PRINCIPALS' APPLICATION OF PERSONNEL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Onuorah, H. C. *PhD*[1] & Egbosi, I. B. *PhD*[2]
[1&2]*Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria*

Abstract
The main purpose of the study was to determine principals' application of personnel and financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education zone, Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 116 principals made up of 61 public secondary schools principals and 55 private secondary school principals in the zone. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education. The instrument was further subjected to reliability testing through a pilot test on 20 principals, ten from private and ten from public secondary schools in Enugu State who were not included in the population of the study. The application of Cronbach Alpha on the obtained data yielded coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.82 for the two clusters of the instrument with an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.80. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Findings of the study revealed that principals in public and private secondary schools applied personnel and financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools to a moderate extent, and that public and private secondary school principals did not differ in their mean ratings on their application of personnel and financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the Post Primary School Service Commission should organize training programmes and conferences for principals in secondary school where they will be educated on the need to understand the strategies for motivating and rewarding staff for greater performance on the job.

Keyword: Principals, Application, Personnel, Financial, Management, Practices, Effective, Administration, Secondary, Schools

Introduction

Education is the foundation for the facilitation of social and economic growth of any nation. It is meant to pass on to the new generations the existing knowledge of their physical environment; to introduce individuals to the organization of society, teach them skills for performing their jobs and enjoying their leisure, as well as to inculcate sound moral values in them for their own benefit and that of the society. This view is strengthened by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) which views education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. According to Nwaka (2010), education is a positive preparation for life and in life. It could be formal and informal.

In Nigeria, formal education is carried out in three stages; primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The secondary level of education which is the focus of this paper is the phase of education students receive after primary school and before the tertiary level. Its importance lies in its position both as the bridge between the primary and tertiary education and as the agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society (Udalla, 2012). The ownership of secondary schools in Nigeria is categorized as privately owned and government owned. The secondary schools owned by the government are referred to as public schools while those owned by others (religious organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals) are known as private schools. All secondary schools, irrespective of ownership, have common objectives. Hence, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) enumerated the broad aims of secondary school education as preparing people for useful living in the society and for higher education.

For the goals of secondary education to be achieved, school administrators should apply management practices that would help improve school processes and activities. This is because the underlying basis of secondary school administration and management is the existence of adequately trained administrators with a set goal or aim, and members who have roles assigned to them and a person at the top who coordinates activities to attain the already set goals of the school. Such a person in the secondary school is called the principal.

Principals in secondary schools are the chief executive officers of the schools and they are the head of the school management team. The principal directs the way things are done in the school. Thus, principals are in charge of the management of schools. For principals to effectively administer the day to day activities of secondary schools they have to effectively apply management practices of building trust, being visionary leaders, communicating effectively the vision of the school to all stakeholders and being exemplary leaders. In line with this Ezeani (2012) asserted that the core areas of management in education are staff/personnel management and financial management.

Personnel management is the effective mobilization of human resources based upon appropriate recruitment, selection, training and placement of appointed

staff in order to achieve the organisation's set-goals and objectives. It could also be defined as the effective utilization of human resources in an organization through the management of people and related activities (Owojori & Asaolu, 2010). This, Udalla (2012) averred that:

> for effective school personnel management, the school administrator should understand recruitment procedures, selection and maintenance of qualified staff attending to equity and diversity; understand staff utilization according to student achievement and development, best practices, efficiency, cost and quality; understand labour relations, collaborative negotiations, and contract management; understand theories, principles and best practices of staff supervision and evaluation to effective implement of standard-based instruction and assessment and understand a variety of theories, principles and best practices of professional development, which will result in improved professional practice among others.

Continuing, Udalla argued that a competent school administrator makes the best use of time, money and staff available to him through effective management. He gets things done through effective coordination and supervision. Just like personnel management, financial management is another important aspect of school management.

Financial management is the performance of management actions connected with the financial aspects of a school for the achievement of effective education (Joubert & Bray, 2007). One important factor in this definition of financial management is that a connection is made between the management tasks and the financial aspects of a school. The implication is that the management of school finances involves the task of planning (budgeting), organising (coordinating), leading (communicating and motivating), as well as controlling (auditing).In this respect, organising of school finances should include aspects such as drawing up a school financial policy; setting up a structure within the school to handle administrative and financial matters; delegating certain functions to clerks, class teachers and the treasurer; and coordinating activities (Ntseto, 2009). Motsamai, Lynette and Corene (2011) suggested that leadership in financial administration involves three aspects, namely: sound relationships, communication with all stakeholders (internal as well as external) and motivation of all the people concerned with school finances.

