

A STUDY OF THE MANAGERIAL TASK PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the management task performance of primary school heads in Anambra State. To guide the study, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated. A sample of 468 school heads and 2628 classroom teachers were selected through random sampling technique. A questionnaire which was developed by the researcher using a 5-point Uter scale was the instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviation were employed to analyse the research questions while the analysis of variare (ANOVA) was used to analyse the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study include that the primary school heads were aware of the managerial tasks expected of them and perform these tasks. The primary school teachers collaborated the view of their school heads but indicated that poor school community relations exist in schools. Performance of task was not significantly influenced by gender, the primary school heads indicated that poor working conditions and lack of teacher cooperation, were among the /actors that impede performance of tasks. The researcher therefore recommended that inorder to strengthen and enhance task performance by primary school heads, there is the need to provide them with incentives (both financial and non-financial as well as the opportunity for professional growth within the system, through refresher courses and in service training.

Primary education has been recognized as a very crucial aspect of the education system. ~~Of the three levels of formal education in Nigeria, primary education is the level where the majority of the Nigerian children come in contact with formal education. This also is the key to the success or failure of the whole education system (NPE, 1998).~~
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In the history of education in Nigeria, the primary schools have been managed by different agencies. The Christian missions, regional government, local government, local authorities, state and federal governments. Primary education has witnessed a lot of changes both in structure and funding all in a bid to provide a qualitative system that would be responsive to the needs, problems and aspirations of the society. Marian, Lock head and Nwana (1998) advised that improvement at all education levels should been of the primary school where children develop their basic attitudes and approaches to learning. Improving the quality of education for pupils in the primary school, therefore, is a prerequisite for developing the human resource base required to meet the technological demands of the twenty first century. (Akusoba, 2002).

According to Rumberger (1987), dropping out of school has long been viewed as serious educational and social problem. If primary school children drop out of school before completing primary education or after it, the achievement of the general aims and objectives of education will be jeopardized. Consequently, the continued, noticeable drop out from school among primary school children in Anambra State before completion and after, the mass failure of pupils in public examinations, teachers and pupils undisciplined behaviours, truancy and absenteeism, call to question the effectiveness of the management task performance of primary school heads in Anambra State.

A variety of school management tasks have been identified for the primary school heads which would help in achieving objectives set for primary education. These management tasks include, curriculum development, curriculum evolution, pupils and staff personnel administration, school community relations, supervision of instruction among others.

School heads are the key ingredients to the success of the education system (Michael 1997). They are appointed for the day-to-day administration and organization of the primary schools and satisfactory performance of task by this group need to be appraised. Okeke (1985), states that the primary school heads are involved in the fundamental or direct tasks of the system - the teaching of the pupils and the indirect, which is the secondary, of decision taking associated with the secondary, purpose of the system - administrative tasks. It seems, however, that the primary school heads are not performing their school management tasks effectively Ozigi 1991; Uwazurike (2004). It is not safe to depend on hearsay, generalization and speculations to primary school heads, especially in Anambra State, are performing their school management functions. There is rather the need to empirically establish if these speculations and generalizations are true.

Some of the schools in the state are located in urban and some in rural areas; some schools are headed by either male or female school heads who have been in the job for more than ten years and have, in the process, acquired vast experiences in task performance. While some have acquired professional skills with additional qualifications. Therefore, it is the intention of the study to find out if any or all of these independent variables (gender, school location, years of experience) influence or impede task performance. It is against this background that this study is designed to appraise the management task performance of primary school heads in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. To what extent do primary school heads perform their school management tasks in Anambra State?
2. What factors facilitate management task performance of primary school heads in Anambra State?
3. What factors militate against management task performance of primary school heads in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference between the views of male and female teachers in the extent to which school heads perform the expected management tasks.
2. There is no significant difference between the opinion of teachers in urban and rural

schools on the extent school heads perform the expected management tasks.

3. There is no significant difference between the opinion of less experienced and experienced teachers on the extent school heads perform the expected management tasks.

Methodology

~~Academic Excellence~~ Survey research design was used for this study. The study was conducted in all the public primary schools in Anambra State. The sample for the study comprised 468 head teachers and 2628 classroom teachers, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled; Questionnaire for Primary School Heads Tasks Performance (QPSHTP), which was developed by the researcher on a 5-point likert scale. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Administration and Supervision departments. The reliability of the instrument were determined through a test retest exercise and the coefficient alpha for reliability of QPSHTP stood at 0.79 which means that the instrument was reliable. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the school heads by the researcher and collected back. Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions. The one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in tasting the three null hypotheses to establish significant differences between the male and female, urban and rural, experienced and inexperienced primary school heads in their performance of the management task.

Results

After analyzing the data of the study, the following results were obtained.

Research Question One: To what extent do primary school heads perform their school management tasks in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean Response and Standard Deviation of Male and Female School Heads on the Extent to Which they Perform the Management Tasks.

