PRINCIPALS' JOB COMPETENCIES AND TEACHERS' COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated principals' job competencies and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted all the 7,027 teachers in the six education zones of Anambra State. A sample size of 1405 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling technique. Two questionnaires titled: "Principals' Job Competencies Questionnaire" (PJCQ) and Teachers' Commitment Scale (TCS) were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts and subjected to internal consistency test using Cronbach's alpha method which yielded 0.75, 0.80 and 0.82 for three sections of PJCQ while that of TCS was 0.82. Data for the study were collected using direct administration and retrieval method. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to analyze data for the study. The findings of the study indicated that there is a moderate and significant relationship between principals' competency in supervision of instruction, staff personnel management and communication and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Anambra State government through Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should establish a sustainable school-based yearly training programme for principals to constantly upgrade their job competencies in supervision of instruction, personnel management and communication in order to optimize teachers' commitment.

Key words: Competencies, Principals' job competencies, commitment, teachers' commitment.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental tool for human development and economic transformation. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), the goals of education are the development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower individuals to live in and contribute positively to the society. In line with this Okechukwu (2022) stated that a very important role of education is the preservation and updating of knowledge and skills of students in line with changes in the society. The Nigerian educational system is categorized into pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Secondary school education is the form of education students receive after primary school and before the tertiary stage. The importance of secondary education lies in its position both as the bridge between primary and tertiary education and the agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society. In fostering and achieving the goals of secondary education, teachers play important roles by

translating the educational goals into knowledge and skill, and transferring them to students in the classroom. Teachers as stated by Mwangi, in Obiekwe, Ogbo and Igbokwe (2020) are the pillars of the society who help students to grow and shoulder the responsibility of nation building. Teachers are indeed the nation's human capital, and every effort needs to be made to ensure their commitment.

Commitment can be seen as the process through which people become willing to give their loyalty and energy to a particular social system (Mart, 2013). Teachers' commitment, according to Mart is the emotional bond between the teacher and the school. Teacher's commitment can be defined using what Douglas cited in Obiekwe (2019) as a teacher's identification with and involvement in a particular school. This commitment can be characterized by a strong personal belief in and acceptance of the school goals and values, a desire to exert oneself for the betterment of the school, and a strong will to remain with the school. Teacher's organizational commitment is the psychological identification of the individual teacher with the school and the intention of that teacher to maintain his membership of the school, and show all personal interest.

High level of teachers' commitment is essential for school success. Teachers with high level of commitment view themselves as integral part of the school, what threatens the school endangers them as well, they do their best to perform their duties better, and work for the school as if it belong to them (Oberholster & Taylor 2009). In contrast, teachers with low level of commitment are less faithful to the school, view themselves as outsiders and are more concerned with personal success than with the success of the school as a whole.

For teachers' optimal commitment to the school, their perception of principals' job competency is crucial. Job competency refer to the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for performing specific tasks and responsibilities in a particular job or profession (Ani, 2017; Anikweze, 2015; Anya & Arthur, 2019). Principal's job competencies may include leadership skills, educational administration knowledge, instructional management abilities, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and so on. Principals' job competencies as defined by Osakwe (2016) is the ability of principals to effectively employ necessary expertise in management of human and materials resources to achieve stated goals. This could be done by demonstrating observable abilities and skills through efficient supervision of instruction in the classroom, provision of quality leadership, managing human and materials resources to achieve the mission and vision of the school. Osakwe outlined principals' competency in; supervision of instruction, staff personnel management and communication, as crucial for improving teachers' effectiveness and commitment.

Supervision of instruction is the process by which principals adequately monitor the activities of teachers in the classrooms, advising and stimulating the interest of teachers and students through monitoring teachers' actual teaching, classroom management and the use of instructional materials. It refers to the process of overseeing and supporting teaching and learning activities in educational settings. Ofoegbu (2017) defined supervision of instruction as a process of ascertaining that teachers carry out the task of teaching to an expected level, according to the stipulated guidelines that control the educational system. It is the way of persuading teachers to desist from application of wrong teaching methods and procedures in instructional delivery. Supervision of instruction focuses on providing guidance, feedback, and assistance to teachers to enhance their instructional practices and improve students' outcomes (Arikewuyo, 2017; Moses, 2014). The primary goal of supervision of instruction according to Akpan (2016) is to ensure that teaching methods, curriculum, and assessment strategies align with educational standards and best practices and to ensure that effective educational services are rendered by the teachers to the students. Principals could be competent in supervision of instruction by inspecting teachers in the classroom as they teach their lessons, inspecting their lesson plans and notes and providing instructional materials for effective teaching and learning to take place (Victor & Peter, 2014). When teachers are adequately supervised by principals, their skills, commitment and overall performance are enhanced. Apart from supervision of instruction, another principals' competency is in the form of staff development.

