

CONTEMPORARY MANAGERIAL PRACTICES ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined contemporary managerial practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. Four research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 268 principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. All the 268 principals were used for the study due to relatively manageable size of the population. The instruments for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Principals' Contemporary Managerial Practices Questionnaire (PCMPQ) which was organized in clusters. Internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability index of 0.83. A total of 268 copies of the questionnaires were distributed and properly filled and successfully retrieved. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that motivational and communication practices are adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. It also revealed that principals do not adopt contemporary digital supervisory practices for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that, Post Primary School Service Commission, should provide training for school administrators, on the use of digital tools to enhance digital literacy.

Keywords: Education, Effective Administration, Motivation, Communication and Supervision

Introduction

Education is an indispensable instrument for equipping individuals with requisite skills, sound knowledge and right attitude to actively contribute to positive development of the society. It is a key to unlocking the potentials of individuals and society, for technological innovations, digitalization, and sustainable development. This view is in line with the contentions of Osegbue (2019) who posited that education is a tool for scientific advancement, economic breakthrough, national cohesion and competition in a globalizing world. Most developed nation, considered education as the major key

performance index for their transformation. One of the crucial educational institutions in which individuals are exposed to learning experiences, is the secondary school. Secondary education which is the intermediate between basic education, and tertiary education is managed by a principal. The principal which could be a male or a female, is the chief administrator and manager of a secondary school, who ensure smooth day-to-day functioning of secondary school through effective administration.

There are some unpleasant situations that tend to indicate ineffective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. Some secondary schools in Anambra State appear to be bedeviled with poor communication network, lukewarmness by the teachers, misconduct among members of staff and infrastructural decay resulting to poor performance of students in both internal and external examinations. Similarly, Nwafor and Egboka (2020) observed that some secondary schools in Anambra State are bedeviled with incidences of indiscipline among staff and students, poor decision making, examination malpractice, improper planning, poor implementation and shortage of relevant facilities which may indicate ineffective school administration.

Effective school administration is the act of efficiently coordinating the daily activities of learning institutions to achieve intended results. Thompson and Akudo (2020) defined effective school administration as the ability of principals to successfully manage the available resources in order to attain set education objectives. Effective school administration helps to bring about optimum achievement of the school pre-determined objectives, through judicious use of the available resources. Operationally, effective school administration is the art of creating a vibrant educational ecosystem, where students, teachers, and staff thrive, by fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity, through visionary leadership, data-driven decision making, and compassionate support, to ensure academic excellence. Effective school administration could be enhanced by the principals through the application of various digital management practices, in order to revolutionize schools.

Management practices are coordinated administrative techniques of ensuring control and judicious use of available human, material, and financial resources to attain set education goals. Khan and Uzair-ul-Hassan (2021) defined management practices as administrative methods employed by a manager to achieve certain goals of an educational institution. In this era of digitalization and technological transformation, principals should employ digitalized means in fostering effective school management. Digital management practice is the use of digital tools, technologies, and methodologies to manage and optimize organizational processes, resources, and workflow for enhancing digital transformation, fostering a digital culture, and developing digital literacy among employees to drive innovation, agility and competitiveness. This is in line with the view of Kane (2019) who opined that digital management practice is a set of activities, processes and behaviours that organizations and their leaders use to manage and lead in a digital environment. Contextually, digital management practices refer to the adaptive and transformative approaches used by leaders to harness the power of digital technologies in order to foster a culture of digital dexterity, and drive sustainable growth, innovation, and competitiveness.

Several scholars have identified management practices that could be used to revolutionize schools especially at this contemporary era of digitalization and accelerated transformation, where technology is revolutionizing the way we live, work, learn, and requiring us to be adaptable, innovative and forward-thinking in order to thrive. Arop et al. (2020) listed management practices to include motivation, discipline, conflict management, supervision, records management and communication. Similarly, Asuquo and Etor (2021) identified management practices to include: communication, motivation and participatory decision-making. The focus of this study is on management practices of motivation, communication, and supervision.

