in the six education zones in the state. The board in charge of secondary schools in Anambra State is the State Post Primary School Services Commission, Awka. The inhabitants of the state are mainly civil servants among which are many teachers, traders and a few farmers especially in rural areas. The people of the state are highly committed to education and have many secondary schools. These reasons therefore make the area suitable for this study.



Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing Anambra State



Fig. 2: Map of Anambra State showing the 21 LGAs

The population of the study comprised 6,029 (six thousand and twenty nine) respondents made up of 252 principals and 5,761 secondary school teachers in the six education zones of the state. The sample for this study is 1,803 respondents comprising 75 principals and 1,728 teachers drawn from the population of the study. The sample was composed using proportionate stratified sampling techniques. The stratification was based on education zones.

Two researcher-developed questionnaires were the instrument for data collection. One was for the principals and the other for the teachers. Each of the two instruments is made up of two parts - "A" and "B". Part A is on background information of the respondents while part B contains items on principals' supportive supervision for teachers. Part B of the first instrument contained ten items which are possible management support practices by principals for supportive supervision of teachers in secondary schools. The items had response options of Yes or No. Part B of the second instrument contains ten items on the extent principals utilize the management support practices. It is structured on a 4- point scale of: Very Great Extent (VGE) = 4 point; Great Extent (GE) = 3 points; Low Extent (LE) = 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point. The face and content validity of the two instruments were established by two experts: one in Educational Management and Policy and the other in Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts are lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

The Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. This was done by administering copies of the instruments to 30 principals and 40 teachers from a secondary school in Enugu State. Enugu State was chosen for the reliability test because both Anambra and Enugu States are in the same South East Zone of Nigeria and also share similar characteristics in terms of school management. The sets of scores obtained from the respondents were collated to determine the reliability co-efficients for the items. This was done using Cronbach Co-efficient Alpha and reliability co-efficients of 0.80 and 0.81 were obtained for the two instruments respectively. These indices are high enough and the instruments were therefore considered adequate for the study.

The researchers collected the data with the help of six research assistants who were instructed on how to distribute and collect back completed copies of the questionnaire. One research assistant was chosen from each of the six education zones in the state. The

administration of the instrument lasted for ten days. All the 1,803 copies of the instrument administered were properly filled, successfully retrieved and were used for data analysis.

The two research questions were answered using frequencies and mean scores respectively. Mean scores that fall between 3.50-4.00, 2.50-3.49, 1.50-2.49 and 1.00-1.49 were taken to indicate VGE; GE; LE and VLE respectively. Again, z-test statistical procedure was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Results in Table 1 below indicate that both principals and teachers accepted the ten items listed as necessary support practices for teachers supervision in secondary schools in Anambra State.

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean Responses			
		No of Principals	No of Teachers		
	Tick Yes or No according to your perception of necessary management support practice for teachers supervision in secondary schools				
1	Supervising teachers while teaching in the classroom	252	Nil	1720	8
2	Organizing group supervision for teachers	250	2	1700	28
3	Arranging peer supervision for teachers	251	1	1728	Nil
4	Organizing clinical supervision for teachers				
5	Organizing general supervision for teachers	252	Nil	1728	Nil
6	Supervising teachers' lesson notes	252	Nil	1720	8
7	Supervising teachers' lesson plan	252	Nil	1728	Nil
8	Supervising teachers' marking schemes	252	Nil	1720	8
9	Supervising teachers' grading of students	250	Nil	1728	Nil
10	Supervising teachers use of instructional materials	250	2	1720	8

Table 1: Principals' and Teachers' Responses on Principals' Support Practices of for Teacher Supervision in Secondary Schools

The results in Table 2 below indicate principals' and teachers' mean ratings on support practices of principals for teacher supervision

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean Responses			
		Principals		Teachers	
	Rate each item based on the extent it is practiced in your school:	\bar{X}	Dec	\bar{X}	Dec
1	Supervising teachers in classroom while teaching.	1.51	LE	1.50	LE
2	Organizing group supervision for teachers.	1.02	VLE	1.00	VLE
3	Arranging peer supervision for teachers.	1.03	VLE	1.08	VLE
4	Organizing clinical supervision for teachers.	1.00	VLE	1.05	VLE
5	Organizing general supervision for teachers.	1.09	VLE	1.02	VLE
6	Supervising teachers' lesson notes.	3.58	VGE	3.52	VGE
7	Supervising teachers' lesson plans.	3.51	VGE	3.84	VGE
8	Supervising teachers' marking schemes.	1.54	LE	2.00	LE
9	Supervising teachers' grading of students.	2.52	GE	2.58	GE
10	Supervising teachers' use of instructional materials.	1.30	VLE	1.32	VLE
	Grand mean	1.81		1.89	