Sadly, this has not been the case in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. This is because it appears that many secondary school principals do not adequately plan for their school programmes and fail to apply basic personnel management practices like the inclusion of staff in the school decision making processes. It is further visible in cases of duplication of functions and general lack of direction in task performance among school principals in secondary schools (public and private) in Awka Education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. This thus leads to

wastages and mismanagement of financial and material resources in schools. The researchers are worried that if these conditions are left unchecked, it will affect the quality of secondary education in the Zone. Thus the need for this study, which sought to determine principals' application of personnel and financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do principals apply personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do principals apply financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals in Anambra State on the extent they apply personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals in Anambra State on the extent they apply financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. The Education Zone is made up of five Local Government Areas, namely Anaocha, Awka – North, Awka – South, Dunukofia and Njikoka. The population of the study comprised 116 principals made up of 61 public secondary school principal and 55 private secondary school principals in the Zone. The entire population was used for the study because the population size was manageable. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and titled "Questionnaire on Personnel and Financial Management Practices for Effective Administration of Secondary Schools (QPFMPEASS)". The instrument had two sections; A and B. Section A elicited information on respondents school type. Section B has two clusters B1 and B2. Cluster B1 contains information on principals' application of personnel management

practices while cluster B2 elicited information on financial management practices applied by secondary school principals. The instrument was structured on a 5- point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Moderate Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The instrument was further subjected to reliability testing through a pilot test on 20 principals of private and public secondary schools (ten from each group) in Enugu State who were not included in the population of the study. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.82 for the two clusters with an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.80. Out of the 116 copies of questionnaire distributed, 104 copies which is made up of 56 for public secondary school principals and 48 for private secondary school principals were properly completed successfully retrieved and were used for data analysis. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while t test was used in testing the hypotheses.

The mean value was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. The item by item analysis was made and decision based on the real limits of numbers of Very High Extent (4.50-5.00), High Extent (3.50-4.49), Moderate Extent (2.50-3.49)**,** Low Extent (1.50-2.49) and Very Low Extent (0.50- 1.49). The t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated t value is less than the critical value of t, it meant that the variable did not significantly affect respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, where the calculated t value was equal to or greater than the critical t value, it meant that the variable has a significant effect on the respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do principals apply personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Principals' on the Extent They Apply Personnel Management Practices for Effective School Administration

		N_1=56 Public SS principals			**N_2= 48 Private SS principals**		
S/N	**Aspects of Personnel Management Practices**	**$\overline{X}_1$**	**SD**	**Remarks**	**$\overline{X}_2$**	**SD**	**Remarks**
1.	Understanding staff recruitment procedures.	2.07	0.73	Low Extent	3.37	0.77	Moderate Extent
2.	Appropriately motivates and rewards performing staff.	2.27	1.04	Low Extent	2.87	0.99	Moderate Extent
3.	Engaging in collaborative negotiation.	2.19	0.85	Low Extent	3.25	0.98	Moderate Extent
4.	Having proper knowledge of labour regulations.	3.47	1.09	Moderate Extent	1.83	0.77	Low Extent
5.	Involving staff in the decision making process.	2.16	0.62	Low Extent	1.87	0.63	Low Extent
6.	Delegating duties to competent staff.	3.33	1.07	Moderate Extent	3.13	1.10	Moderate Extent
7	Encouraging staff development programmes.	2.27	0.81	Low Extent	2.12	0.94	Low Extent
8.	Encouraging team spirit among staff.	2.14	1.13	Low Extent	3.47	1.04	Moderate Extent
9.	Good conflict management ability.	3.68	1.17	High Extent	3.42	0.62	Moderate Extent
10.	Seeking opinion from other stakeholders	2.48	1.02	Low Extent	4.32	1.01	High Extent
11.	Reporting employee grievances to the proprietor/government	4.08	1.02	High Extent	3.42	1.03	Moderate Extent
12.	Giving feedback to staff on decisions made by proprietor/government and regulating bodies.	4.35	0.71	High Extent	3.69	1.11	High Extent
13.	Leading by example. For instance proper time management and punctuality to school and meetings.	3.46	1.20	Moderate Extent	4.11	0.81	High Extent
14.	Properly supervising staffs commitment to duty. For instance through classroom visits.	2.79	1.04	Moderate	3.68	0.94	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**2.91**	**0.96**	**Moderate Extent**	**3.22**	**0.84**	**Moderate Extent**

