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TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF THE EXTENT OF PRINCIPALS UTILIZATION OF DISCUSSION AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION TECHNIQUE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined teachers' perceptions of the extent to which principals utilise discussion as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools within the Enugu Education Zone. One research question guided the study, and one null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey design was employed. The study's population consisted of 1,934 teachers from 31 public secondary schools in the Enugu Education Zone, comprising 1,625 female and 309 male teachers. The sample included 198 teachers. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire validated by three experts. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered twice, with a one-week interval, to 20 secondary school teachers (10 male and 10 female) in Udi Education Zone, Enugu State, using the test-retest method. The scores generated were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability, yielding a coefficient of 0.82. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The findings revealed that teachers perceived that principals use discussion as an instructional supervision technique to a high extent in secondary schools in the Enugu Education Zone. The findings also revealed that gender significantly influence teachers' perceptions. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that principals should be encouraged to hold regular constructive discussions with teachers as part of their instructional supervision.

Keywords: Teachers, Perception, Discussion, Instructional Supervision, Principal

Introduction

Supervision as the act of being in charge of somebody or something and make sure that everything is done correctly and safely. Supervision can be seen as a process of overseeing or monitoring the performances of workers and helping them to improve their competencies and attain organizational goals. Glickman et al. (2017) described supervision as "all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. It involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, a selection and revision of educational

objectives, materials of instruction and methods of teaching, and the evaluation of instruction". The definition recognizes the leadership role of the supervisor and how it should impact teaching-learning experience and teacher development. Abdul (2022) also averred that supervision is a task of improving instruction through regular monitoring and in-service education of teachers. More so, Mohammed et al. (2015) viewed instructional supervision as the process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with pupils, and as such it is a process of stimulating growth and a means of helping teachers to help themselves.

Another school of thought perceived instructional supervision as one technique of educational administration, which among other things emphasizes ways to stimulate and improve the professional growth of teachers, assisting and guiding them and procedures of teaching in ways that will improve their overall performance and effectiveness. Egbebi et al (2019) identified two types of supervising as internal and external supervision. Internal supervision at the institutional level is undertaken by the school head and those delegated by him to do supervisory work. Agu et al. (2021) noted that internal supervision is more conversant with the needs and problems of the teachers. In view of the above definition instructional supervision entails promotion of practices.

Effective instructional supervision is an instrument used in schools for behavior modification. It determines the goals of school and means of accomplishing them. Therefore, instructional supervision in school has been seen as a motivator whereby one person who is the head motivates others towards the achievement of specific goals of the school (Abbas et al., 2022). Umaru (2018) stated that improving instructional supervision in schools through building principals' capacity also add that, even though stakeholders in education may be aware of the value of the principal's instructional supervisory responsibilities, effective instructional supervisory skills are hardly practiced. Dumba et al. (2023) posited that the main instructional supervisory role of school principals include giving teachers direction, resources and supporting them. Discussion is a vital instructional supervision technique that principals can utilise to improve teaching and learning outcomes in secondary schools. This approach involves facilitating dialogue among teachers, encouraging the exchange of ideas, and collaboratively solving instructional challenges. Through meaningful discussions, principals can promote a culture of ongoing professional development and continuous improvement among their staff.

The discussion method is defined by the interactive exchange of ideas and perspectives among participants. It serves as a collaborative platform for in-depth exploration of various topics, allowing teachers to reflect on their practices and share valuable insights. EduCorpus (n.d.) stated that discussion approach promotes critical thinking, communication skills, and

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active engagement, making it a key strategy for instructional supervision. The principal, as the instructional leader, plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective discussions. They must establish a supportive atmosphere where teachers feel encouraged to share their experiences and ideas. This requires setting clear objectives for the discussion, preparing stimulating questions, and ensuring that all participants have an opportunity to contribute (Howard, 2015). The principal's ability to bring together differing viewpoints and maintain focus on critical issues is essential for ensuring productive and impactful discussions (Ani, 2016). The researcher wonders if gender could play a significant role in principals' utilization of discussion technique in supervision.

