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Principals' application of management by objective in the management of personnel and instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Anambra state

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Abstract

This study analysed secondary school principals' application of management by objective (MBO) in the management of personnel and instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions were answered and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05. The descriptive survey design was adopted with a sample of 801 respondents made up of 129 principals and 672 teachers. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Application of Management by Objective in Management of Personnel and Instructional Programmes" (AMBOMPIP) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of educational management and one expert in the field of measurement and evaluation. Internal consistency coefficients of 0.75, 0.78 were obtained for the two sections

of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha method. An overall reliability co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained for the entire questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean for the research questions, and t-test for the hypotheses. The p-value was used to determine the significance of difference at 0.05 significant level. The result among others revealed that principals in Anambra State apply management by objective in personnel management and management of instructional programmes. The study recommended among others that the State government through the school boards are to consistently organize seminars and workshops for principals in order to update their knowledge of MBO so that they can utilize the benefits and apply it to various administrative areas of the school.

Keywords: management by objective, task performance, school administration

Introduction

Education in all countries of the world has been considered very important for personal and societal development. It is in view of the indispensable role of education in development of human being and modern society that various declarations on education have been made at the global level and in Nigeria. In line with the preceding, the educational system in Nigeria has been delineated into different levels mainly pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, 2014) ^[6].

The secondary education according to FRN (2014) is the form of education students receive after primary school and before the tertiary stage. This level of education is saddled with preparing the individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education. Secondary education is aimed at raising generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the dignity of labor, appreciate values and be inspired with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life (FRN, 2014). These aims however appears to have remained largely elusive in Nigeria school system, due to problems relating to teachers' and students' administration, finance, infrastructure, motivation, curriculum and supervision. As a result, principals as school leaders or managers are continued to be blamed for not efficiently and effectively providing education necessary for the future.

To effectively provide education for the future, principals need to apply effective management techniques in the administration of secondary schools. Management technique is simply a method or technique used to perfect performance and a way things should be done. Management techniques in educational settings entail well planned systematic management of human and material resources to enable administrators succeed in their leadership role (Osakwe, 2013) ^[18]. It implies leadership by coordinating the skills, knowledge and potentials of teachers and students through the adaptation of such styles that will enable the school to achieve its expected goals and objectives.

There are many management techniques in literature which secondary school principals can apply in the administration of schools to achieve desired goals and objectives. Major management techniques according to Osakwe (2013) ^[18] and Ofojebe (2010) ^[15] include: Management By Objectives (MBO), Planning Programming and Budgeting Systems (PPBS), Programmes

Evaluation and Review Techniques (PERT) and Delphi technique. The focus of this study is on MBO management technique. This is because it is the most popular management technique and it is a useful tool for personnel management and task performance in school organization.

Management by objective is a technique of management that attempts to relate organizational goals to individual performances and development through the involvement of all levels of management (Oboegbulem, 2013) ^[14], MBO involves the establishment and communication of organizational goals, the setting of individual goals in line with the organizational goals, the periodic and final review of performance in relation to the organizational goals (Sharif & Nazadin, 2010). The ultimate aim of MBO in school management is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation through optimum performance of its members.

In secondary education context, MBO involves a stream of objectives, decisions and actions of secondary school principals, which leads to the development of a strategy to achieve educational objectives (Olatunji, 2013). MBO technique is a very useful tool in directing the efforts of employees. It is perceived as the most popular management technique for allocating the resources which are available within the school for the accomplishment of organizational goals. According to Newman (2011), MBO is very useful in personnel management and task performance. It focuses on those performances or behavioural outcomes that are measurable, such as what behaviour or results is expected and at what level of proficiency is it expected? Who is to perform the behaviour to achieve the desired result? when is the result to be accomplished? Where, or in what situation, is the result expected? How long a time is permitted to achieve the expected result? what measurement tools are to be utilized (Ofojebe, 2010) ^[15].

The application of MBO in school administration by principals can help them achieve transformation of the resources of the school and realisation of the school objectives (Nwite, 2016) ^[15]. Management by objectives can be applied by the principals in various areas of school administration such as: management of instructional programmes, staff management, students' management, schools' financial management, schools' infrastructural management, management of school-community relationship among other areas. This study will focus on the two most important areas of school administration which are: personnel management and management of instructional programmes. Most secondary school principals are judged based on their performance in these areas of school administration.

