AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.12 (2), May-August, 2024 https://ajemates.org

PERCEPTION OF PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE

Okoli Joy Uchenna[1]
Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
Email: joyuchenna97@gmail.com, **Phone**: 08038714393

Ogbu Juliana I[2]**.**
Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
Phone: 08027375158

&

Ukpai Nicolin Samuel[3]
Phone: 08026092157
Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Education Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

ABSTRACT

The study examined Perception of Principals' Management Competencies for Effective Management of Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. To carry out the study, two specific purposes with two corresponding research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. An over view of related literature were reviewed. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of three thousand, three hundred and forty four (3,344) teachers was used to get information from the principals. The sample size was 455 respondents. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. Structured questionnaire tagged Perception of Principals' Management Competencies for Effective Management of Public Junior Secondary Schools (PPMCEMPJSS) was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The structured questionnaire was validated by three experts, one from measurement and Evaluation unit of Science Education Department and two from Educational Administration and planning all from Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument yielded 0.88 using Cronbach alpha reliability approach. Mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that principals of Public Junior Secondary Schools required management competencies for effective management of teachers and students. The finding of the two null hypotheses indicated that there is no significant

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difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on management competencies required of principals' for effective management of teachers and students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals in public junior secondary school in Ebonyi State should be continually being trained in management competencies required for effective management of schools through study leave with pay, workshops and seminars to acquire more skills.

Keywords: Perception, Management, Competencies, Effective Management, Junior Secondary Schools.

Introduction

School is a social system, an educational institution consisting of defined boundaries within which individuals interact, and interrelate in the performance of activities for the purpose of achieving educational goals. Melody (2016), saw secondary school as an institution of learning charged with the major function of producing men and women who in addition to being able to make a successful living, can also help their community and contribute to its economic and social well-being. Secondary schools usually provide education to children between the ages of 11 and 16 after they have completed primary schools. Inegbenehi (2021), opined that secondary education in Nigeria is divided into two sections, Junior and Senior Secondary Education. Each level is of three years duration. The curriculum of the senior secondary schools is comprehensive and diversified in nature and at the junior secondary level, students are taught both academic and pre-vocational subjects. Ogbonnaya (2014), listed the importance of secondary school education as follows: Secondary school education is a stepping stone to higher education. It provides an opportunity for primary school leavers to acquire more knowledge, develop skills and prepare them to live effectively in our changing society, Secondary school education helps in the development of the potentials of our youths and their cultural talents through the teaching of music, craft and religious knowledge and the broad and diversified curriculum of secondary school education provides for differences in talents and opportunities. Some secondary school graduates are of the junior secondary school level while some continue up to senior secondary school. Others go into technical trades, crafts, commercial areas or academic areas.

At the primary level of education, the Public Junior Secondary School stage shall be tuition free, universal and compulsory, this, in effect, means that this stage is part of the universal basic education system. The primary level is sometimes referred to as the lower basic while the Junior Secondary stage is referred to as the Upper Basic Education. These schools are located in both urban and rural areas and are also headed by the male and female principals.

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For effective teaching and learning at the Public Junior Secondary School level, the teacher-student ratio shall be 1:35. Students who complete the Public Junior Secondary School are streamed into (1) the Senior Secondary School, (2) the Technical College, (3) an out of school vocational training centre or into an apprentice scheme.

A principal is professional teacher and general leader of a secondary school. Oboegbulem (2011), viewed the principal as a professional leader, formal supervisor and subject supervisor. To achieve high quality education, it is expected that a school principal through supervision and evaluation brings improvement in quality of instruction. As enumerated in Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2014), the principals maintain educational excellence and objective with regard to monitoring and maintenance of minimum standard in secondary schools, Similarly Egwu, (2004), stated that biblically every flock of sheep must have a shepherd to protect and advice in time of adversity. It seems with the above views that the principal as a supervisor does the following. Inspects and marks teachers' lesson notes, determines students' level of interest and attentiveness during lesson delivery and checks the methods of lesson delivery, the use of teaching aids and classroom control to maintain high quality education (Igwe, 2011).

