UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.16 (1); https://unijerps.org
2021 Impact Factor: 5.641; 2020 Impact Factor: 5.355.
July-December, 2023
Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363

FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE

Okeke Ndidi L (PhD); Obilor Peter U (PhD); Okonkwo Eucharia C
&
Ezeonwumere Chidimma

Department of Educational Management and Policy,
Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
on.loretta@unizik.edu.ng / 08037769698

ABSTRACT

This descriptive study design examined the factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in Public secondary schools in Awka South L.G.A of Anambra State. A total of 57 public secondary school principals and vice principals constituted the study population. There was no need for sampling since the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire titled "Factors influencing school principals' effectiveness questionnaire" was designed in 4 Likert formats and used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by experts from Nnamdi Azikiwe University. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 for the instrument was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. Mean scores were used for data analysis and the findings showed that teacher factors, student factors, and infrastructural factors affect principals' effectiveness. It was therefore recommended that School management should ensure that teachers comply with the ethics of their profession in other to realize students' learning. In addition, moral education should be prioritized in schools to inculcate respect in student, a co-existent and positive attitude towards the members of the school community.

Keywords: Teacher factor, Student factor, Infrastructure factor, School principals, Effectiveness

Introduction

Education plays a central role in the overall development of man and his society. It is a vital tool in the development of the mental, intellectual, and emotional well-being of individuals and also at the core of all activities of man. Yet, can only thrive in institutions of learning when the leader is effective and can efficiently mobilize and utilize the human and material resources available to achieve the goals of education. A principal as the instructional leader, curriculum developer, technology leader, and public relation officer of the school is in charge of its success or failure. However, studies have shown that the effectiveness of principals is hampered by certain factors ranging from insufficient physical facilities, inadequate school equipment and instructional materials, insufficient funds, teachers' incompetence, indiscipline among teachers and students, and incessant teacher transfer among many others (Otegbulu, 2016; Olorunsola & Bello, 2018)

Teachers' attitude to work is at the core of these challenges, Olorunsola and Bello (2018) agree that some teachers in public schools are not committed to the official

responsibilities assigned to them, they constantly come to school late and indulge in trading in the school environment. As a result of this unethical behavior, the quality of teaching and student learning remains poor and is evident in the general performance of students in external examinations such as the West African Examination Council and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board.

Furthermore, student disruptive behavior is another variable that has gravely affected the principals' performance in the management of the school (Olorunsola and Bello, 2018). They noted that most public secondary schools admit more than their carrying capacity and this has created disciplinary issues. Olorunsola and Bello (2018) affirm that the inability to instill and maintain discipline among students by school principals is a sign of managerial ineffectiveness and this could have a negative impact on school administration. In addition, is the issue of lateness to school by students (Torubel & Omemu, 2015).

Lack of adequate school infrastructure was identified by Ogunode, Ahaotu, and Ayisa (2021), Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) as a challenge to principals' effectiveness and Mohammed, Ogunode, and Yahaya (2021) concurred that Nigerian public secondary schools do not have adequate infrastructural facilities that promote effective teaching and learning. This study seeks to examine some of the aforementioned factors to find out if they actually affect school principals' effectiveness in the management of public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is believed that the findings of this study will help inform school principals on the issues that are impeding their effectiveness and the importance of taking care of those impediments for the proper functioning of their schools.

The construct Principals' effectiveness is described as principals who through their leadership activities are able to drive both student achievement and teachers' effectiveness (Anep, 2009). These types of school leaders create consistent quality learning experiences in the classroom across the school. They engage in driving teacher effectiveness and they also build a culture of high aspiration and expectations among students and teachers (Anep, 2009). In another definition, Besong (2014) sees principal effectiveness as the ability of school principals to oversee and maintain school facilities and initiate projects, including those left unfinished by their predecessors.

Also, Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010), see principal effectiveness as the extent to which a principal's leadership practices and behaviors are positively associated with improved student outcomes and school performance. It can be defined as the degree to which a principal's leadership results in improved academic achievement, positive school culture, and effective stakeholder engagement (Bae, Min, & Kim, 2021). Effective principals are those who are able to create a positive school climate, establish a shared vision, provide instructional leadership, and promote teacher professional development, which ultimately leads to improved student achievement" (Lee & Lim, 2021). From the ongoing, it can be deduced that principals' effectiveness is a consistent improvement in teachers' performance by a school principal who is a visionary leader and who often engages in professional

development as a way of repositioning teachers for greater performance.