Data in Table 1 reveal that principals of public secondary schools applied items 9, 11 and 12 to a high extent as shown by the mean ratings of 3.68, 4.08 and 4.35 respectively. They also applied items 4, 6, 13 and 14 with mean ratings of 3.47, 3.33, 3.46 and 2.79 respectively to a moderate extent. However, they rated the application of 7 items, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10 with mean ratings ranging from 2.07 to 2.48 to a low extent. The standard deviation scores of the items ranging from 0.62 to 1.17 showed that the respondents' opinions are related. The grand mean of 2.91 shows that public secondary school principals in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria applied personnel management practices to a moderate extent.

On the other hand, principals of private secondary schools applied items 10, 12, 13 and 14 with mean ratings ranging from 3.68 to 4.32 to a high extent, items, 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 11 with mean ratings of 3.37, 2.87, 3.25, 3.13, 3.47, 3.42 and 3.42 respectively to a moderate extent. They also applied items 4, 5 and 7 with mean ratings of 1.83, 1.87 and 2.12 respectively to a low extent. The standard deviation ranging from 0.62 to 1.17 showed that the respondents' opinions are close. The grand mean of 3.22 indicated that principals of private secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria applied personnel management practices to a moderate extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent do principals apply financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Principals' on the Extent They Apply Personnel Management Practices for Effective School Administration

		N_1= 56			N_2=48		
S/N	**Aspects of financial Management Practices**	$\bar{X}_1$	**SD**	**Remarks**	$\bar{X}_2$	**SD**	**Remarks**
25.	Applying knowledge of budget and fiscal planning.	4.07	0.87	High Extent	3.00	0.84	Moderate Extent
26.	Having an understanding of school finances.	3.89	0.86	High Extent	3.22	0.96	Moderate Extent
27.	Demonstrating the ability to plan and manage resources according to school vision and action plans.	2.05	0.89	Low Extent	3.52	1.08	High Extent
28.	Understanding the implications of labour relations, negotiations and contracts on administration.	3.71	0.94	High Extent	2.64	1.11	Moderate Extent
29.	Applying and assessing current and future technologies for school management and business procedure.	2.31	1.11	Low Extent	2.65	1.09	Moderate Extent
30.	Knowing how to evaluate the school financial resources for administrative effectiveness.	3.02	0.91	Moderate Extent	2.55	1.07	Moderate Extent
31.	Effectively managing school finances like the PTA levies.	3.75	0.80	High Extent	3.70	0.91	High Extent
32.	Involving competent staff in managing the school's financial resources	3.45	1.10	Moderate Extent	3.22	0.89	Moderate Extent
33.	Collaborating with other staff when making decisions on expenditures.	1.94	0.73	Low Extent	2.04	0.83	Low Extent
34.	Collaborating with all stakeholders (community, government, SMEs and multi-national companies) on issues relating to the school finances.	1.81	0.94	Low Extent	2.07	0.91	Low Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.00**	**0.91**	**Moderate Extent**	**2.86**	**0.97**	**Moderate Extent**

Data analysis in Table 2 reveal that public secondary school principals applied four items namely, 1, 2, 4 and 7 with mean ratings of 4.07, 3.89, 3.71 and

3.75 respectively to a high extent in their schools administration while they applied items 6 and 8 with mean ratings of 3.02 and 3.45 respectively to a moderate extent and items 3, 5, 9 and 10 with mean ratings ranging from 1.81 to 2.32 to a low extent. The standard deviation scores of the items ranging from 0.73 to 1.11 show that the respondents' opinions were related. The grand mean value of 3.00 indicated that public secondary school principals in Awka Education zone, Anambra State, Nigeria applied financial management practices to a moderate extent for effective administration of secondary schools.