A school principal is an academic head, an administrator who has to see to the smooth running of the school making sure that curriculum and all instructions are formally implemented to achieve high productivity in schools. Onu, (2009), stated that the principal has to ensure that the programmes and activities of the school are planned, designed, coordinated and integrated in such a way that the school is able to satisfy the needs of the personnel. Hornby (2007), defined principal as a person who is in charge of a college or a university. This means that the principal plays a leading role in a school as the chief person in authority, the highest in order of importance of leaders of a school or college.

A teacher is an instructor whose job is teaching. Teachers teach in schools and is the heart of education. Aja-Okorie (2016), maintained that the school principal and the teachers are expected to have cordial relationship without necessarily compromising the ethics of the school. Teachers management competencies required of a principal includes; Use of good leadership style, adequate communication, adequate decision in issues concerning teachers interest, allowing teachers to attend workshop, reward of efficient teachers and reducing teachers workload to avoid poor teaching and learning. The management of teachers is the fulfillment of the aims and objectives of education, therefore, principals must supervise teachers to see that meaningful learning is taking place in all the classes and that the teachers are teaching what they supposed to teach by providing helping hand through advice and correcting the erring teachers in their weak

areas in a friendly and mature manner to promote instructional delivery.

Students are persons who are studying in colleges or university. Student management competencies required of principals for effective management of students includes; admitting qualified students properly, organizing orientation for new students, providing health services for students, providing guidance and counseling services in the school for students, managing discipline among students, supervising students' attendance to classes, involves students in decision making in the school, provides basic amenities in the school for students and adhering to students ratio of 1.35 in a class. Unfortunately many principals lack these competencies and brings low standard in Education. The researcher observed these problems and it prompted in developing interest to fill the gaps.

Statement of the Problem

. The administrative problems related to teachers management that resulted to absenteeism and unpunctuality of teachers are traced from principals inability to carry them along in issues that concerns them, not rewarding the efficient teachers and not reducing their workload to avoid poor teaching and learning. Management competencies required of the principals on students affairs includes, admission of qualified students', orientation, supervising students attendance to classes and management of disciplines among students, lassie affair attitude of many principals has led to students decline in discipline, which has caused students exhibiting deviant behaviours like truancy, bully, loitering, cultism and examination malpractice. Many students are absence and late to school as observed by the researcher examples at 9am in the morning you still see students loitering on the road. Many government policies are not implemented well. In many States in Nigeria, public junior secondary schools were built separately from senior secondary schools but in almost all the schools in Ebonyi State both junior and senior secondary schools share one compound and there is always frequent clash of interest among principals, teachers and students. This calls for a need to ensure that management problems arising in public junior secondary schools are tackled properly hence the researcher sought to ascertain perception of principals management competencies for effective management of public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine perception of principals' management competencies for effective management of public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sought to:

1. Determine the perception of principals' management competencies in managing teachers for effective administration in public

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junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

2. Find out the perception of principals' management competencies in managing students in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

Five Research questions guided the study, they include:

1. What are the perception of principals' management competencies for effective management of teachers of Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the perception of principals' management competencies for effective management of students in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H_{O1}: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on perception of principals' management competencies for effective management of teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

H_{O2}: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the perception of principals' management competencies for effective management of students in Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Method

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design for this study. This design, according to Nworgu (2006), is a design that is used to collect data on a given population so as to describe or present the facts of that population as it is. It is a design that is mainly concerned with describing events as they are without any manipulation of what is being observed. The area of the study covered the whole Ebonyi State. Ebonyi State was created on the 1st October, 1996 from the old Abia and Enugu State with Abakaliki as the state capital. The State is one of the (36) States in Nigeria situated in the South East geopolitical zone, bounded in the east by Cross-River state, west by Enugu State, north Benue and south Abia State, all in Nigeria. Ebonyi State is chosen for the study because of some peculiar problems observed by the researcher in secondary schools which is affecting the academic status. The population of the study were teachers. Teachers of three thousand, three hundred and forty four (3,344) of Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State comprising 1840 male and 1504 female teachers were used to get information for their principals (EB-SUBEB DIGEST 2018). Teachers were used because they stand in a better position to assess the principals' competencies. The Sample size for the study was 455 teachers. The area of

