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Abstract

Purpose: The study was carried out to determine the administrative and supervisory leadership needs of principals of secondary schools in South East and South South Nigeria. Four research questions guided the study.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive survey research design while a sample of 700 principals was purposively randomly selected for the study. A 23 – item questionnaire structured on a four-point rating scale was used for data collection. The face validity of the instrument was determined using two experts. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient was applied in the analysis of their responses and the average coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Results: Findings indicated that organizational needs, power to exercise authority needs, community based needs and manpower-related needs are needs of secondary school principals in South East and South South Nigeria.

Policy recommendations: The authors recommended among others that government and professional bodies in the education sector should organize periodic capacity training and retraining programmes for principals on school administration and supervision to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes in secondary schools.

Keywords: *Administrative, Supervisory, Leadership, Needs and Principals.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges facing Nigerian society in this contemporary era is how to create a model for effectively meeting the administrative and supervisory needs of principals to manage and advance secondary schools in Nigeria. Administration according to Atakpa and Okolo (2009) is the activities done in order to plan, organize and run a business, school or other institutions for effective attainment of goals. Supervision on the other hand is the process whereby an authorized person sees that the work done is in line with stated standard, and if not, he corrects, directs, teaches, or demonstrates. He also assists in teaching techniques, confers with teachers, evaluates, examines, revises curriculum and courses of study (Ohiwerei & Okoli, 2010). Good administrative and supervisory activities of principals according to Kathleen (2006) lead to effective and efficient management of secondary schools. It also brings teachers up to minimum standards of effective teaching, and improves teachers' competencies.

The principal is the executive head of the school organization. He is a coordinator who organizes activities in such a way that things work smoothly, quickly and effectively (Agih, 2015). This means that every principal of a school must be involved in effective planning, organizing, supervision, controlling and evaluation. The achievement of set goals by principals depends on principals' leadership and administrative skills; level of funding, relation with teaching staff, students and the communities. Ezeocha (1985) in Nwazor (2015) averred that for principals to carry out their administrative and supervisory leadership roles effectively, certain needs must be identified and met. These needs according to Ezeocha include; administrative needs, organizational needs, power to exercise authority needs, manpower-related needs, and community based needs. Success and survival of secondary schools depends on awareness of principals (as leaders) and how they handle these needs for effective outcome.

Administrative needs are all the administrative activities carried out to ensure the achievement of school objectives. It also concerns freedom of principals in the discharge of their school responsibilities. Organizational needs of principals mean freedom to innovate, create and initiate horizontal and vertical communication among the staff (subordinates) for effective management of the schools, among others. Agreeing with this, Kooser (2005) stated that identifying and meeting these needs are essential to successful principal ship. Power to exercise authority needs entail authority of the principal to discipline staff, utilize school funds to purchase equipment such as computers, photocopiers, generators, and building school laboratories.

Community-based needs concern how to develop meaningful new ideas through exercising imagination and originality. It also concerns principal's ability to organize classes for community literacy by using the school as evening adult education centers and also using his teachers (especially those interested) to impart knowledge to the community. Ibukun, Oyewole and Abe (2011) averred that a practical step to promoting effective school-community relations is for the principals to study and understand the community in which the school is located. Manpower needs in the views of Ezeocha (1985) in Nwazor (2015) concern the quality of principals, adequacy in number of teachers, how teachers' salaries are paid, and periodic training and retraining programmes available to teachers. An empirical study by Adegbenile (2011) on principals' competency needs for effective school administration in south west Nigeria revealed that instructional leadership skills, personnel management skills and financial skills are needed by principals. The study focused on determining the organizational, power to exercise authority, community based and manpower-related needs of principals in South East and South South Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Principals engage in administration and supervision of schools. Administration involves planning, organizing, directing and coordinating of human and material resources for effective and functional teaching and learning, while supervision involves advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and overseeing teaching and non-teaching staff so as to achieve expected results. What one principal does at his school is usually determined by several factors. However, several needs such as organizational, power to exercise authority, community based and manpower-related needs prevent the principals from leading effectively in their schools. Supporting this view, Ekundayo (2013) observed with concern that principals of secondary schools often fail to carry out effective administrative and supervisory leadership roles as a result of hindrances such as poor incentives, limited educational resources, and administrative inadequacies. It is necessary therefore to identify those needs which may impede principals of secondary schools from performing their school leadership functions effectively.