Moreover, teachers are important stakeholders in the educational system and are greatly needed by principals for the effective administration of schools. Their roles include; the preparation of lesson plans, organization of instructional materials, presentation of lessons, evaluating students, marking answer scripts, and preparing report sheets (Animba & Nneji, 2020). Research studies in Nigeria have noted the inadequacies of professional teachers in public primary and secondary schools in the country as a huge problem facing the school principal (Animba & Nneji, 2020). In the same vein Animba and Nneji (2020) observed the increase in school enrolment by school leaders without adequate provision of teachers and facilities to manage them. This lack of sufficient teachers and facilities have resulted in the poor preparation of students for external examination.

The teachers' factor also covers the principal's indifference to teachers' problems; poor communication between principals and teachers in the school; role ambiguity or lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities; issuing of queries to teachers by the principal; lack of recognition of teachers' efforts by the principal; poor condition of service and principal's highhandedness in school administration (Nwangwu & Chidiobi, 2014). These factors not only negatively affect the principals' and teachers' work roles but, school outcomes as well (Walton & Datton, 2015).

Students also constitute a factor that affect principals' effectiveness in the school. In agreement, Igu, Ogba, and Igwe (2014) posited that students' indiscipline poses serious challenges to the school principals and could lead to a decline in academic standards. Torubel and Omemu (2015) disclosed various ways student could disrupt school activities as bullying, drug consumption, and cultism among others. They concluded that there is a need for principals to find solutions to students' maladaptive behaviors if school goals are to be achieved. Furthermore, the inability to instill and maintain discipline among the teachers and students are indices of managerial ineffectiveness and this could have a negative impact on school administration.

Infrastructural facility is an important component of educational institutions. School facilities such as classrooms, libraries, farms, gardens, laboratories, workshops, offices, stores, school buildings, staff quarters, chairs, tables, textbooks, magazines, journals, pictures, filmstrips, charts, bulletin boards, posters, cartoons, school museums and play fields are crucial for the effective management of schools by principals (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016). A good school plant also fosters desirable behavior, creativity, harmonious relationship, and problem-solving skills among learners; and set up a school network that would meet future demands for education and enhance teaching and learning (Akinsolu, 2014). In addition, some schools with notable facilities have been observed to have poor maintenance culture which have rendered those facilities useless (Oladipo et al 2014). It is quite clear that such schools will be difficult to administer.

Statement of the Problem

School principals face numerous responsibilities due to innovation and

changes that occur daily in the educational system. There are changes in instructional practices, leadership, technology, and curriculum development. The principals are expected to pioneer these changes in the school and at the same time achieve the goals of education. Moreover, recent studies have observed the roles played by teachers and students behaviour in influencing the effectiveness of the school principals in carrying out their duties. It is on this premise that this study seeks to identify and examine those teacher and student factors that affect the principals' effective performance in public secondary schools in Awka South and proffer solutions to handle the challenges for effective educational delivery.

Research Questions

The following questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What are the teacher factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. What are the student factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?
3. What are the infrastructure factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Research Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population was made up of 57 public secondary school principals and vice principals in Awka South Local Government Area. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Factors Influencing School Principals' Effectiveness Questionnaire" (FISPEQ), which was developed to align with the research questions of this study. The questionnaire had 26 items that elicited information from respondents on factors influencing principals' effectiveness. It was based on a four-point Likert scale format with options of "Strongly Agree (SA)," "Agree (A)," "Disagree (D)," and "Strongly Disagree (SD)." The validity of the instrument was carried out by three experts in the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The feedback from these experts was used to make necessary modifications to the instrument before its final production. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Cronbach alpha and a coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. Data collection was carried out by the researcher and two research assistants. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores.

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Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the teacher factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean scores of teacher factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools

S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
1.	An inadequate number of teachers affects principals' effectiveness of improved students' learning	3.33	Agreed
2.	Unethical behaviors of teachers towards work affect principals' effectiveness of improved students learning	3.36	Agreed
3.	Poor training of teachers on the best practices in the teaching profession affects principals' effectiveness	3.28	Agreed
4.	teachers' inability to understand the roles assigned to them by school management affects principals' effectiveness	3.36	Agreed
5.	The poor condition of service for teachers affects principals' effectiveness	3.43	Agreed
6.	Teachers' private businesses that interfere with their school work affect principals' effectiveness	3.57	Agreed
7.	constant conflict between teachers and school management affects principals' effectiveness	3.38	Agreed
8.	Teachers' poor discharge of assigned duty affects principals' effectiveness	3.54	Agreed
9.	Teachers' use of ineffective teaching methods affects principals' effectiveness	3.43	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.40**	**Agreed**