the study was first stratified according to the education zone of the State. Then, simple random sampling technique through balloting with replacement was applied in each zone to sample 168 teachers for Abakaliki zones, 136 teachers for Onueke zone and 151 teachers for Afikpo zone. The teachers from each of the three education zones formed the sample of the study. The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire titled perception of principal management competencies for effective management of Public Junior Secondary Schools (PPMCEMJSS). The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A demographic data of respondents

Sex – Male or Female, Location – Urban or rural. Section B, addressed the major research questions of the study, consisting of 46 items on the principals' management competencies for effective management of Public Junior Secondary Schools. The questions were developed on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) 4points, Agreed (A) 3points, Disagreed (D) 2 points, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) 1 point. In order to ascertain the face and content validity of the instrument for this study, the instrument was submitted to three (3) experts; one expert in measurement and evaluation from the Department of Science Education and two experts from Department of Educational Foundations all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The experts were requested to assess the instrument with regard to clarity of language relevance, appropriateness of content and structure in line with the purpose of the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha reliability approach. The reliability index of the entire items of the questionnaire yielded an alpha index of 0.88. Based on the alpha indices obtained, it indicated that the instrument is reliable for the study. Mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD) were used to analyze the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The responses related to each research question were tallied and weighted. The cut off mean score was 2.5. Item with a value of 2.5 and above was considered and accepted while any score below 2.5 was not accepted. In testing the hypothesis t-test was used to test the entire null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The t-calculated was compared with t-tables, where the t-calculated was less than the t-table, the hypotheses was accepted (significant) and where the t-calculated was greater than the t-table, the hypotheses was not accepted (not significant).

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Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of principals' management competencies for effective management of teachers in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Mean Result on the Perception of Principals' Management Competencies for Effective Management of Teachers in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

S/N	Item Statement	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1.	Use of good leadership style.	455	2.62	0.967	Agreed
2.	Ensures adequate communication with teachers	455	2.56	0.968	Agreed
3.	Makes adequate decisions in issues concerning teachers interest	455	2.67	0.928	Agreed
4.	The principal allows teachers to attend seminars.	455	2.578	0.951	Agreed
5.	The principal maintains secret with issues concerning his/her teachers.	455	2.62	0.782	Agreed
6.	The principal rewards efficient teachers	455	2.65	0.830	Agreed
7.	The principal involves teachers in decision making.	455	2.64	0.782	Agreed
8.	The principal assigns responsibility to teachers based on who is actually capable.	455	2.78	0.776	Agreed
9.	The principal reduces his / her teachers workload to avoid poor teaching and learning.	455	3.14	0.666	Agreed
10.	The principal develop incentive structure to motivate teachers.	455	3.28	0.662	Agreed
11.	The principal involves teachers in evaluation of their activities to guide them	455	3.22	0.687	Agreed
12.	Uses punishment appropriately.	455	3.25	0.641	Agreed
13.	Enhances job performance of teachers.	455	3.22	0.622	Agreed
	Grand Mean ($\bar{x}$)		**2.86**		**Agreed**

The result of the data analysis presented in table 1 reveals that teachers of public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State agreed that Principals of public Junior Secondary Schools required management competencies for management of teachers in public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. As shown in this table, all the items obtain a mean values that ranges from 2.50 and above. Therefore, the results revealed that the respondents had agreed that principals needed management competencies for effective management of teachers' in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of principals' management competencies for effective management of students in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

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Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Perception of Principals' Management Competencies for Effective Management of Students in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