Motivation is anything that spurs and induces one into displaying and sustaining desirable behaviour. Nduhura et al. (2021) defined motivation as a set of energetic forces that influences the direction, intensity and duration of work-related behaviour of an individual. Motivation boosts the morale of staff to be dedication and put their best efforts in attaining set goals and objectives. Agu, et al. (2021) observed that motivated teachers always go the extra mile in carrying out their duties of teaching students to attain set education goals. They further stressed that, motivational practices include training,

promotion, provisions of good work condition, maintaining high level of mutual and good relationship among and between employees. Motivated teachers are likely to work hard towards implementing decisions communicated to them.

Communication is the art of disseminating information, sharing opinions and expression of feelings between two or more persons. It is also the means of conveying a message, exchanging of thought and ideas among individuals. Oguejiofor (2023) opined that communication is the process of conveying information from the sender to the receiver. The sender is the person that conveys the information, while the receiver is the person that decodes it. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit, and responds immediately (Ngwakwe et al, 2018). Communication is the use of spoken word, printed word, graphs and pictorial representations, facial expressions, bodily movements, gestures and actions to convey thoughts, ideas, intentions, opinions and desires of one person to another (Yawe & Bua, 2016). Ngwakwe et al. (2018) asserted that the person who initiates the conversation or sends the information or message is called the sender, while the person who receives the information is referred to as the receiver. Communication practice is a dynamic process of creating and exchanging meaning, fostering connections, and building trust, through verbal and non-verbal interactions, active listening, and empathetic understanding. Communication is a means of clearly stating expectations from teachers during supervision.

Supervision is a deliberate effort of overseeing the activities of teachers to provide professional guidance and assistance for improvement of instructional delivery. Awe et al. (2022) defined supervision as a process of assisting, directing, stimulating and motivating teachers to enhance teaching and learning process through overseeing their activities in educational institutions. Kataka et al. (2023) noted that supervision is an administrative activity that encourages teachers to improve their pedagogical effectiveness and productivity through professional guidance, and advice. Supervision is the act of empowering others to achieve their full potential by providing guidance, support and discipline, while fostering a culture of trust, open communication, and continuous learning, to ensure that goals are met, and growth is sustained. Similarly, supervision can be seen as a dynamic and collaborative process that fosters a culture of excellence, innovation, and growth, by providing visionary leadership, constructive feedback and supportive guidance, to unlock individual and team potential, drive performance excellence, and achieve strategic objectives. Instructional supervision practices are geared towards ensuring that each individual teacher within the school system prepare lesson plan, adhere to time-table in teaching, manage classroom, cover the scheme of work and perform other instructional duties as scheduled by the school administrators (Damaris et al. 2020). Contextually, supervision practices can be seen as intentional and reflective process of engaging with others to promote professional growth, develop skills, and enhance performance, through regular communication, constructive feedback, and supportive guidance.

Statement of the Problem

The cases of absenteeism without fair reason, lateness to school, and nonchalant attitude to work among teachers, is evident in some public secondary schools in Anambra state. Some principals tend to unclearly express their job expectations to teachers, pay very little attention to staff and retort to harsh tone and inappropriate words in communicating with members of staff. There appears to be practice of rarely meting sanctions and punishment to teachers for professional misconduct in public secondary schools in Anambra State which may account for their misbehaviour.

The supervisory exercise of the principals seems to be irregular which could probably account for poor lesson plan and delivery, missing of lesson presentation by teachers and inadequate coverage of scheme of work. The ill-equipped office of some teachers, irregular training, denial of the opportunity to participate in decision making could be traceable to poor level of motivation, lack of effective, and poor supervision. When situations like these persist, teachers are demoralized and uncommitted to teaching of students to attain high academic performance. It is in the light of this problem, that the study examined the contemporary managerial practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the managerial practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the motivational practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. determine the communication practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. ascertain the supervisory practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the motivational practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What are the communication practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What are the supervisory practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference on the mean rating of principals on the motivation practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference on the mean rating of principals on the communication practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant difference on the mean rating of principals on the supervisory practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted in this study to examine the managerial practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was carried out in Anambra State. Population of the study comprised all the 268 principals from all the public secondary schools in the six education zone in Anambra State. Census sampling technique was used due to the manageable size of the population. One instrument developed by the researchers titled: "Principals' Managerial Practices Questionnaire (PMPQ)" was used to collect relevant data for the study. The instrument was divided into section A and B. Section A was structured to elicit demographic information about the respondents, while section B which was organized in three clusters, to sought the opinion of the respondents with regards to the managerial practice adopted for effective administration of schools. The instrument was validated by two experts in the department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient which yielded an index of 0.83. Data collected were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A 4-point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. This implies that an item that has a mean greater than or equal to the cut-off point of 2.50 is considered high while an item that has less than 2.50 was considered as low. T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