Personnel management is an essentially part of school administration concerned with the procurement and utilization of personnel as well as satisfaction and motivation of the teachers. Principal is effective when he is able to coordinate staff and develop harmonious relationship with his staff, since achievement of goals of the school is a cooperative effort of the principal and staff. Situational analysis shows that there is a general poor performance amongst teachers in secondary schools in Anambra state as there are reports of poor attitude to work, lack of interest and commitment in teaching, absenteeism, lack of dedication to teaching and carrying out assignments (Gbenu, 2012; Ige, 2013; Ezeugbor 2015) ^[7, 8, 5]. These problems are probably due to poor principals' personnel management in the school. Another principals' task performance area that is of interest

to this study is the management of instructional programmes. Management of instructional programmes is a task performance area that demands that the principal embrace the most striking and glaring administrative aspects of the school which include the curriculum development and instructional delivery. Curriculum and instruction are of primary importance in achieving school goals, it also deals with the listing of courses of study as well as the instructional methods by which the teaching learning process is carried out. Most secondary school principals in Nigeria and indeed Anambra State appear not to allocate commensurate amount of time and effort that is needed in the management of instructional programmes. This may be the reason for the observed poor teaching and learning process, poor teaching and learning outcome and poor instructional planning and delivery in the State's secondary education sector (Anambra State Government, 2010; Ige, (2013) ^[8]. The purpose of MBO is for effective management of instruction. It is assumed that when principals apply MBO in this area, it will help enhance their task effectiveness and school goal attainment in management of instructional programmes.

The structure of the secondary school system makes the allocation of tasks at various levels and the assessments of such tasks easy by applying the concept of management by objectives. This study therefore analysed principals' application of management by objectives in management of personnel and instructional programmes.

Statement of the Problem

It is true that for principals to achieve school administrative effectiveness, there is need for them to apply management by objective in various school administrative task areas. However, it appears that principals of secondary schools in Anambra State may not be applying this technique in school administration. This seems to be the reason for the poor state of infrastructural development and undue delay in school development experienced in some of the public secondary schools in the state. Most secondary schools in Anambra state are in deplorable condition. Looking at the dilapidated nature of the physical facilities in some of the secondary schools in the state, one gets worried as to the level of comfort of the students and staff in both the classroom setting and the entire environment. Some of the school buildings are moribund in terms of outlook, with broken floors, windows and leaking roofs. The environment of most secondary schools runs short of aesthetic view. Most often, the schools are overgrown with grasses which are dangerous for both staff and students because such may harbour dangerous animals, insect as well as pests.

Moreover, there seem to be a general poor teacher performance in secondary schools in the state. There are reports of teachers' poor attitude to work, lack of interest and commitment in teaching, absenteeism, lack of dedication to teaching and carrying out assignments. Also, the rate of truancy among students in the state is seemingly high, indicating that students' management services are not effectively carried out. These administrative problems facing secondary schools in the state suggest that principals may not be applying MBO for effective administration of secondary schools in the state. This necessitated the current study to ascertain principals' application of MBO in management of personnel and instructional programmes in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

1. How do principals apply MBO in personnel management in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. How do principals apply MBO in management of instructional programmes in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on how principals apply MBO in personnel management practices in Anambra state.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on how principals apply MBO in instructional programmes in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 6,382 respondents a sample of 801 (129 principals males & 672 teachers) was drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. A researchers'

developed instrument titled "Application of Management by Objective in Management of Personnel and Instructional Programmes" (AMBOMPIP) which was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.75, 0.78 for the two sections of the instrument and 0.77 for the entire instrument. The instrument was considered reliable in line with Nworgu (2015), who stated that if the co-efficient obtained for an instrument is up to 0.70 and above, the instrument should be considered good enough to be used for a study. The direct administration and retrieval method was used for data collection. A total of 801 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 758 were retrieved and was used for data analysis. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, a mean rating of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agree while mean rating of less than 2.50 was interpreted as disagree. The null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value associated with the t-cal was less than 0.05 whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where the p-value was greater than 0.05.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings on Principals Application of MBO in Personnel Management

		Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Allow students to participate in nominating school prefects.	3.39	.65	Agree
2.	Appraise staff performance based on specific objectives.	3.34	.67	Agree
3.	Delegate staff to organise orientation for new students on school objectives.	3.13	.73	Agree
4.	Delegate or assigns tasks to staff according to competences to achieve set objectives	3.02	.74	Agree
5.	Discuss with students and school guidance counsellor before solving students' academic problems in school.	3.07	.70	Agree
6.	Give autonomy to teachers to set private objectives and strategies or means for achieving them.	3.16	.62	Agree
7.	Hold staff-students forum meetings (apart from school assemblies) and praise students' superior performance and discuss with students schools' academic progress.	3.08	.61	Agree
8.	Involve students in making educational decision and curriculum reforms to achieve set objectives.	3.17	.77	Agree
9.	Involve students in provision of suitable school rules and regulations.	3.16	.68	Agree
10.	Involve teachers in decision making and make use of their contributions in planning school programmes.	3.06	.79	Agree
11.	Liaise with education management board in Screening and provision of qualified teachers to Improve teaching and learning	3.01	.75	Agree
12.	Liaise with teachers to ensure that adequate disciplinary measures are meted out to erring students to achieve school objectives.	2.97	.74	Agree
13.	Motivate staff with praises or gifts to achieve set objectives.	3.07	.74	Agree
14.	Organise seminars and orientation for staff on School objectives (e.g instructional matters).	2.02	.92	Disagree
15.	Permit students indicate when they want to be evaluated.	2.17	.91	Disagree
16.	Provide in service training for staff and non-academic in line with school objectives.	2.21	.86	Disagree
17.	Support teachers actively in their recognition of students' contributions to and accomplishment of school objectives.	3.01	.65	Agree
18.	Use peer/students evaluation to assess staff Effectiveness in achieving school objectives.	3.02	.76	Agree

As shown in Table 1, the respondents agree to 15 of the 18 listed items as ways through which principals apply MBO in personnel management. They include: allowing students to participate in nominating school prefects, appraising staff performance based on specific objectives, delegating staff to organise orientation for new students on school objectives, delegating or assigning tasks to staff according to competences to achieve set objectives, discussing with students and school guidance counsellor before solving students' academic problems in school, giving autonomy to

teachers to set private objectives and strategies or means for achieving them, holding staff-students forum meetings (apart from school assemblies) and praise students' superior performance and discuss with students schools' academic progress, involving students in making educational decision and curriculum reforms to achieve set objectives, involving students in provision of suitable school rules and regulations. Other are by: involving teachers in decision making and make use of their contributions in planning school programmes, liaising with education management board in screening and

provision of qualified teachers to improve teaching and learning, liaising with teachers to ensure that adequate disciplinary measures are meted out to erring students to achieve school objectives, motivating staff with praises or gifts to achieve set objectives, supporting teachers actively in

their recognition of students' contributions to and accomplishment of school objectives and using peer/students evaluation to assess staff effectiveness in achieving school objectives. The mean for the 15 items ranged from 2.97 to 3.39.

Table 2: Mean Ratings on Principals Application of MBO in Management of Instructional Programmes

		Mean	SD	Remark
1	Discuss school academic objectives in forum with students (e.g in assemblies or discussions).	3.33	.80	Agree
2	Do not introduce new subjects except in consultation with school board.	3.31	.72	Agree
3	Initiate instructional programmes together with teachers and students.	3.24	.74	Agree
3	Involve teachers in curriculum decisions, plans the subject to be studied and breaks the syllabus in a sequential order for different classes.	3.18	.75	Agree
4	Liaise with teachers to use students achievement data to develop academic objectives	3.19	.72	Agree
5	Liaise with teachers to ensure that objectives set are measurable, realistic and challenging to be achievable	2.90	.79	Agree
6	Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across subjects and classes (e.g the principal, vice principals, heads of departments).	3.00	.79	Agree
7	Mentor and coaches teachers to set objectives for improving students' achievement within a stipulated time.	3.01	.66	Agree
8	Monitor school activities to be consistent with objectives.	2.85	.84	Agree
9	Develop strategies for achieving school academic objectives with the staff at staff meeting.	2.95	.74	Agree
10	Set objectives for each worker in the school, from the gate man, labourer to classroom teacher.	3.02	.77	Agree
11	Supervise instructions regularly to ensure that classroom activities are effective and consistent with objectives and directions of the school.	3.08	.71	Agree

