

PRINCIPALS' JOB PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated principals' job performance enhancement for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the 247 principals in the 247 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 173 principals as the sample size. The instrument that guided the study was a self-designed questionnaire tagged: "Principals' Job Performance Enhancement Questionnaire (PJPEQ)" and it was structured and weighted after the modified four-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively. The instrument was duly validated and the reliability was tested using the test re-test method, which was calculated with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded an index of 0.87. The data collected for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed, among others, that principals should keep abreast of current trends in education by exploring their research skills; they should build networks with outstanding schools by adapting their novel concepts into their own schools; they should maintain school-community relationships; they should be proficient in the use of computers; they should be knowledgeable of using the Internet to explore trendy pedagogical skills and apply creativity skills while discharging their instructional leadership roles. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that principals should endeavour to be effective instructional and technological leaders in their schools, actively participating in the selection and implementation of the tools teachers use to engage students and improve learning for economic recovery.

Keywords: job performance, enhancement, economic and recovery

INTRODUCTION

Education has been described as a key that unlocks national development. When a nation has a problem, it runs to its education sector to get a solution to it. The Nigerian economy has been in a recession for over two years now and since the knowledge economy depends solely on education for a way out, it becomes necessary to introduce some strategies that can enhance principals' job performance for economic recovery. As the saying goes, "Quality education is a reflection of quality school administrators." Economic recovery is a period after a nation experienced a recessive economy. Of all the professions in the world, teaching is the only one that is charged with the daunting tasks of creating the human skills and capabilities that contribute to national development. Teachers are therefore expected to build learning communities, develop the capacities for innovation and adapt to change that is essential to socioeconomic development and technological advancement in this 21st century (Hargreaves & Lo, 2000). However, teachers cannot perform these tasks if principals do not

perform their instructional leadership roles effectively. Kochhar (2000) maintained that the success or failure of a school depends on the ability, supervisory skill, knowledge, personality and professional development of the school administrator. Thus, effective teachers are reflections of efficient principals that keep abreast of the trendy world.

It is pertinent to note that preparing students to thrive in a global, technologically advanced society is a herculean task. Adedamola (2014) emphasised that the worth of development of any nation lies in the quality and skills of its human capital. Secondary education in Nigeria is aimed at preparing young school leavers for useful living in the society, as well as higher education for sustainable national development and global competitiveness. Considering the fundamental importance of secondary education in Nigeria, Babayemi (2006), noted it is a cornerstone for the empowerment of youths for national development. However, this can only be achieved through creative, innovative and visionary principals. Okorie (2002) described a principal as a catalyst who stirs the teaching staff into becoming responsive to the needs and aspirations of the society and gearing them towards realising them. Akpa (2013), as cited in Adedamola (2014), asserted that a principal who would produce an effective leadership must be a dynamic leader, who is involved in maintaining uniform standards in the school's instructional programmes, setting high academic standards, staying informed of policies and teachers' problems, making frequent classroom visits, creating incentives for learning and maintaining students' discipline. Wilmore (2004) also pointed out the diverse roles of principals as ranging from implementing educational policies, to keeping track of all activities within the school. Hence, these sum up the administrative and professional tasks of a principal.

Performance is defined as the output and accomplishments of an employee, which are acknowledged by the organization or system in which he works (Robbins, 2004). It can also be described as the ability to combine skilfully the right behaviour towards the achievement of a given task or organisational goals. Principals' job performance therefore includes all the organizational and structural duties of principals that enhance school effectiveness and students' academic achievement (Obilade, 1999; Wilmore, 2004). In order to meet the globalised standards of teaching-learning and achieve economic recovery in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, principals' job performance has to be enhanced. Prensky (2001) pointed out that our 21st century administrators need to be effective instructional and technological leaders in their schools, actively participating in the selection and implementation of the tools teachers use to engage students and improve learning. Thus, in the past, different students were taught in similar ways; today, teachers are expected to embrace diversity teaching pedagogical skills.