What are the motivational practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of motivational practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

S/N	Items description	N=268 X	SD	Decision
1	Give gift items to outstanding teachers	2.56	1.01	Agree
2	Publicly recognize staff on social media platform	2.41	1.10	Disagree
3	Give monetary rewards to outstanding teachers.	2.62	1.05	Agree
4	Conduct free medical examination for teachers	2.44	1.11	Disagree
5	Recommend teachers for promotion as and when due	2.71	1.00	Agree
6	Provide first-aid facilities for staff in case of emergency situations	2.54	0.98	Agree
7	Award digital certificates to recognize teachers' achievements	2.45	1.04	Disagree
8	Provide access to digital training, webinars and workshop	2.40	1.10	Disagree
Cluster Mean		2.52	1.05	Agree

As shown in table 1, the mean ratings of principals for items 1, 3, 5, and 6, are above 2.50 and thereby indicating agreement with the item statements as motivational practices adopted by principals for effective school administration. The mean ratings of principals for items 2, 4, 7 and 8 are below 2.50 and thereby indicating disagreement with the item statements as motivational practices adopted by principals for effective school administration.

The pooled standard deviation score which stood at 1.05 revealed that their responses are close to the mean indicating little variation in their responses. The cluster mean of 2.52 which is above 2.50 indicated that motivational practices are adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two:

What are the communication practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of communication practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

S/N	Items description	N=268 X	SD	Decision
9	Provide online suggestions boxes for dissemination of information	2.54	1.04	Agree
10	Pass message to members of staff through email	2.73	1.08	Agree
11	Paste information on school notice board for members of staff	2.68	1.11	Agree
12	Maintain an up-to-date school portal with essential information	2.89	1.09	Agree
13	Provide digital platform to provide teachers with information	2.70	1.00	Agree
14	Make use of text message to inform staff on happenings in the school	2.63	1.04	Agree
15	Make use of staff meeting to disseminate information to staff	2.67	1.14	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.69	1.07	Agree

Table 2 shows that principals recorded mean scores of above 2.50 for all items indicating agreement with the items as communication practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. The pooled standard deviation score of 1.07 that closer convergence of the mean ratings. The cluster mean of 2.69 which is above 2.50 revealed that communication practices are adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Three: What are the supervisory practices adopted by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores of supervisory practices adopted by Principals for school effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State

S/N	Items description	N=268 X	SD	Decision
16	Visit teachers in the classroom to observe their instructional delivery daily	2.67	1.09	Agree
17	Use digital means (Biometric attendance machine) to track teachers punctuality	2.41	1.03	Disagree
18	Provide mentoring to teachers through digital channels (zoom, Google Meet, Skype)	2.38	1.08	Disagree
19	Inspect teachers' lesson plans daily	2.52	1.10	Agree
20	Check teachers' coverage of scheme of work before examination	2.45	1.12	Disagree
21	Provide digital video recording software to observe teachers' class instruction	2.40	1.05	Disagree
22	Daily inspection of class attendance registers to ensure that they are regularly marked by teachers	2.44	1.07	Disagree
23	Utilize digital tools to monitor school safety (surveillance camera)	2.49	1.02	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	2.46	1.07	Disagree

Result of data analysis presented in table 3 revealed that mean ratings of Principals for items 16 and 19 which are above 2.50 indicated agreement with the items as parts of supervisory practices adopted by principals for effective school administration. On the other hand, mean ratings of principals for items 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 23 which are below 2.50, showed disagreement as parts of supervisory practices adopted by principals for effective school administration in this digital era.