Data in Table 2 revealed that private secondary school principals applied items 3 and 7 with mean ratings of 3.52 and 3.70 respectively to a high extent in their schools administration. They applied six items, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 with mean rating ranging between 2.55 to 3.22 respectively to a moderate extent and items 9 and 10 with mean ratings of 2.04 and 2.07 respectively to a low extent. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.83 to 1.11 showed that the respondents' opinions were related. The grand mean value of 2.86 indicated that private secondary school principals in Awka Education, Anambra State applied financial management practices to a moderate extent for effective administration of secondary schools.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals in Anambra State on the extent they apply personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Principals on the Extent They Applied Personnel Management Practices

Variable	**N**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**df**	***ά***	**t-cal.**	**t-crit.**	**Decision**
Public Principals	56	2.91	0.96					
				102	0.05	1.03	1.96	Not Significant
Private Principals	48	3.22	0.84					

Data in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 1.03 at 102 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical t value of 1.96. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals on the extent they applied personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals in Anambra State on the extent they apply financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Principals on the Extent They Applied Financial Management Practices

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	ά	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Public Principals	56	2.91	0.96					
				102	0.05	1.03	1.96	Not Significant
Private Principals	48	3.22	0.84					

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated t-value of 1.03 at 102 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical t value of 1.96. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals on the extent they applied personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Discussion

The findings on personnel management practices indicated that public and private secondary school principals in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria applied personnel management practices to a moderate extent. This is in line with Udalla (2012) who noted that most principals in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria are moderately equipped with the requisite skills in handling staff in most secondary schools in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State. Udalla further noted that for schools to be successful, personnel management is an important competence school administrators should possess in order to effectively manage the school programme. The finding is also in line with, Owojori and Asaolu (2010) who asserted that the objectives of school personnel management are to plan and direct activities necessary, to select and assign the best qualified individual staff and students, to provide opportunities for the growth in service for these individuals, and to maintain good interpersonal relationships. This finding also agrees with Olaleye (2013) who revealed that public and private secondary school principals of selected schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria adopted quality improvement measures, encouraged team work with staff and students and participated in academic activities that influenced academic achievement in the school. Olaleye further discovered that the principals were involved in academic activities of students by

supervising teachers' and students' work and discouraging examination malpractices.

The finding further revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State, Nigeria on the extent they applied personnel management practices for effective administration of secondary schools. This finding agrees with Olaleye (2013) who reported that principals in public and private secondary schools carry out appropriate checks on their staff and students.

The findings on financial management practices showed that public and private secondary school principals in Awka Education Zone, Anambra State applied financial management practices to a moderate extent. This agrees with the finding of Oboegbulem and Kalu (2013) that principals in secondary schools in South East, Nigeria follow the budget guideline specifications in planning and implementing budget but do not defend budget with their bursars. It also corroborates, Ntseto (2009) who stated that organising of school finances should include many aspects such as drawing up a school financial policy, setting up a structure within the school to handle administrative and financial matters, delegating certain functions to clerks, class teachers and the treasurer and coordinating all the activities.

Similarly, Motsamai, Lynette and Corene (2011) suggested that leadership in financial administration involves three aspects, namely; sound relationships, communication with all stakeholders (internal and external) and motivation of all the people concerned with school finances. The authors further noted that harmonious collaboration between academic and administrative staff is a prerequisite for successfully achieving financial objectives in the school system. The findings of the study further revealed that significant difference did not exist in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals in Anambra State, Nigeria on the extent they applied financial management practices in their administration. This is in agreement with Oboegbulem and Kalu (2013) who noted that principals in some secondary schools carry out adequate financial management processes in the discharge of their duties.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that principals in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone applied personnel and financial management practices to a moderate extent. This shows that both principals in private and public secondary schools do not adequately apply personnel and financial management practices for effective administration of secondary schools in Awka Education Zone.

Recommendations

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

1. The Post Primary School Service Commission should organize training programmes and conferences for principals in secondary schools to educate them on the need to understand the strategies for motivating and rewarding staff for greater performance on the job.
2. The federal and state governments through the ministries of education should go into partnership with financial organizations who will assist them in mapping out effective financial practices that will best suit public and private secondary schools and also train principals on effective school financial management practices.
3. Principals and administrators of secondary schools should integrate the use of technology in the management of school finances. This will to a great extent reduce financial misappropriations and errors in the management of the school finances.

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