



Principals' Social Characteristics And Teachers' Performance In Public Secondary Schools In Abia State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated principals' social characteristics and teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Abia State. Correlation research design was adopted for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The populations of the study comprised all 198 vice-principals in public secondary schools in Abia State. The stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 132 vice-principals as the sample size which represented 66.67% of the population. Two self-structured questionnaire titled: "Principals' Social Characteristic Questionnaire" (PSCQ) and Teachers' Performance Questionnaire (TPQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in the field Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation, University of Port Harcourt. The internal consistency index was computed and established using a Cronbach Alpha statistic with reliability coefficient of 0.81. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to answer the research questions, while z-ratio was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between principals' emotional intelligence as well as social skills on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Abia State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education through the Education boards should organize regular workshops, seminars and conferences to train principals on the need for effective application of emotional intelligence for effective school administration.

Keywords: Principals, Social, Characteristics, Teacher, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Education has been globally referred to as the noblest industry of the human society. It is the most potent tool for economic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of any country. There is no doubt, that the development of any nation is anchored primarily and dependent on the quality of the education system available to the country. Education is nowhere without the teacher playing a pivotal role in ensuring attainment of educational objectives under the supervision and coordination of an efficient principal. Teachers are arguably the most important group of professionals for our nation's future. Without the teacher, the education system will be crippled. The increased importance in teachers' job performance has made it extremely important to identify the factors that influence teachers' job performance. Teachers' job performance plays a crucial role in students' learning process. Teachers play a significant role in supporting and promoting effective teaching and learning in the school. They are instrumental in transferring learning material to children at their understandable level.

Teachers are always under pressure as they are accountable to their performance and student performance. Their major functions in schools include but not limited to the following; planning,

preparing and delivering lessons to all students in the class; teaching according to the educational needs, abilities and achievement of the individual students and groups of students; adopting and working towards the implementation of the school development plan of the particular school they are giving service in; assigning work, correcting and marking work carried out by his/her students; assessing, recording and reporting on the development, progress, attainment and behaviour of one's students; providing or contributing to oral and written assessments, reports and references relating to individual students or groups of students. She explained how problems are solved and explains the lesson to the students (Sunitha, 2016).

The achievement of a successful teaching is not just in understanding the subject content, but also the application of effective skills in instructional delivery and supervision among others, not excluding the combination of thinking and feeling. Goleman (1995) identified one of those skills as emotional intelligence. Emotions are involved in everything people do: every action, decision and judgment. People normally need to communicate and to be connected with others, so it becomes necessary to be able to navigate one's own behavior through the network of others. Therefore, emotions can't be separated from thinking in any aspect of life. Emotionally intelligent people recognize this and use their thinking to manage their emotions rather than being managed by them. More specifically, whenever learning is undertaken, there is an undercurrent of emotions going on with crucial information. Whether it is taken into consideration or not, it is still there.

Emotional intelligence as a word was coined by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defines it as one's ability to monitor one's own and others emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence plays an important role at the administrative level of any organization. It is centered on one's ability to understand and applies one's emotions positively to every situation that may arise. Goleman (2001) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize own feelings and the feelings of others, the ability to motivate and manage the emotions of his own and others better.

The ability of an administrator to motivate and manage his personal emotions and that of others guarantees the possibility of achieving organizational goals. In other words, it distinguishes outstanding leaders in the area of performance or productivity. A principal's emotional intelligence can create a healthy environment where employee emotions are well managed and teachers are able to perform their duties effectively, thereby safeguarding student academic achievement (Goleman, 2006; Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008; Moore, 2009). According to Goleman (1998), there are five critical pillars or competences of emotional intelligence, namely; self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness (empathy) and social skills. Each of the components of emotional intelligence can greatly impact the way a school principal perceives and reacts to all types of organizational events (Anand and UdayaSuriyan, 2010).

It is worthy of note to state that, self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation are important competencies for intrapersonal emotion management, while social awareness (empathy) and social skills are about interpersonal emotion management. For the purpose of the paper, the focus will be self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills.

Self-awareness is related to effectiveness in management and leadership. Self-awareness serves as a foundation for behaviours and skills such as goal-setting, effective communication, listening and stress and time management. The Self-awareness of a principal in identifying his/her strengths and weaknesses in terms of expression of emotions will enable him/her to handle issues that may arise most appropriately for the overall benefit of the organization. The knowledge of the self is important to exhibiting self-control. It is imperative for school administrators to engage in self-analysis of emotions as this can motivate or demotivate them in handling their emotions and that of others more effectively. Understanding that emotions can motivate or demotivate them would assist them in managing these emotions rightly to actualize healthy inter-intrapersonal relationship for the attainment of school goals and objective (Grobler and Conley, 2014).