The pooled standard deviation score is 1.07 while the mean rating is 2.46 which is below 2.50. This implied that principals, do not adopt supervisory practices for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference on the mean rating of male and female principals on the motivation practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.

Table 4: t-test analysis of male and female principals mean rating on the motivational practices adopted for effective school administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	No	X̄	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	120	2.33	1.09	266	1.33	1.96	Accept
Female	148	2.51	1.10				

Table 4 showed that the calculated t-value of 1.33 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the motivational practices adopted for effective school administration. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected, leading to the conclusion that principals accept motivation is indeed an essential tool for effective school administration.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference on the mean rating of male and female principals on the communication practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.

Table 5: t-test analysis of male and female principals' mean rating on communication practices adopted for effective school administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	No	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	120	2.96	0.83	266	1.09	1.96	Accept
Female	148	3.08	0.97				

Table 5 showed the t-test analysis of male and female principals' mean responses at 0.05 level of significance on communication practices adopted for effective school administration. The data indicated that the t-calculated value of 1.09 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96. This means that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of the respondents on the communication practices adopted for effective school administration. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference on the mean rating of male and female principals on the supervisory practices adopted for effective administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.

Table 6: t-test analysis of male and female principals' mean rating on supervisory practices adopted for effective school administration of public secondary school in Anambra State.

Variables	No	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	120	2.73	1.08	266	2.70	1.96	Reject
Female	148	2.38	1.02				

Table 6 revealed that the calculated t-value of 2.70 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference between male and female principals' supervisory practices for effective school administration in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study showed that principals agreed that they adopt use of gift, monetary reward, and recommendation for promotion as motivational practices for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State, but disagreed to the use of modern digital motivational measures such as digital award of certificates and provision of digital training, webinar, and workshops. This agreed with the finding of Chiemeka-Unogu (2022) which revealed that most principals use the traditional regular motivational strategies in administration of secondary schools even in this era of digitalization and global competitiveness. Digital motivational practice makes principals more effective in streamlining administrative tasks and workflows, and also improves their engagement in managerial activities for effective school administration.

The result of this study showed that the principals totally agreed that they adopt the communication practices such as the use of online suggestion boxes, notice boards, school portal, individual and group platforms, text messages, and staff meetings for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in tandem with the finding of Nwogbo et al. (2019) who affirmed that modern communication strategies are very fast and effective, when adequately applied in the school system. Similarly, Ngwakwe et al. (2018) asserted that making use of text messages to inform staff on happenings in the school, is easy, fast and effective way of dissemination of information in this era of digitalization.

In furtherance, the findings revealed that principals do not adopt the use of digital supervisory practices such as the use of biometric attendance machine, skype, Google meet, surveillance camera as supervisory practices for effective administration of public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in agreement with the contentions of Awe et al. (2022) which observed that most supervisors still make use of old system of regular class visits and daily inspection of instructional delivery. Regrettably, failure to use modern digital supervisory practices in education can lead to ineffective teacher

evaluation and support, poor student outcomes and academic achievement, inadequate professional growth opportunities just to mention a few.

The test of null hypothesis 1 and 2 in tables 4 and 5 respectively showed no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on motivation and communication practices adopted for effective school administration while, hypothesis 3 revealed that there is indeed a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on supervisory practices adopted for effective school administration to revolutionize public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that principals did not adopt most digital measures in managing public secondary schools in Anambra State. Rather, they still use conventional methods. The dimensions of managerial practices adopted by principals were motivational, and communication practices, while they did not adopt the supervisory practices highlighted.

Recommendations

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

1. The Government and other stakeholder in education should provide digital tools needed to enhance principals' managerial task.
2. Ministry of Education should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to organise annual training, seminars, and workshops on the use of modern digital tools to enhance principals' administrative competence.
3. Post Primary School Service Commission, should provide training for school administrators, on the use of digital tools to enhance digital literacy.

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