Principals' job performance is specified in five areas of professional practice: leading teaching-learning processes; developing self and others; leading improvement, adapting innovation and change; leading school management; and engaging and working with the community (Fullan, 2001). Okorie (2002) also categorised the major tasks of a principal into goal attainment and organisational maintenance. To do this effectively, principals need to be able to adapt teaching programmes to societal needs, promote teamwork among teachers, and engage in teacher monitoring, evaluation, professional development and building networks of schools to adapt or adopt the latest trend in education to their school (Elmore, 2000; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). The principals need to create conducive learning environments where staff members are encouraged to work collaboratively to share their expertise and learn from one another on a regular basis (Ada, 2013). According to Elmore (2000), demands placed on principals have changed; their jobs have shifted from managerial functions to a balance of leadership and administrative functions across a wide spectrum of responsibilities.

Fullan (2001) maintained that the job of administrative leaders is primarily enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization.

According to Prensky (2001), today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors. They are "digital natives," born into the digital age, while teachers are "digital immigrants," who are adapting their skills and thinking processes to a new world. These "digital natives" have fundamentally different expectations of access and interactions with technology of which the principals must thrive to meet through the teachers. Considering this fact, Ogbonnaya (1997) corroborated that a supervisor of instruction should be very knowledgeable. He went further to assert that he or she must be abreast of current trends and developments in education, teaching and methodology, classroom techniques and even current affairs. Nosiri (1997) also posited that the principals must possess research skills as well. As a matter of fact, technological advancement has made today's principals face unique challenges that were never encountered or even imagined by their predecessors. Okorie (2002) warned that these changes have profound implications for teachers, teaching and learning, as well as for the leadership of schools and education systems. This is probably as a result of the increasing demands of the knowledge economy.

In the past, the focus of society was on the provision of education to all and sundry; today the focus is on the outcomes – what education can offer to society through its products. This calls for the various strategies the principals can adapt or adopt for ensuring the nation's rapid economic recovery. In the same vein, Uche (2002) corroborated that the educational system can influence the economy of a nation. Considering this fact, principals should be encouraged to participate in staff development programmes such as: in-service training, workshops, seminars, conferences, among others so as to upgrade themselves and learn some novel concepts and pedagogical skills that they will introduce in their schools so as to foster global competitiveness (Adieme, Iremeka & Iloabuchi, 2015). Ada (2013) posited that principals' instructional supervision is essential in enhancing teachers' performance and productivity for economic recovery. Hence, principals must provide effective leadership by ensuring that the learning facilities are in good condition and that the teachers are competent in delivering instructions.

Obanya (2014) posited that there must be a paradigm shift from the old ways principals have been performing their duties to the new demands of the knowledge economy by repositioning themselves in a fast changing world. Nosiri (1997) maintained that principals must be knowledgeable, versatile and research oriented. This way, they will be to guide the teachers in applying computer-assisted instructions to the teaching-learning process. In another dimension, Babayemi (2006), observed that the demands placed on principals have changed, but their professional techniques have not changed to meet those demands and the shortcomings are beginning to tell on the secondary school education system. It is against this backdrop that the researchers examine the strategies for principals' job performance enhancement for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria, the Giant of Africa, has been confronted with economic recession for the past two years. There has been an on-going debate among educational stakeholders on the declining quality of education in Nigeria, particularly in secondary education. Some of the heated arguments revolve around the role the education sector ought to have played in the economic recovery of our dear nation. This is because they firmly believe that education is a tool that enables learners to become functional adults, who will take care of themselves and their families and contribute to sustainable national development. Another heated argument is

centred on the traditional pedagogical approach teachers are still using to deliver instruction to students (digital natives) in this digitalised world. In Rivers State, it appears the case is not different either.

The researchers are bothered about this. Could it be that the principals are still glued to the old ways of performing tasks in the schools and neglecting the fact that teaching and learning process must match with the globalisation standard of teaching? Or could it be that the principals are ignorant of the fact that education is a tool for change and innovation in a country that faces economic recession? Hence, these unanswered questions underscored the problem of this study.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine how principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain how principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State;
2. find out ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning process is performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How can principals' job performance be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. In what ways can principals ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 alpha level of significant:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the 247 principals in the 247 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 173 principals, which represents 70% of the population as the sample size. The instrument for the study was a self-developed 16-item questionnaire entitled: "Principals' Job Performance Enhancement Questionnaire (PJEQ)." It was structured after the modified Likert four-points rating scales of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Agree (1 point). Face and content validities were ensured. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using test re-test method, which was calculated with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

Coefficient and it yielded an index of 0.87. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses of no significant difference.