Objectives of the Study

- i. The organizational needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria.
- ii. The power to exercise authority needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria.
- iii. The community based needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria.
- iv. The manpower-related needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be beneficial to Nigerian Government, principals as well as prospective principals, and researchers. The Nigerian governments would benefit from the findings of this study by being informed of the administrative and supervisory leadership needs of principals. The information would enable the government to provide enabling environment and policies for meeting these principals' needs. Furthermore, principals as well as prospective principals would benefit from the findings by being exposed to administrative and supervisory leadership needs that are prevalent in secondary schools. The recommendations from the findings could also lead to provision of training and retraining programmes for principals and offer opportunities for practices that can improve their achievement of leadership roles. Finally, future researchers would benefit from the findings of this study as it would offer guidance and data for research on principals' school administration and supervision.

The instrument used was a structured questionnaire titled “Principals Administrative and Supervisory Leadership Needs (PASLN)”. The instrument had four clusters A to D. Cluster A contain six items on organizational needs, B has five items on power to exercise authority needs, cluster C contains six items on manpower related needs while cluster D has six items on community based needs. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale namely; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagrees (SD). Face validity of the instrument was established by giving initial draft of the instrument to two experts from Vocational Education Department at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Test re-test method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered to twenty principals outside the sample area and after an interval of two weeks; the instrument was administered to them again. Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient was applied in the analysis of their responses and the average coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. This means that the instrument was 89 percent reliable. This was considered adequate for the study. A 23-item structured questionnaire was then administered to the respondents. Out of the 700 copies of the questionnaire administered, 680 copies were correctly filled and returned, giving a percentage return of 97. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The cut-mark for decision making in the research questions was adopted at 2.50. Items with mean ratings of 2.50 and above were rated agreed while items with mean ratings below 2.50 were rated disagreed.

RESULTS

Research Question 1:

What are the organizational needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents’ Mean and Standard Deviation responses on the Organizational Needs of Principals

S/N	Items on organizational needs of Principals	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Give principals access to funds to enable them plan how to meet school goal	3.30	0.75	Agreed
2.	Meeting school financial needs on time	3.50	0.61	Agreed
3.	Giving principals freedom to organize seminars, workshops and conferences for teachers to update their skills and knowledge	2.72	0.78	Agreed
4.	Give principals freedom to plan and source for funds for school improvement	3.17	0.64	Agreed
5.	Giving principals training before appointment	2.57	0.53	Agreed
6.	Providing regular in-service programmes for principals to update their knowledge	3.02	0.32	Agreed
Grand mean		3.05		Agreed

Table 1 show that the mean ratings of the respondents ranged from 2.57 to 3.50. Similarly, the standard deviation ranged from 0.32 to 0.75. Since all the items are above mean ratings of 2.50, so they are rated agreed. This means that respondents agreed that all the six items are organizational needs of secondary school principals.

Research Question 2

What are the power to exercise authority needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents’ Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Power to Exercise Authority Needs of principals

S/N	Items on Power and Authority Needs of Principals	Mean	SD	Decision
7.	Give principals freedom to discipline staff without interference from commissions headquarters	3.50	0.61	Agreed
8.	Give principals freedom to discipline students without interference from parents and host communities	4.00	0.91	Agreed
9.	Giving principals freedom to utilize school funds to erect hostels	2.58	0.48	Agreed
10.	Give principals freedom to purchase ICT facilities and other equipments for the school	3.89	0.74	Agreed
11.	Giving principals freedom to erect laboratories and library blocks	3.17	0.43	Agreed
Grand mean		3.43		Agreed

Data in Table 2 show that the mean ratings of the respondents ranged from 2.58 to 4.00. Similarly, the standard deviation ranged from 0.43 to 0.91. Since all the items are above 2.50, so they are rated agreed. This means that respondents agreed that all the five items are power to exercise authority needs of secondary school principals.