Key: X = Mean; Dec. = Decision

Table 2: Mean Ratings on Support Practices of Principals for Teacher Supervision

The results above show that both principals ($X = 1.81$) and teachers ($X = 1.89$) indicate that generally the level of support practices adopted by principals for teacher supervision is low in secondary schools in Anambra State. However, they also indicated that the practice varies from item to item. While it is high in some areas it is low in others. This is shown by the principals' mean ratings of 3.58 and 3.51 for items 6 and 7, and teachers' mean ratings of 3.52 and 3.84 for the same items respectively which indicate that the principals to a very great extent supervise teachers' lesson notes and lesson plans. It was also shown that the principals to a great extent supervise teachers' grading of students, item 9 with mean scores of 2.52 and 2.58 for principals and teachers respectively. Similarly, the principals' mean ratings of 1.51 and 1.54 for items 1 and 8 respectively, as well as the teachers mean ratings of 1.50 and 2.00 respectively for the same items indicate that the principals to a low extent supervise teachers while teaching in classroom and their marking schemes.

Again, the principals' mean ratings of 1.02; 1.03; 1.00; 1.09 and 1.30 for items 2; 3; 4; 5 and 10 respectively as well as the teachers' mean ratings of 1.00; 1.08; 1.05; 1.02 and 1.32 for the same items respectively indicate that the principals to a very low extent organize group supervision; peer supervision; clinical supervision; general supervision nor do they supervise teachers' use of instructional materials in class.

The results in Table 3 below show the summary of data analysis for the hypothesis. The results indicate that the calculated z-value of 2.80 is greater than the critical z-value of 1.960 at 1081 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance.

Groups	Number	Mean	Sd.	Df.	Z-cal.	Z-crit	P	Decision
Principals	75	1.81	1.90	1081	2.80	1.960	>.05	Not Accepted
Teachers	1728	1.89	1.52					

Table 3: z-test on Support Practices of Principals for Teacher Supervision

The hypothesis is, therefore, not accepted. Thus, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of management support practices for teacher supervision for enhancing teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data analyses for this study, the following findings were made that:

1. The principals' management practices necessary for supportive teacher supervision in secondary schools include supervising teachers while teaching in classrooms, arranging peer and clinical supervision for teachers, supervising teachers' lesson notes, marking schemes and grading of students.
2. The level of management support practices by principals for teachers' supportive supervision is low in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of management support practices for supportive supervision of teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State differ significantly.

Discussion of Results

The data analysis presented in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that though the level of management support practice is low in secondary schools in Anambra State that the principals to a very great extent supervise teachers' lesson notes and plans. This agrees with the findings of Campbell (2007) that successful principals always monitor and supervise teachers' lesson notes as well as the teachers' plan of what they want to teach the students.

The results also showed that principals to a low extent supervise their teachers in class or their marking schemes. The findings are in agreement with Lin and Gorrell (2003) who found that some school heads are so occupied with office work that they hardly have time to supervise their teachers.

Further findings of the study indicate that principals, to a very low extent, organize group supervision, peer supervision, clinical supervision, general supervision, nor supervise their teachers' use of instructional materials. The above findings are supported by Cakiroglu (2003) who found that most school heads lack supervisory skills and as a result entrust academic supervision into the hands of Board officials. Ezepue (2005) found out that principals do not adequately supervise their teachers' instructional activities. Like the current study, Ezepue also found significance difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers' on the principals' frequency of instructional supervision. The findings of this study have a number of implications for principals and state government.

The first implication of the study concerns school principals. If principals do not support their teachers in schools, the performance of such teachers may be low. Secondly, if principals do not encourage or recommend their teachers to attend staff development programmes such as seminars and workshops, teachers may not be abreast of new discoveries in teaching and learning processes.

The last implication of the study concerns the state government. Public schools are among government establishments and as such require adequate funding and provision of facilities. If the government fails to take adequate care of principals and teachers, management support practices in schools may fall below expectation. Again, where principals and teachers are not adequately encouraged to attend in-service training programmes, management support practices at the school level may not be effective.

Conclusion

On the basis of the data analyses and the discussion, the researchers made some conclusions, which include that principals management practices necessary for supportive teacher supervision include supervising teacher while teaching and organizing group, peer, clinical and general supervision. It also includes supervising teachers' lesson notes, lesson plans, marking scheme, grading and supervising teachers' use of instructional materials. The principals management practices necessary for supportive teacher supervision in secondary schools in Anambra State however appear to have ignored such areas like group, peer, clinical and general supervision which are greatly needed in schools in order for teachers to be more efficient in their duties.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should frequently arrange for inter-school visitations for cross-school exchange of knowledge and skills as a way of supporting teachers to grow professionally.

2. Principals should not limit their supervisory roles to teachers' lesson notes and plans but also their marking schemes and classroom instructions. The essence should not be to police instructions but to help the teachers to grow professionally.
3. Principals should apply several supervision techniques, such as peer and clinical supervision where the contributions of each participating teacher is valued to help them do better in the class.
4. Government should ensure that principals of public secondary schools improve on their management support practices, and should frequently organize seminars on effective supportive supervision techniques for effective and efficient running of schools.

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