Table 1 shows that each of the items 1-9 has a mean score above the mean criterion of 2.50. With a grand mean score of 3.40, the result of the analysis shows that respondents agreed to all the above items as the teacher factors affecting school principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Question 2: What are the student factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean scores of student factors influencing principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools

S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
10.	Truancy among students affects principals' effectiveness	3.50	Agreed
11.	bullying among students affects principals' effectiveness	3.54	Agreed
12.	The use of drugs among students affects principals' effectiveness	3.19	Agreed
13.	Students' involvement in cultism activities affects principals' effectiveness	3.42	Agreed
14.	Students' destruction of school properties affects principals' effectiveness	3.61	Agreed
15.	Students' attacks on teachers affect principals' effectiveness	3.49	Agreed
16.	Students' resistance to punishment affects principals' effectiveness	3.66	Agreed
17.	Students' lack of proper home training affects principals' effectiveness	3.42	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.47**	**Agreed**

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Table 2 shows that items 10-17 have a mean score above the criterion mean. And also a grand mean score of 3.47 indicates that respondents agreed to all the above items as the student factors affecting school principal effectiveness in public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Question 3: What are the infrastructure factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean scores of infrastructure factors influencing school principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools

S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
18.	Lack of standard classrooms affects principals' effectiveness	3.68	Agreed
19.	Lack of standard laboratory for students affects principals' effectiveness	3.43	Agreed
20.	The lack of a well-equipped library affects principals' effectiveness	3.61	Agreed
21.	Inadequate offices for school staff affect principals' effectiveness	3.54	Agreed
22.	The absence of staff quarters affects principals' effectiveness	3.36	Agreed
23.	Lack of school store affect principals' effectiveness	3.54	Agreed
24.	Lack of convenience in school for staff and students affect principals' effectiveness	3.42	Agreed
25.	Lack of standard sporting facilities in school affect principals' effectiveness	3.56	Agreed
26.	Lack of instructional materials for teaching affects principals'' effectiveness	3.66	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.53**	**Agreed**

Table 3 shows that items 18-26 have a mean score above the mean criterion for this study respectively. With a grand mean score of 3.53, the result of the analysis shows that respondents agreed to all the above items as the infrastructure factors affecting school principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows that teachers' factors affect principals' effectiveness with a grand mean of 3.40. This finding is in line with the report of Olorunsola and Bello (2018) who noted that lateness to school, selling of goods to fellow staff members, and teachers sneaking out of the school compound during working hours to run personal errands, were the teachers factors that affect principals effectiveness. Also, this finding tallies with the report of Ikegbusi and Iheanacho (2016) who observed that many public schools are understaffed and their principals were to teach in addition to their administrative duties.

Furthermore, Table 2 indicates that student factors influence principals' effectiveness with a grand mean of 3.75. This finding tallies with the study of Olorunsola and Bello (2018) who opined that the inability to instill and maintain discipline among students by school principals is a sign of managerial ineffectiveness and this could have a negative impact on school administration. Also, in agreement was Torubel & Omemu (2015) who revealed that many secondary school students behave in defiant and aggressive ways in and out of the school setting

Table 3 indicates that infrastructural factors affect principals' effective administration

with a grand mean of 3.53. This finding is in line with the report of Mohammed, Ogunode, and Yahaya (2021) which stated the lack of school infrastructure has a great influence on principals' effectiveness. Also, Ikegbusi, (2014) is in tandem with the findings of this study when he noted that teaching and learning facilities were lacking in many public secondary schools in Nigeria, which makes secondary school principals' efforts to administer their schools diligently, fall below expectation.

Conclusion

Principals play an important role in the administration of public secondary schools. They play the primary functions of providing a conducive learning environment, facilitating teaching and learning in their various schools. The extent to which they can effectively perform these functions is dependent on teachers' cooperation, students' cooperation, and the availability of basic infrastructure. Based on the findings, this study concludes that teachers constitute a factor that affects school principals' effectiveness; students' attitudes affect school principals' effectiveness; and the availability of infrastructure also affects school principals' effectiveness. The implication of these findings suggest that the principals failure to address teachers, students, and facility issues in their schools will greatly affect student learning and teachers' performance, consequently affecting the overall school outcomes. School outcomes are a general measure of principals' effectiveness, so a poor school outcome indicates principals' ineffectiveness.

Recommendations

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

1. More subject teachers should be recruited by the government to make up for the inadequacies in most schools.
2. School management should ensure that teachers comply with the ethics of their profession in other to realize students' learning.
3. Moral education should be prioritized in schools to inculcate in student respect, co-existent and positive attitude towards the school authority
4. stakeholders of education should help in the provision of adequate and modern education infrastructure

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