S/N	Item Statement	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
14.	The principal admits qualified students properly.	455	3.17	0.678	Agreed
15.	The principal organizes orientation for new students.	455	3.06	0.752	Agreed
16.	The principal provides health services for students.	455	3.14	0.746	Agreed
17.	The principal provides guidance and counseling services in the school for students.	455	3.32	0.629	Agreed
18.	The principal manages discipline among students.	455	3.40	0.586	Agreed
19.	The principal supervise students attendance to classes.	455	3.40	0.614	Agreed
20.	The principal involves students in decision making in the school.	455	3.41	0.591	Agreed
21.	The principal provides basic amenities in the school for students.	455	3.39	0.572	Agreed
22	The principal adheres to students' ratio of 1.40 in a class.	455	3.36	0.565	Agreed
	Grand Mean ($\bar{x}$)		**3.29**		**Agreed**

The result of the data analysis presented in table 2 revealed that principals required management competencies for effective management of student in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Test of Hypotheses:

H_{O1}: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' management competencies for effective management of teachers in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test of Difference in the Mean Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the Principals Management Competencies for Effective Management of Teachers in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

S/N	Gender of Teacher	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	T.cal	T.crit	Decision
1.	Male	221	2.90	0.94	453	0.267	1.96	uphold
	Female	234	2.35	0.91				
2.	Male	221	2.77	0.96	453	1.618	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.36	0.92				
3.	Male	221	2.95	0.89	453	0.308	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.42	0.89				
4.	Male	221	2.88	0.93	453	1.084	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.28	0.86				
5.	Male	221	2.90	0.90	453	0.868	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.35	0.80				
6.	Male	221	2.85	0.80	453	1.130	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.46	0.81				
7.	Male	221	2.84	0.71	453	1.464	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.45	0.80				

8.	Male	221	2.82	0.72	453	1.156	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	2.73	0.82				
9.	Male	221	3.09	0.66	453	1.554	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.19	0.66				
10.	Male	221	3.16	0.69	453	1.438	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.25	0.62				
11.	Male	221	3.11	0.72	453	1.318	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.32	0.63				
12.	Male	221	3.17	0.66	453	1.623	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.33	0.61				
13.	Male	221	3.18	0.59	453	1.363	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.26	0.64				

The result of the t-test analysis presented in table 3 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' management competencies for effective management of teachers in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi state. As shown in the table, all the items had the t-calculated values less than t-critical values obtained. Based on this, the researcher upheld the null hypotheses and concludes that, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers in the management competencies required of principals for effective management of teachers' in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

H_{O2}: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on management competencies required of principals' for effective management of students in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test of Difference in the Mean Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the Principals' Management Competencies for Effective Management of Students in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

S/N	Gender of Teacher	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t.cal	t.crit	Decision
14.	Male	221	3.13	0.65	453	1.296	1.96	uphold
	Female	234	3.21	0.69				
15.	Male	221	2.95	0.79	453	1.155	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.17	0.69				
16.	Male	221	3.01	0.77	453	1.633	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.26	0.69				
17.	Male	221	3.21	0.64	453	1.606	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.42	0.59				
18.	Male	221	3.38	0.58	453	0.855	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.41	0.57				
19.	Male	221	3.39	0.61	453	0.440	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.41	0.62				

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20.	Male	221	3.45	0.59	453	1.306	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.38	0.58				
21.	Male	221	3.41	0.57	453	0.829	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.37	0.56				
22.	Male	221	3.38	0.54	453	0.972	1.96	Uphold
	Female	234	3.33	0.60				

The result of t-test analysis presented in table 4 reveals that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on management competencies required of principal' for effective management of students in Public Junior Secondary School in Ebonyi State. As shown in the table, the t-calculated value are less than t-critical values. Based on this the researcher upheld the null hypothesis and concludes that there was no significant difference on the mean rating of male and female teachers on management competencies required of principals' for effective management of students in public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Discussion

The result of the data analysis presented in table 1 reveals that principals of Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State needed management competencies for effective management of teachers of Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. This is because all the items in table 1 of chapter four obtained a mean value that ranges from 2.56, which exceed the bench mark of 2.50. Based on that the researcher agrees that principals needed the management competencies.