Research Questions 3

What are the community based needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents’ Mean and Standard Deviation on the Community Based Needs of Principals

S/N	Items on Community Based Needs of Principals	Mean	SD	Decision
12.	Giving principals freedom to use school premises to meet host communities’ educational needs	2.63	0.35	Agreed
13.	Giving principals freedom to dialogue with communities to study beyond their present level of education	4.00	1.01	Agreed
14.	Giving communities freedom to demand for accountability from principals	2.72	0.78	Agreed
15.	Giving principals freedom to partner with communities to build laboratories for schools	3.77	0.72	Agreed
16.	Giving principals freedom to start adult education programme for communities	3.27	0.69	Agreed
17.	Giving principals freedom to employ indigenes of host communities as non teaching staff	3.06	0.43	Agreed
Grand mean		3.05		Agreed

Data in Table 3 show respondents’ mean and standard deviation on community based needs of principals. The mean ratings of all the six items are above 2.50. This means that the respondents agreed that all the items listed are community based needs of secondary school principals.

Research Questions 4

What are the manpower-related needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria?

Table 4: Respondents’ Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Manpower-Related Needs of principals

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
18.	Give principals freedom to choose teachers of adequate qualifications	3.43	0.36	Agreed
19.	Provide adequate number of teachers to principals to work with	3.80	0.76	Agreed
20.	Giving principals freedom to choose teachers for specialized vocational or business subjects	2.72	0.08	Agreed
21.	Provide principals with enough ancillary Staff technical staff and typists	3.97	0.82	Agreed
22.	Giving principals freedom to organize training and retraining programmes for teaching and non teaching staff	3.67	0.45	Agreed
23.	Giving principals freedom to employ personal assistants to reduce stress on them	2.56	0.07	Agreed
Grand mean		2.58		Agreed

Data in Table 4 show that the mean ratings of the respondents ranged from 2.56 to 3.43. Similarly, the standard deviation ranged from 0.07 to 0.82. Since all the items are above 2.50, so they are rated agreed. This means that respondents agreed that all the six items listed are manpower-related needs of secondary school principals.

Discussion

The analysis of the organizational needs of secondary school principals shown in table 1 indicated that respondents agreed that all the items (1-6) are organizational needs. This is attested by the grand mean of 3.05. The findings of the study agreed with that of Valenze (1996) which revealed that principals need to be trained before and retrained after appointment to enable them carry out their school leadership functions effectively. Valenze further stated that unless many of these needs are met, principals will continue to perform below expectation which in turn will hinder the achievement of goals of secondary education.

The analysis on the power to exercise authority needs of secondary school principals as presented in Table 2 revealed that respondents agreed that all the items (7-11) are power to exercise authority needs of principals with a grand mean of 3.43. The findings of the study are in line with that of Ezeocha (1985) which revealed that secondary school principals need freedom to discipline staff

without interference from commissions headquarters, to discipline students, to plan and source funds, and to buy ICT facilities and other equipment for their schools.

The analysis on community based needs of principals in Table 3 indicated that respondents agreed with grand mean of 3.05 that all the items listed are community based needs of principals. Also, the analysis in Table 4 on manpower-related needs revealed that all the items are seen as manpower-related needs with grand mean of 2.58. The findings in Tables 3 and 4 are in agreement with that of Ukeje (2000) and Ibukun (2003) which revealed that principals need to have adequate number of qualified teachers in their schools, principals need to be trained and retrained regularly for them to perform to the optimum standard.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that freedom to carry out organizational roles, power to exercise authority, community based and manpower-related functions are needs of secondary school principals in south east and south south Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, this paper recommended the following:

1. Educational Administrators should give secondary school principals greater freedom and authority to enable them carry out their administrative and supervisory leadership roles effectively.
2. Government and professional bodies in the education sector should organize periodic capacity development training and retraining programmes for principals on school administration and supervision to improve the quality of teaching and learning process in secondary schools.

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