Staff personnel management also known as human resource management (HRM), is the strategic approach to managing an organization's employees. It involves the effective utilization of human resources to achieve organization's goals and objectives. Personnel management encompasses various functions and activities related to recruiting, hiring, training, developing, compensating, and retaining employees (Arop Owan & Agunwa, 2018). Staff personnel management as defined by Achmad (2017) is the establishment of procedures for the employment or payment of workers or staff. It is an arrangement of conditions which make possible greater self-direction by staff in the performance of their tasks. Therefore, it is an important function in the general context of all administrative responsibility of the principal. Vaghela (2015) described personnel management as the process by which the administrators or those saddled with the responsibility to control an organization, ensure that proper functions are performed in order to boost the morale of the workers and to promote the attainment of goals and objectives. For proper administration of personnel, the principal has to be conceptually and technically competent in the discharge of his administrative duties. Staff personnel management involves principals' communication, consultations, persuasions, delegations and motivation of staff in the school to achieve good working relationship (Uzoechina, 2016). Principals could be competent in staff personnel management and supervision of instruction through effective inter-personal relationship such as proper communication.

Communication can be seen as an administrative tool employed by principals to influence school operations through human interactions. It serves as the life wire of any effective school and successful administrators are trained and equipped to impact the whole school process through effective communication. Communication involves two or more individuals sharing personal feelings, purposes and knowledge, and making concerted efforts to understand each other. Communication in school takes place between and among principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, students as well as other stakeholders. The goals of the school are shared by the principal with relevant individuals within the school system through communication. Not only this, the management of human, material, time and information which are the main resources in schools cannot be effectively and efficiently utilized without competency in communication.

Communication competency is the capability of a principal to disseminate information in an accurate and clear manner and as intended. It is also how he gives and receives information and transfers ideas and opinions to his staff. Peretomode, (2014) exerted that communication process is dynamic and timely; it possesses useful inherent elements that can instruct, persuade, stimulate, regulate, socialize, assess, develop, clarify and specifically influence the necessary outcomes and performance of the institutions. Communication competency involves speaking appropriately to people while maintaining good eye contact, eloquent speech with tailored language, listening effectively, writing clearly with concise language, being confident, friendliness, empathy, use of questions, open-mindedness, and presenting ideas appropriately Odu-Dikoro (2022). A principal is expected to be competent in all these communication skills and at the same time be conscious of his non-verbal behaviour so that subordinates can hear and understand the message being communicated.

However some principals' mode of communication create barriers that thwart the meanings and interpretations of information provided, resulting to communication failure which could lead to educational goal misplacement and disharmony in the school. Not only this, most principals in Anambra State appear incompetent in the discharge of most of their job responsibilities. Despite Government's efforts through training and retraining of principals to improve their job competencies, there are still evidence of poor instructional supervision, poor motivation of staff, poor relationship between school and the community. There are also accusations of poor cordial relationship between principals and staff in some secondary schools in Anambra State. When teachers perceive the principal to be incompetent in handling the affairs of the school, it can lead them to; mistrust their principal, low commitment and productivity and general ineffectiveness. This is in line with Ezeugbor, cited in Obiekwe and Ezeugbor (2019) that principals' display of ineffectiveness in school management could lead to teachers' poor attitude to work, absenteeism, lack of dedication to teaching and carrying out

assigned tasks. These situations therefore made it imperative to determine the relationship between principals' job competencies and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

This study determined the relationship between principals' job competencies and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, this study determined:

1. The relationship between principals' competence in supervision of instruction and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. The relationship between principals' competence in staff personnel management and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. The relationship between principals' competence in communication and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' competence in supervision of instruction and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' competence in staff personnel management and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between principals' competence in communication and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' competence in supervision of instruction and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' competence in staff personnel management and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between principals' competence in communication and teachers' commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Methods