Self-regulation is the ability of concentrating on tasks for a longer period of time, suppressing impulsive behaviour, planning the smaller steps that are necessary to solve tasks and planning future activities and prioritizing tasks (Anderson, 2002; Diamond, 2013; and Gerst, Cirino, Fletcher and Yoshida, 2015). These abilities are considered to be important for the attainment of school goals and objectives (Anderson, 2002; Diamond, 2013; and Gerst et al, 2015).

Self-regulation is focus on regulating one's behaviours and thoughts in order to execute goal directed behaviour. Optimal administrative performance requires high level of self-regulation; principals need to regulate their own attention, behaviours, thoughts and emotions in order to pay the required amount of attention to the administrative task at hand (Diamond, 2013). Social skills are fundamental for instructional delivery. They have impact on learning, interpersonal relations, coexistence, mental health and the collaboration of students and teachers as well as in teachers' effectiveness (Tapia-Guiterrez and Cubo-Delgado, 2015). Tapia-Guiterrez and Cubo-Delgado, (2015) further categorized social skills in to six broad skills namely; conversational skills (communicating, to listen, dialogue and relationship), coexistence skills (sociability, friendship), solidarity and empathy skills (solidarity, empathy), self-assertion skills (assertiveness, respect), collaboration skills (tolerance, interaction) and conflict resolution skills (arbitration). The core concept of social skills are to impact effective interpersonal relation, communication and empathy for guarantee increase in teachers' performance for the actualization of school goals and objectives.

Teachers need a leader who can inspire and motivate them to be more effective in teaching while students will rely heavily on teachers to acquire knowledge and skills both social and intellectual. Therefore, the effectiveness of the school is highly dependent on the skills of the principal (Rowena, 2014) because their attitude and skills are decisive to the effective implementation of the programs of the school. Principals are the leaders who play an important role in the achievement of excellence or success of a school. Among these skills is the ability to control social activities which allows the principals to influence teachers to carry out teaching process effectively. In this regard, the ability of the principal to manage social interactions among school personnel is important in determining the success of the school particularly the performance of teachers.

Social skills possessed by principals' aid socialization in the school which is important for collective goal attainment and performance. Sharma, Goswami and Gupta (2016:219) asserted that "socialization means becoming a member of the society and learning the rules, attitudes and beliefs of the society". It is this knowledge that is required for optimal performance and goal attainment. Social skills are therefore fundamental for the success of any formal organization. Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Gundlach and Stoner as cited in Beheshtifar and Norozy (2013:74) stated that social skill or the ability to effectively interact with others is becoming increasingly important for organizations as more team based arrangements are used and more service-oriented jobs are employed. The principal and the teachers under his headship must make conscious effort to acquire these social skills for optimal educational goal attainment and task performance.

Teachers' are central to attainment of school goals which is tied to their level of job performance. This confirms the reason why school head are particularly concern the job performance of teachers. According to Peretomode in Adeyemi (2010) job performance is determined by workers' level of participation in the day to day running of the organization (school). In their views, Giami and Obiechina (2019) described job performance as the ability to skillfully use the right behavioural attitude to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Teachers' performance can be influence positively when school heads (principals) are passionately concerned about the teachers' needs with the intention of satisfying them. This action is capable of guaranteeing optimal result for the actualization of school objectives (Giami and Obiechina, 2019).

Owoeye in Adeyemi (2010) identified variables of job performance, to include; effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work, and disciplinary ability as virtues which teachers should uphold effectively in the school. On this note therefore, teachers' job performance can be measured through annual report in terms of teachers'

performance in teaching, lesson note preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject content, instructional proficiency, dedication to duty, commitment to assigned task and extra-curricular activities. Other areas worthy of mention include, effective leadership, effective supervision, effective monitoring of students' work, motivation, students' discipline, class control and management. This no doubt, however, places the teacher as an important resource input in the educational system, because only the teachers shape the direction and influences to a great extent the attainment of school goals and objectives since they are the ones that interpret and also implement educational policies (Giami & Obiechina, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the advancement in technology and educational reforms, the educational system faces mirage of challenges and issues. These issues are mainly concerned with the poor academic performance, demands and expectations of parents, declining quality of education, non-serious attitude of the students, heavy workload on teachers' etc. such issues make it difficult for the teachers to cope with the academics as well as societal demands of the parents and students. Social pressure on the school system has resulted in emotional disturbance and challenges for the principal to handle.