S/N	Variables	Male		Female	
		X	SD	X	SD
1	Curriculum development and implementation	3.8	.64	4.19	.58
2	Curriculum Evaluation	3,9	,92	4,31	,62
3	Pupil-personnel administration	4.5	.69	4.65	.64
4	Staff-personnel Administration	3.8	.41	3.98	.78
5	School- community relations	3.8	.89	3.80	.80
6	Supervision of construction of work.	4.1	.54	4.07	.59

From table 1 above, it observed that the teachers were of the view that both their male and female school heads perform their management tasks most often. As the teachers scored their

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male heads with a mean of 3.88 on how often the school heads assist in curriculum development and implementation, they scored their female counterparts with 4.19, also on curriculum evaluation, the male heads scored 3.98 and the female 4.31. On pupil-personnel administration, the male scored 4.50 and female 4.65. As the males scored 3.83 on the staff personnel administration the female scored 3.98. On school-community relations, the males scored 3.83 and females 3.80. Finally in supervision of instruction, the males scored 4.13 whereas the females scored 4.07.

Research Question Two: What factors facilitate management task performance of primary school heads in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean Response and Standard Deviation on the Facilitating Factors for the Performance of the School Management Tasks.

S/N	Factors	X	SD
1	Financial incentive	2.19	1.14
2	Regular promotion	1.91	0.90
3	Good working condition	1.70	1.04
4	Opportunities for staff development	2.38	0.84
5	Functional supervision	1.79	0.76
6	Non-financial incentives	2.68	1.03
7	Determination	3.34	0.75

Data from table 2 showed that with the mean response of 3.34, the head teachers believed that they were able to perform their duties sometimes due to self determination. Also with the mean response of 2.68, the school heads indicate that they perform their tasks sometimes due to non-financed incentives. Again with 2.38, they showed that they are rarely being facilitated by the opportunities for staff development. The mean response of 2.19 showed that rarely do financial incentives facilitate the performance of management tasks in school. Regular promotion X 1.91, functional supervision X 1.79 and good working conditions were said to be rarely facilitating the school heads performance of their tasks.

Research Question Three: What factors militate against management task performance of primary school heads?

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Table 3: Mean Response to Items Relating to the Factors Militating Against the Task Performance of the Primary School Heads.

S/N	Factors	X	SD
1	Poor working conditions	3.27	.64
2	Poor and irregular pay	3.53	.82
3	Lack of encouragement	3.16	.66
4	Lack of supervision	1.44	.76

5	Inadequate training	2.02	.68
6	Lack of staff co-operation	4.08	.51
7	Heavy work load	3.55	.64

Data in the table above showed that lack of staff co-operation with x 4.08 most often hinder their performance of the management tasks, also poor and irregular pay X 3.53, heavy work load with X 3.35, poor working conditions with X 3.27 and lack of encouragement with X 3.16 sometime hinder the school heads task performance. Also inadequate training with X 2.02 rarely hinders the performance of the school heads but lack of supervision with X 1.44 never hinders the school heads task performances.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the view of male and female teachers on the extent the school heads perform the expected management tasks.

Table 4: ANOVA of the Teachers' Opinions on the Extent their Heads Perform their Expected Management Tasks Based on Gender.

Source of Variation	SS	df	ms	Cal-F	CritF	P>0.05
Between group	0.011	1	0.011			
Within group	0.8045	10	0.805			
Total	0.8155	11	0.091	0.137	4.96	N5

Ns = "Not significant"

From table 4, it was observed that at 5% level of significance, 1 df number and 10 df denominator, the calculated F 0.137 is less than the critical F 4.96. Therefore the null hypothesis above was upheld. Gender of the teachers have no significant influence on their opinions in the extent their heads perform their management tasks.

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HO₂: There is no significant difference between the opinion of teachers in urban and rural school on the extent school heads perform the expected management tasks.

Table 5: ANOVA on Rural and Urban Teachers Response to Items Relating to Extent their School Heads Perform their Tasks

Source of variation	SS	df	ms	Cal-F	Grit F	P>0.05
Between group	0.015	1	0.015			
Within group	0.9318	10	0.093			
Total	0.9465	11	0.108	0.161	4.96	N5

Data in table 5 shows that at 5 percent significant level, 1 df numerator and 10 df denominator the calculated F 0.161 is less than the critical F 4.96. The second null hypothesis was upheld. Therefore it was concluded that the opinion of the teachers was not influenced significantly by their school location.

H0₃: There is no significant different between the opinion of less experienced and experienced teachers on the extent school heads perform the expected management tasks.

Table 6: ANOVA in Teachers Views On The Extent Their School Heads Perform Their Tasks Based On Experience.

Source of variation	of SS	df	ms	Cal-F	CritF	P>0.05
Between group	0.0181	1	0.0181			
Within group	1.033	10	0.1036			
Total	1.0511	11	0.1211	0.176	9.96	N5

Data in table 6 above reveals that at 5 percent level of significant, 1 df numerator and 10 df denominator, the calculated F 0.176 is less than the critical F 4.96. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. It is concluded that years of experience of the teachers have no ~~Academic Excellence~~ influence in their views on the extent their school heads perform then-tasks. H0₄: There is no significant different male and female school heads in factors facilitating their performance of the management tasks..