Gender may affect principals' leadership styles, which in turn influences their approach to discussions. Female principals often adopt more collaborative and inclusive styles, encouraging open dialogue and participation from all staff members. In contrast, male principals might lean towards more directive approaches, potentially limiting the scope of discussion (Vennebo & Aas, 2020). This difference can shape the environment in which discussions occur and affect teachers' willingness to engage. The gender of the principal can also affect teacher engagement during discussions. Research indicates that female teachers may feel more comfortable participating in discussions led by female principals due to shared experiences and understanding (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). On the other hand, male teachers might respond differently based on their perceptions of gender roles in leadership. However, these views are theoretical in nature and have not been empirically proven to be true in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. It is against this background that the researcher investigated teachers' perception of the extent of principals' utilization of discussion as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

Statement of the Problem

The Federal Republic of Nigeria outlines the overall objectives of secondary education in the National Policy on Education, which include providing students with a broad-based curriculum for developing essential skills, fostering moral and civic responsibility and preparing students for higher education or vocational training. Secondary education is expected to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute meaningfully to national development. However, the realisation of these objectives in Enugu State seems to be challenging. Based on observations made by the researcher in some secondary schools in the Enugu Education Zone, it appears that some teachers are struggling to effectively carry out their instructional tasks. For instance, it was observed that certain teachers fail to adequately prepare for lessons, leading to poorly delivered content that does not engage students. Some teachers were also found to be inconsistent in using appropriate teaching methods and materials, leaving students without the required support for

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comprehensive learning. Furthermore, it seems that some principals in some secondary schools do not conduct regular instructional supervision, which would allow them to engage in constructive discussions with teachers about their instructional delivery. Without such supervisory interventions, there is little opportunity for teachers to receive feedback on how to improve their teaching practices. The researcher is concerned that if this situation is not addressed, it will negatively affect the academic achievement of secondary school students, ultimately impacting the quality of human capital in the state.

Research Question

To what extent do teachers' perceive principals' utilization of discussion as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers' perception of principals' use of discussion as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

Research Method

The study employed a descriptive survey research design and was carried out in the Enugu Education Zone. The population consisted of 1,934 teachers from 31 public secondary schools in the zone, comprising 1,625 female teachers and 309 male teachers. A sample of 198 teachers was selected, representing 10% of the total population. A cluster sampling technique was used to sample the teachers, with each of the three Local Government Areas treated as a cluster. From each cluster, three schools were selected using a simple random sampling technique (balloting), resulting in nine schools. Systematic random sampling was then used to select 22 teachers from each of the nine schools, yielding a total sample of 198 teachers. The data collection instrument was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Extent of Principals' Utilization of Discussion as Instructional Supervision Technique as Perceived by Teachers" (QEPUDISTPT). The questionnaire had two sections: Section A focused on the respondents' bio-data, while Section B consisted of five items related to the extent of principals' use of observation techniques. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from Very High Extent (VHE) to Very Low Extent (VLE). To ensure face validity, the instrument was reviewed by three experts—two from Educational Management and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Department of Peaceland University, Enugu. For reliability, the questionnaire was administered to 20 secondary school teachers (10 male and 10 female) in Udi Education Zone, using the test-retest method with a one-week interval. The reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a value of 0.82, indicating high reliability. A research assistant was enlisted to help distribute and collect the questionnaires, and the assistant

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was thoroughly briefed on the process. A total of 198 questionnaires were distributed, with 194 returned, resulting in a return rate of 97.97%. The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to address the research question, and t-tests were employed to test the hypotheses. A mean score of 2.50 and above was classified as High Extent, while scores below 2.50 were considered Low Extent. The null hypothesis was rejected if the calculated t-value was equal to or exceeded the table t-value at the 0.05 significance level, and accepted if it was lower.