Over the years many testimonial practices have seen the success story of schools been attributed to the principals managerial instinct, in the same way, the failure of schools have been associated with the managerial instinct of schools leadership. Given the proposition that everything rise and fall on leadership, this making the leadership of an organization or institution a grease in the wheel of its performance.

Earlier researchers have focused more on the role of emotional intelligence in the learning process and in individuals' career success. More research are focused on teachers' emotional intelligence and students' performance, or teachers-students' emotional intelligence as an expo factor to students' educational achievement. This study therefore, is intended to investigate principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' performance with emphasis to public secondary schools in Abia State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between principals' social characteristics and teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Abia State. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

1. examine the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Abia State.
2. ascertain the relationship between principals' social skills and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Abia State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' social skills and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Abia State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' social skills and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Abia State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the correlation research design. The population of this study was 197 vice-principals from public secondary schools in Abia State. The stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 132 vice-principals as the sample size which represents 66.67% of the population. Two self-structured questionnaire titled: Principals' Social Characteristics Questionnaire (PSCQ) and Teachers' Performance

Questionnaire (TPQ) was drawn in line with the four point likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used for rating the questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts in the field of Education Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistency index was computed and established using Cronbach Alpha statistic with reliability coefficient of 0.81. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to answer the research questions while z-ratio was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Questions One: What is the relationship between principals’ emotional intelligence and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between principals’ emotional intelligence and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 1: correlation result on the respondent’s ratings on the relationship between principals’ emotional intelligence and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State

Variable	n	df	r	z-ratio	z-crit.	Sig	Alpha Level	Remarks
Principal’s Emotional Intelligence Teachers Performance	168	166	0.357	5.10	1.96	0.0312	0.05	Statistically significant

Result in table 1, showed that there was a significant positive relationship between principals’ emotional intelligence and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State. It also showed that the z-crit. value of 1.96 was less than the computed calculated z-ratio of 5.1, hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. That is, there is a significant relationship between principals’ emotional intelligence and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between principals’ social skills and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between principals’ social skills and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 2: correlation result on the respondent’s ratings on the relationship between principals’ social skills and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State

Variable	n	df	r	z-ratio	z-crit.	Sig	Alpha Level	Remarks
Principal’s Social Skills Teachers Performance	168	166	0.433	6.18	1.96	0.0284	0.05	Statistically significant

In table 2, there is a significant positive relationship between principals’ social skills and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State. It also showed that the z-crit. value of 1.96 was less than the computed calculated z-ratio of 6.18, hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. That is, there is a significant relationship between principals’ social skills and teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Abia State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

1. The findings of the study show that teachers’ performance in secondary schools is significantly influenced by the principals’ emotional intelligence. The findings also implies that the principals’ self-awareness is vital in ensuring teachers improved performance. Given the position of Mohammad, Aijaz and Saira (2018) that self-awareness has been characterized as a determinant of job performance by many authors, it help understands the importance of one’s feelings and the relation to the job performance. According to Megarian and Sosik (1997), self-awareness is the capacity of an individual to recognize the impact of one’s emotions on his thought, behavior and goals. It also results in high ratings of effectiveness by superiors and co-workers.

Furthermore, it was revealed that the attitude of self-regulation helps administrators to effectively regulate their thoughts and behaviours towards achieving specific goals. This assertion is in agreement with the view of Diamond (2013) that optimal administrative performance requires high level of self-regulation; principals need to regulate their own attention, behaviours, thoughts and emotions in order to pay the required amount of attention to the administrative task at hand.

2. On the other hand, Social skills are fundamental and crucial for effective teaching and learning for optimal outcome. This was corroborated by Tapia-Guiterrez and Cubo-Delgado (2015) when they opined that instructional delivery have much impact on learning, interpersonal relations, coexistence, mental health and the collaboration of students and teachers as well as in teachers' effectiveness (Tapia-Guiterrez & Cubo-Delgado, 2015). Therefore, findings from the study concludes that principals' self-regulation and principals' social skills impact more in improving teachers' performance. These variables enhance high level interpersonal relationship, instructional delivery and teamwork among teachers' for effective administration towards the attainment of school goals and objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study revealed that principals' emotional intelligence and social skills contribute significantly to teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Abia State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Ministry of Education through the Education boards should organize regular workshops, seminars and conferences to train principals on the effective application of emotional intelligence for effective school delivery.
- ii. Principals in secondary schools should always assess their interpersonal relationship with subordinates (teaching and non-teaching) to determine if expected outcome is achieved.
- iii. A conference of Principals of secondary schools should be created for termly interaction where experiences would be shared and areas of shortcomings in the application of emotional intelligence in the discharge of the duties address for optimal result.

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