Discussion

To find out the extent the school heads perform the tasks expected of them teachers revealed that the school heads maintain pupil-personnel administration always with mean scores of 4.50 for males and 4.65 for females. But they opined that the following tasks are performed more often: curriculum development and implementation, curriculum evaluation, staff personnel administration, school-community relation and supervision of instruction. The least mean score on these stated tasks performed most often by school heads is 3.80 which is above 3.50, the lower class limit of 4.00. Teachers indicated that use of community resources and active participation in community activities occur rarely. Further data from the questionnaire revealed that the position of the teachers on the extent their school heads perform their expected tasks were not influenced significantly by their gender, school location and levels of experience.

The findings of the present study agree with the observation made by Okeke (1990), for him, the primary school heads are involved in primary or direct tasks, which are essentially associated with the secondary purpose of the system administrative tasks. Also, the finding are in line with the claim of Michael (1997), who pointed out that programme evaluation is a task that must be performed by the primary school heads. Uwazurike (2004) nevertheless contended that primary school heads are not performing their roles satisfactorily either as a result of poor training in educational administration or failure to define roles of the school heads. But some scholars like-Fagbulu (1973) believed that the head teacher who tries to do everything by him/her self would not only fail, but his failure would be pitiful because the helping hands available to him in solving problems would be idle while he/she kills himself with over-work.

However, the level at which the school heads perform their expected tasks in Anambra State as revealed in this study is capable of improving teaching method and techniques, utilizing some of the newly discovered principles of group dynamics, providing for individual differences and evaluating their own teaching against set objectives as observed by Harris (1991).

On the research question on the factors that facilitate the school heads performance of their expected tasks, the result revealed that self-determination was the major energizing factor which sometimes facilitates the task performance of school heads. At times, non-financial incentive facilitates them but the school heads showed that they rarely experience opportunities for staff development, financial incentive, regular promotion, functional supervision and good working condition. The null hypotheses formulated on the factor facilitating task performance based on the gender of the school heads, their school location and level of experience were upheld.

Hoyle (1986), maintains that an effective leader takes into account four sets of forces when deciding what action to take. The forces are in the leaders subordinates, situations, support and environment. One needs to take a trip to some of the primary schools in Anambra State to the environment in which the school heads work and how pupils learn and are taught. Although Ezeocha (1985) is of the view that every school head is expected to perform the following tasks in administration. Staff personnel, pupil-personnel services, equipment and finance management, pupil relations and good communication system determination, should not be expected to be handedly, perform such tasks effectively. Marlain, Lock head and Harris (1991) also noted that personal ambition, academic qualification and length of service do not all contribute to successful school managers, unless they are supported with high priority in the distribution of resources.

Responses on the militating factors showed that lack of staff co-operation, poor and irregular pay, heavy work load and lack of encouragement are very common. This could be one of the reasons why Okeke (1990) lamented that it has been a popular public opinion that the primary school heads are not performing their school management tasks effectively. These factors were not significantly influenced by gender, school location and level of experience. These factors have continued to water down the efforts of the school heads, the teachers and the pupils in both internal and external examinations.

If the pupil, understand and appreciate what is being taught in school, if pupils should have adequate motivation to learn, if the teachers must follow the right methods of teaching and if there should be adequate and suitable infrastructure and materials for teaching and learning in the schools, the heads of schools would then be encouraged to perform their tasks.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Although the primary school heads in Anambra State perform their management tasks very often, much is required to be done in the area of school-community relations. The performance of the expected management tasks of the primary school heads is informed more by their self-determination to succeed them on good working condition, financial incentive or regular promotion. Finally, Non-financial incentives was identified by the primary school heads as the major factor facilitating performance of tasks.

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

1. To strengthen and enhance task performance by primary school heads, there is need to provide them with incentives both financial and non-financial as well as the opportunity for professional growth within the system, through refresher courses and in service training. The school system is as good as its management so the need for school administrators who can be more responsive to the needs of the schools.

2. To inculcate literacy and numeracy skills in pupils, primary schools need to be equipped with modern language skill training materials and equipment, specialist teachers need to be employed. Children should learn about their community and immediate environment.
3. Since primary school teachers perform their tasks as indicated in the study, new policies, curriculum provisions and literature on new methods, and teaching procedures, evaluation, guidance etc should be made available to schools.
4. The policy makers need to define management tasks, modern techniques and procedures for assessing performance of such tasks and produce them as handbooks and manuals for school heads and teachers.
5. The practice of promoting every teacher to school head by seniority could be replaced by identifying individuals with specific managerial skills.
6. Stake-holders in primary school management and administration, other than teachers, particularly those who have not studied education need initial and occasional workshops to make them aware of what the school heads do so that there would not be conflict of interest that may impede performance.

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