The finding of the study is in line with that of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), which stated that the principals maintain educational excellence and objective with regard to monitoring and maintenance of minimum standard in Public Junior Secondary Schools, similarly Egwu (2014), pointed that biblically every flock of sheep must have a shepherd to protect and advice in time of adversity. The principal as a supervisor is entrusted with duties to plan, inspect, guide and direct all activities that lead to achievement of the goals of the school system. It therefore seems that the principal as a supervisor inspects and marks teachers' lesson notes, determines students' level of interest and attentiveness during lesson delivery and classroom control to maintain high quality education reported by Igwe (2011). This is in accord with Aja-Okorie (2016) which maintained that the school principal and the teachers are expected to have cordial relationship without necessarily compromising the ethics of the school. it seems that the good principals work closely with vice principals, teachers, non-tutorial staff with a common goal of providing good and safe learning atmosphere free of conflict for the good of all to achieve school aims and objectives. It is also revealed that public junior secondary

school principals are gender sensitive. This is in line with Nelson (2009) who observed that male and female principals posted to urban and rural schools manage conflict in different ways. The result of this study expected that a school principal through evaluation brings improvement in quality of instruction. This is in line with Federal ministry of Education (2009) who described evaluation as an instrument for improving performance through checking the teachers' note of lesson, scheme of work, diaries, registers and financial records.

The result of the data analysis presented in table 2 reveals that principal of public junior secondary schools of Ebonyi State needed management competencies for effective management of students. This is because all items in table 2 of chapter four has a mean range of above 2.50 which has exceeded the criteria bench mark for agreement. It is based on this outcome that the researcher concludes that principals of Public Junior Secondary Schools needed the management competencies for managing Public Junior Secondary Schools Students in Ebonyi State. The finding of this study revealed that the principal must lead a school in improving students, achievement, believing in value and committed to students' learning as the foundational purpose of schooling and proposition that all students can achieve high standards of learning and so must needed knowledge and understanding of the relationship of assessment to improve students outcome and strengthening instruction. The findings of this study is in agreement with that of Ogbonnaya (2004) who stated that it is the principal that develops and implements the educational programmes of the school makes sure that curriculum and all instructions are formally implemented to achieve high productivity in schools. The result of the findings is also in accordance with Igwe (2011) who further affirmed that principal shall ensure a safe, orderly environment that encourages students to take responsibility for their behavior, and creates high morale among students, fill all required reports regarding violence, vandalism, attendance and discipline matters. All are gearing managing students well to avoid conflicting issues in school. The finding also implies that students are provided with an opportunity to exercise self-control.

The finding of the study explained that a disciplined person is orderly, responsible, diligent, honest and cooperative. When the school head wants to instill discipline on students he shall set good example for all students, initiate school rules and regulations and tabulates it before the students. The principals should treat all students equally to create good learning environment, rewards good behavior and punishes negative behavior. This is in line with FRN (2014) which reviewed that admission of students should be based on the merit and normal procedure. Oboegbulem (2014) concord with the findings of the study that for students management to be effective, the good principal may delegate other teachers to help some areas like enrolment and

orientation. Aja-Okorie (2016), supported this and said that the school head need to organize orientation programmes for students in Public Junior Secondary Schools, letting them to acquit to their new phase of education life and the plan for future step in career development. Above all it is very clear that principals of public junior secondary school needed the management competencies for the management of students of their various schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the principals of Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State needed the competencies in management of teachers and students related issues in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. The could for effective management of public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Recommendations

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

1. Male and female principals in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State should be continually being trained on required competency for effective management of schools through study leave with pay, workshops and seminars to acquire more skills and knowledge in managing teachers.
2. Principals in Ebonyi State Public Junior Secondary School should be encouraged and motivated for their good administration in handling students matters for effective management of students' for high performance.

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