A Correlation survey research design was employed for the study. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 7,027 teachers. From the population, a sample of 1405 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure involving proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. Two questionnaires titled: "Principals' Job Competencies Questionnaire" (PJCQ) and Teachers' Commitment Scale (TCS) were used for data collection. The questionnaires were subjected to face validity using three experts. A pilot test using 20 teachers from two government owned public secondary schools in Enugu State was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. The scores obtained were collated to determine the internal consistency of the items in each of the questionnaires. This was done using Cronbach's Alpha method. The co-efficients for the three sections of PJCQ were 0.75, 0.80 and 0.82 while that of TCS was 0.82. The direct method of administration and retrieval of copies of the questionnaire was employed by the researchers. The completed copies were collected on the spot and follow up visits were made in cases where the respondents could not submit on the spot. Out of the 1405 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, a total of 1115 copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. The return rate was approximately 79% which the researchers considered satisfactory for the study. Data analysis was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. For

decision on the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of relationship was interpreted using the interpretation of correlation coefficient by Downie and Health cited by Nworgu (2015) where: 0.30 and below is for low, above 0.30 - below 0.80 for moderate, 0.80 and above is high. For the hypotheses, the null hypothesis was not rejected where the obtained p-value is equal to or greater than significant value of 0.05 ($P > 0.05$), however, the null hypothesis was rejected where the obtained p-value is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). All analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Results

Table 1: Pearson r on the Relationship between Principals' Competency in Supervision of Instruction and Teachers' Commitment

Source of Variation	N	r	P-value	Remark
Supervision of Instruction Commitment	1115	0.56	.00	Moderate Significant Relationship

Analysis in Table 1 shows that there is a moderate and significant relationship between principals' competency in supervision of instruction and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is shown by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r which is 0.56 and *P*.value <0.05.

Table 2: Pearson r on the Relationship between Principals' Competency in Staff Personnel Management and Teachers' Commitment

Source of Variation	N	r	P-value	Remark
Staff Personnel Management Teachers' Commitment	1115	0.54	.00	Moderate Significant Relationship

Table 2 shows that there is a moderate and significant relationship exist between principals' competency in staff personnel management and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is shown by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r which is 0.54 and *P*.value <0.05.

Table 3: Pearson r on the Relationship between Principals' Competency in Communication and Teachers' Commitment

Source of Variation	N	r	P-value	Remark
Communication Teachers' Commitment	1115	0.66	.00	Moderate Significant Relationship

As shown in Table 3 there is a moderate and significant relationship between principals' competency in communication and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r = 0.66 and *P*.value <0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study shows that there is a moderate and significant relationship between principals' supervision of instruction and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This shows that an increase in principals' job competency in supervision of instruction will moderately improve teachers' commitment. This finding is not strange because when principals adequately monitor the activities of teachers in the classrooms, advises and stimulates the interest of teachers and students, teachers will want to identify with such principal because they will gain a lot by working with them.

This finding is in line with that of Hunter-Boykin and Evans (2015), who found that teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership abilities are favourably correlated with their efficacy and morale. The finding of this study also aligns with Okeke and Mbah (2019) who revealed that morale of the staff will be significantly enhanced if principals strive to develop themselves along the line of their duties.

Another finding of the study shows that there is a moderate and significant relationship exist between principals' competence in staff personnel management and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding agreed with Ilzamatul and Purbaningrum (2019) who found that teachers' perception of their head teacher's competencies is one of the many variables that affect their productivity and commitment. This corroborates Matin, Jandaghi, Karimi and Hamidizadeh (2010), Aydin, Uysal and Sarier (2012) and Wenno (2016) that there is a strong link between appraisal, promotion, supervision alongside comfortable climate and teachers' commitment and performance. These findings are in agreement with Tansky and Cohen (2001) reveals that motivation coming from the principal and interpersonal communication influence the teachers' work commitment.

This study also found a moderate and significant relationship between principals' competence in communication and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This agrees with Asiyai (2012) who found out that effective communication is important in maintaining conducive school environment for teaching and learning. This is because the principal communicates rules and expectations of the school and the staff and students know the consequences of their actions. These findings agree with Mgbodile, (2014) that principals who know what to communicate, how to communicate, when to communicate and the right medium of communication at all times inspires teachers' sense of belonging. Effective communication maintained by principals enhances awareness, enlightenment involvement, feelings of belongingness and performance effectiveness as well as establish the relationship between principals and teachers in the school.

Conclusion

In line with the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that there is a moderate and significant relationship between principals' competency in supervision of instruction, staff personnel management and communication and teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Anambra State government through Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should establish a sustainable school-based yearly training programme for principals to constantly upgrade their job competencies in supervision of instruction, personnel management and communication in order to optimize teachers' commitment.
2. Anambra State Education Commission should ensure that only teachers who possess relevant competencies are appointed as principals. This will help maintain crop of principals who are capable inspiring teachers' commitment.

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