In Table 2, the respondents agree that the 12 listed items are ways through which principals apply MBO in the management of instructional programmes. They include by: discussing school academic objectives in forum with students, not introducing new subjects except in consultation with school board, initiating instructional programmes together with teachers and students, involving teachers in curriculum decisions, planning the subject to be studied and breaking the syllabus in a sequential order for different classes, liaising with teachers to use students' achievement data to develop academic objectives, liaising with teachers to ensure that objectives set are measurable, realistic and challenging to be achievable, making clear who is responsible

for coordinating the curriculum across subjects and classes (e.g the principal, vice principals, heads of departments). Others are by: mentoring and coaching teachers to set objectives for improving students' achievement within a stipulated time, monitoring school activities to be consistent with objectives, developing strategies for achieving school academic objectives with the staff at staff meeting, setting objectives for each worker in the school, from the gate man, labourer to classroom teacher and by supervising instructions regularly to ensure that classroom activities are effective and consistent with objectives and directions of the school. The mean for the 12 items ranged from 2.85 to 3.33.

Table 3: t-test comparison of principals and teachers mean ratings of principals' application of MBO in Personnel Management

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Principals	122	2.95	.41	756	.04	.97	Not-Sig
Teachers	636	2.95	.36				

Table 3 shows that the mean score for principals ($M=2.95$, $SD=.41$) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers ($M=2.95$, $SD=.36$); $t(756)=.04$, $p=.97$. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on how principals apply MBO in personnel management practices in secondary schools in Anambra state was therefore not rejected.

Table 4: t-test comparison of principals and teachers mean ratings of principals' application of MBO in instructional programmes

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Principals	122	3.11	.55	756	.47	.76	Not-Sig
Teachers	636	3.08	.48				

The results in table 4 shows that the mean score for principals ($M=3.11$, $SD=.55$) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers ($M=3.08$, $SD=.48$); $t(756)=.47$, $p=.76$. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on how principals apply MBO in instructional programmes in secondary schools in Anambra state was therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that principals apply MBO in personnel management. This finding is in tandem with that of Nwagbo (2013) ^[10] and Ugwu (2002) ^[21] who found that many school administrators use MBO in personnel management. Jaiyeoba (2004) ^[9] also found that school principals in South Eastern States of Nigeria make use of MBO greatly in staff management. The study by David and

Stephen (2000) ^[3] also had a similar finding with that of the present study. They found that most successful school administrators adopt MBO in managing their staff. In contrast, Eze (1990) ^[4] found that only few principals apply MBO in personnel management.

The finding of the hypothesis shows no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on principals' application of MBO in personnel management. This is an

indication that principals and teachers are well aware of the benefits of MBO in personnel management and it is being applied by principals in the schools. This finding is in line with Ajaniyi (2004) who found that male and female principals do not differ significantly in their use of MBO in personnel management in their schools. A different finding by Udeozor (2004) indicate that male and female principals differ significantly in their mean ratings scores on principals' application of MBO in staff management.

The finding of the study also shows that the respondents agree that principals apply MBO in management of instructional programmes in secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding is an indication that principals of secondary schools in Anambra State have embraced MBO as an effective management technique in managing instructional programmes in school. This finding agree with that of Ugwu (2002) who found that MBO is a veritable management technique for implementing instructional programmes in schools. Again, Obi (2004) ^[13] found that most school principals apply MBO in the management of their instructional programmes in order to achieve effectiveness. The finding is also in tandem with the findings of Ofojebe (2010) ^[15], Nwosu (2008) ^[12] and Jaiyeoba (2014) ^[9] who in their separate studies reported that principals acknowledged that MBO is beneficial in achieving continuous improvement in the management of instructions in school.

The finding of the hypothesis indicated no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on principals' application of MBO in instructional programmes. The possible interpretation could be that both principals and teachers are aware of the advantages of MBO in school administration with regard to the management of instructional programmes to achieve set goals of the school. This finding is related to the finding of Onuma (2017) ^[17] who found that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings scores of male and female principals on their application of MBO in secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State apply MBO in the management of personnel management and instructional programmes.

Recommendations

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

1. State government through the school boards are to consistently organize seminars and workshops for principals in order to update their knowledge in of MBO so that they can utilize the benefits and apply it to various administrative areas of the school.
2. In-service training programmes should also be organized for teachers from time to time because principals alone cannot achieve the goals of the school. Application of MBO is between principals and staff and should be maintained in the schools so that both groups can work collaboratively in achieving the school goals through the application of MBO.

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