Presentation of Results

Research Question: To what extent do teachers' perceive principals' utilization of discussion as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone?

Table 1: Mean Scores of the responses on Principals' Utilization of Discussion Technique (N=194)

ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
Organizing students forum after classroom visitation	2.99	0.95	High Extent
Holding teachers forum on instructional matters	2.83	0.67	High Extent
Principal encourages periodic interactive session with both teachers and students regarding teaching and learning	2.84	0.78	High Extent
Principal shares personal classroom experiences and ideas with the teacher	3.05	0.89	High Extent
Principal spends time one-on-one with teachers to clarify issues in teaching and learning	2.80	0.68	High Extent
Cluster Grand Mean	**2.90**		High Extent

The result of data analysis in table four above shows the grand mean score of teachers with respect to principals' utilization of discussion as supervisory technique as 2.90. The standard deviation scores of 0.67 and 0.95 indicate that the teachers' opinions were related. The cluster mean of 2.90 indicate that teachers' opined that principals' utilize discussion as instructional supervisory technique in public secondary schools to a high extent.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in their perception of principals' utilization of observation as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

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Table 2: Summary of T-Test Statistics Verifying the Significant Difference between Male and Female Teachers in Their Perception of Principals' Utilization of Discussion as Instructional Supervisory Technique

Variable	No.	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Decision
Male	31	2.79	0.660					
				192	2.48	1.96	0.05	Rejected
Female	163	3.00	0.69					

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2 shows the value of t-calculated as 2.48 at 0.05 level of significant difference and 192 degree of freedom while the critical value was 1.960. Since the critical value was greater than the calculated value, the null hypothesis tested was rejected. The implication is that gender has significant influence on teachers' perception of principals' utilization of discussion as instructional supervisory technique.

Discussion

Finding of the study revealed that teachers opined that principals' utilize discussion as instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu education zone to a high extent. This finding was in agreement with Vennebo and Aas (2020) who reported that teachers' perception on the instructional roles of school Heads reflected that good communicating leaders were characterised by frequent monitoring and feedback to their teachers. The mean scores of teachers were 2.90 indicate that principals have good communicating relationship with their teachers in terms of supervision. Ani (2016) opined that discussion is a process of communication in an administration. It entails action from a sender who desires sharing information with another or others, a reaction which reflects a receiver's willingness to continue with the activity of communicating with the sender. Furthermore, finding of the study revealed that male and female teachers did differed in their opinion on the extent principals utilize discussion as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. This finding indicates that male and female teachers differed on the extent to which principals utilize discussion as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. This is in line with Vennebo and Aas (2020) who reported that female principals often adopt more collaborative and inclusive styles, encouraging open dialogue and participation from all staff members. In contrast, male principals might lean towards more directive approaches, potentially limiting the scope of discussion. This difference can shape the environment in

which discussions occur and affect teachers' willingness to engage.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that principals utilise discussion as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in the Enugu Education Zone to a high extent. Discussion, as a supervisory technique, would help enhance the quality of instructional delivery and teaching practices in public secondary schools within the zone. Additionally, the study revealed that teachers differ in their opinions on the effectiveness of discussion as a supervisory method, depending on their gender. It is, therefore, essential that measures are implemented to continuously encourage principals' use of discussion in instructional supervision, as this plays a crucial role in improving instructional practices in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should be encouraged to hold regular, constructive discussions with teachers as part of their instructional supervision. These discussions should focus on providing feedback, sharing best practices, and addressing challenges in instructional delivery. This will help create an environment of continuous improvement in teaching practices and enhance the quality of education in public secondary schools.
2. Since teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of discussion as a supervisory technique differ based on gender, principals should receive training on how to engage effectively with both male and female teachers. This training should address gender biases and equip principals with strategies to foster open, respectful communication, ensuring that all teachers feel supported and motivated in their professional roles.

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