RESULTS

Research Question One

How can principals’ job performance be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Principals’ Job Performance Enhancement for Economic Recovery in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/ N.	Principals’ Job Performance Enhancement Include	Male Principals		Female Principals		Mean Set	Remarks
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
1.	Principals should direct instructional programmes towards meeting societal needs.	3.07	0.77	3.09	0.73	3.08	Agreed
2.	They should constantly upgrade themselves by participating in staff development programmes.	2.83	0.79	2.78	0.77	2.81	Agreed
3.	They should keep abreast of current trends in education by exploring their research skills.	2.97	0.78	2.94	0.75	2.96	Agreed
4.	They should build networks with outstanding schools by adapting their novel concepts into their own schools.	2.78	0.80	2.86	0.76	2.82	Agreed
5.	They should maintain school-community relationships.	3.04	0.77	3.07	0.73	3.06	Agreed
6.	They should be proficient in the use of computers.	2.81	0.79	2.92	0.75	2.87	Agreed
7.	They should be knowledgeable of using the Internet to explore trendy pedagogical skills, which they will demonstrate to the teachers.	2.69	0.81	2.81	0.76	2.75	Agreed
8.	They should be proficient in time management skills.	2.82	0.79	2.75	0.77	2.79	Agreed
9.	They should apply creativity skills while discharging their instructional leadership roles.	3.06	0.77	3.12	0.73	3.09	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean/Standard Deviation	2.90	0.78	2.93	0.75	2.92	

Data in Table 1 showed the mean scores and standard deviations of male and female principals on principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. Both the male and female principals agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. The aggregate mean scores of 2.90 and 2.93 for male and female principals showed that they agreed to the items in the table as principals' job performance enhancement for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. These include: principals should direct instructional programmes towards meeting societal needs; they should constantly upgrade themselves by participating in staff development programmes; they should keep abreast of current trends in education by exploring their research skills; they should build networks with outstanding schools by adapting their novel concepts into their own schools; they should maintain school-community relationships; they should be proficient in the use of computers; they should be knowledgeable of using the Internet to explore trendy pedagogical skills; they should be proficient in time management skills and apply creativity skills while discharging their instructional leadership roles.

Research Question Two

In what ways can principals ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2(Part-I). Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Ways Principals can Ensure that Teaching-learning Processes are Performed Effectively for Economic Recovery in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/ N	Ways Principals can Ensure Effective Teaching and Learning Processes Include:	Male Principals		Female Principals		Mean Set	Remarks
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
10.	Principals should provide effective leadership by ensuring that the learning facilities are in good condition.	2.89	0.79	2.63	0.78	2.91	Agreed
11.	They should guide teachers in using computer-assisted instructions in the teaching-learning processes.	2.62	0.81	2.69	0.77	2.66	Agreed
12.	They should constantly organize workshops where teachers can learn some novel teaching approaches.	3.12	0.76	2.89	0.75	3.11	Agreed
13.	Team teaching, where teachers will learn from one another should be promoted.	3.08	0.76	3.03	0.74	3.06	Agreed
14.	Having conferences with teachers after classroom visitation can help in developing critical thinking in them.	2.72	0.80	2.84	0.76	2.78	Agreed

Table 2 (Part-II). Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Ways Principals can Ensure that Teaching-learning Processes are Performed Effectively for Economic Recovery in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/ N	Ways Principals can Ensure Effective Teaching and Learning Processes Include:	Male Principals		Female Principals		Mean Set	Remarks
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
15.	Creating a good school climate can enable professional growth of teachers.	2.77	0.80	2.65	0.78	2.71	Agreed
16.	Encouraging teachers to acquire research skills which will help them to gather more information on a particular topic before teaching it could go a long way to enhancing teaching-learning processes.	3.06	0.77	3.02	0.74	3.04	Agreed
Aggregate Mean/Standard Deviation		2.89	0.79	2.82	0.75	2.86	

Table 2 revealed the mean scores and standard deviations of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. Both the male and female principals agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. The aggregate mean scores of 2.89 and 2.82 for male and female principals showed that they agreed to the items in the table as ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. These include: principals should provide effective leadership by ensuring that the learning facilities are in good condition; they should guide teachers in using computer-assisted instructions in the teaching-learning processes; they should constantly organize workshops where teachers can learn some novel teaching approaches; team teaching, where teachers will learn from one another should be promoted; having conferences with teachers after classroom visitation; creating a good school climate and encouraging teachers to acquire research skills.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals’ job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3. z-test of Difference between Male and Female Principals on Principals’ Job Performance Enhancement for Economic Recovery in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Status	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Male Principals	83	2.90	0.78	171	-0.26	±1.96	Not significant
Female Principals	90	2.93	0.75				

P < 0.05

Table 3 revealed the z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. The result showed that z-calculated value of -0.26 is less than the critical value of ± 1.96 ; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4. z-test of Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principals on Ways Principals can Ensure that Teaching-learning Processes are Performed Effectively for Economic Recovery in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Status	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Male Principals	83	2.89	0.79	171	0.59	± 1.96	Not significant
Female Principals	90	2.82	0.76				

P < 0.05

Table 4 showed the z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. The result revealed that z-calculated value of 0.59 is less than the critical value of ± 1.96 ; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State by doing the following: principals should direct instructional programmes towards meeting societal needs; they should constantly upgrade themselves by participating in staff development programmes; they should keep abreast of current trends in education by exploring their research skills; they should build networks with outstanding schools by adapting their novel concepts into their own schools; they should maintain school-community relationships; they should be proficient in the use of computers; they should be knowledgeable of using the Internet to explore trendy pedagogical skills; they should be proficient in time management skills and apply creativity skills while discharging their instructional leadership roles. These findings are in line with Ogbonnaya (1997); Ada (2013); Obanya (2014); Adieme, et al. (2015), who maintained that there must be a paradigm shift from the old ways principals have been performing their duties to the new demands of the knowledge economy by repositioning themselves in a fast changing world. Nosiri (1997) corroborated the fact that principals must be knowledgeable, versatile and research oriented.

The findings are also in agreement with Kochhar (2000), who emphasised that the success or failure of a school depends on the ability, supervisory skill, knowledge, personality and professional development of the school administrator. Hence, the findings harmonised

Prensky's (2001) view about our 21st century administrators need to be effective instructional and technological leaders in their schools, actively participating in the selection and implementation of the tools teachers use to engage students and improve learning. The findings are in line with Fullan (2001), who succinctly stated that principals' job performance is specified in five areas of professional practice: leading teaching-learning processes; developing self and others; leading improvement, adapting innovation and change; leading school management and engaging and working with the community. Furthermore, the null hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals' job performance can be enhanced for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Another result of this study showed that ways principals can ensure that teaching and learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State include: principals should provide effective leadership by ensuring that the learning facilities are in good condition; they should guide teachers in using computer-assisted instructions in the teaching-learning processes; they should constantly organize workshops where teachers can learn some novel teaching approaches; team teaching, where teachers will learn from one another should be promoted; having conferences with teachers after classroom visitation; creating a good school climate and encouraging teachers to acquire research skills. These findings are in consonance with Akpa (2013), as cited in Adedamola (2014); Obilade (1999); Wilmore (2004), who posited that a principal who would produce an effective leadership must be a dynamic leader, who is involved in maintaining uniform standards in the school's instructional programmes, setting high academic standards, staying informed of policies and teachers' problems, making frequent classroom visits, creating incentives for learning and maintaining students' discipline.

These findings agree with Prensky (2001), who observed that today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors. They are "digital natives," born into the digital age, while teachers are "digital immigrants," who are adapting their skills and thinking processes to a new world. These "digital natives" have fundamentally different expectations of access and interactions with technology of which the principals must thrive to meet through the teachers. Thus, the null hypothesis showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on ways principals can ensure that teaching-learning processes are performed effectively for economic recovery in secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that principals' job performance need to be enhanced in order to enable them to guide and stimulate the teachers' instructional delivery towards contributing to the economic recovery of our dear nation, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals need to be effective instructional and technological leaders in their schools, actively participating in the selection and implementation of the tools teachers use to engage students and improve learning for economic recovery.

2. Government should formulate a policy that will make principals undergo computer-assisted instruction trainings, which will enable them to gear teaching and learning processes towards meeting the needs of the students, who are “digital natives,” in this 21st century.

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