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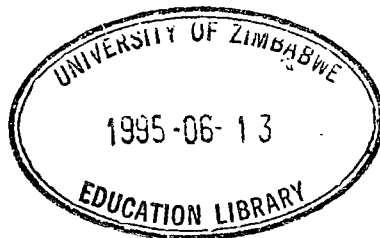
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AN EVALUATION STUDY OF PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT PERFOR- MANCE AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study is both evaluative and comparative in nature. It elicits data from teachers on their respective instructional programmes. One research objective was determined using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation) and two null hypotheses were tested using the t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The results show the principals mean performance ratings (by teachers) in the overall management of instructional programmes to be high. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in instructional programme management ratings between male and female principals. However, significant difference exists in the instructional management performance ratings between democratic and nondemocratic principals, with undemocratic principals being rated more highly than principals who exhibited democratic leadership style in overall instructional programme management.

INTRODUCTION

The school is a complex, social organization. One of its principal goals is the provision of formal education to students through appropriate pre-determined instructional programmes. Instruction is given a central place in any formal educational system because it is through it that learning can be facilitated or hindered. As

Bossert et al. (1982) put it, "the core technology of schools is instruction and the primary production goal is to increase student learning" (p.42). This fact explains, perhaps, why the most widely heralded role of the principal is that of providing instructional leadership - serving as consultant for and evaluator of the teaching staff and performing logistical and organizational maintenance functions related to the curricular articulation (Martin and Willover, 1981).

The new system of education in Nigeria demands new methods and standards of performance on both the part of the principal, teachers and students. As Ehaimetalor et al. (1985) rightly point out, there is dearth of personnel and equipment to manage the present innovative programmes in the Nigerian Secondary School System. In light of these facts, one would want to know how well the principals have performed their chief function of managing instructional programmes in schools in the face of scarce resources.

A number of factors affect the principal's performance in instructional management. The factors include formal organizational milieu, sex of the principal, training, external environments - finances, parents' pressure, size, shape of the administrative hierarchy, characteristics of the staff and students as well as the principal's background and socio-economic context of the school (Bossert et al, 1982; Salley et al., 1982). These findings are outcomes of investigations conducted in America. How they will be applicable in the Nigerian context is confusing.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The point has been made that the evaluation of principal's instructional management performance has become increasingly necessary due to the numerous programmes characteristics of the present school curriculum in Nigeria. At present, instructional supervision and staff performance appraisal focus attention on instructional staff and not so much on the principal's instructional leadership

role. In fact, in the case of teacher performance appraisal, it is the principal who evaluates the performance of all staff under him or her.

However, while the officially authorized evaluator of the teacher is a man or woman on the spot who has the opportunity to observe his/her performance directly, that of the principal is invariably remote from the principal's job location – ministerial or school Board Officials. This raised doubts about the objectivity of the evaluation process with respect to principals, especially in the area of instructional management. Consequently, it would be proper to obtain evidence from teachers on their respective principal's performance level in the management of instructional programmes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the instructional leadership performance of secondary school principals in Rivers State of Nigeria on certain variables using the perceptions of teachers. More specifically, the study is designed to examine one research objective and two null hypotheses as follows:

Research Objectives

To determine the current performance level (high or low) of principals in the overall management of instructional programmes in the Rivers State Secondary School System.

Research Hypotheses:

HO1: There is no significant difference between the performance ratings of male and female principals in instructional programmes management.

H02: There is no significant difference between the performance ratings of principals with predominantly democratic leadership style and those with a predominantly undemocratic leadership style in instructional programme management.

Method and Procedures

The design of this study is descriptive, evaluative and comparative in nature. Its evaluative aspect determined and judged the principals' performance level in the management of different categories of school instructional programmes. Its comparative nature analyzed the performance differences that existed between different groups of principals (male - female and experienced - less experienced) as instructional managers.

All secondary school principals in Rivers State of Nigeria constituted the population for this study. At the time of this study, there were 256 principals and 3,688 teachers in the Rivers State Secondary School System (Rivers State Ministry of Education, 1989). For this study, the fourteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state were categorised into three clusters (Riverine, Central and Upland) to reflect the geographical terrain of the state. Two LGAs were randomly selected from each cluster. There were 87 secondary school principals in the six LGAs selected. Of the 87 principals, 57 were randomly selected to constitute the sample of this study. The ratings of a total of 290 teachers who had served under their respective sampled principals for at least one year were used to evaluate the principals' instructional management performance.

Instrumentation

Two survey forms were used in this study. The first, "principals Demographic Data Questionnaire," Form P, was issued to each selected principal to elicit his/her demographic data. The second, Teachers' Questionnaire, Form T, entitled, "Principals Instructional Management Performance in Rivers State (PIMP/RS)", was the main instrument used to solicit data for the study. It

was administered to each selected teacher. The PIMP/RS was validated by a panel of five experts. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.823.

The PIMP/RS consisted of two sections. Section A attempted to elicit the leadership style (democratic or undemocratic) exhibited by the principals as observed by their teachers on a four point Likert-type scale. A mean score of three or greater than three was taken as indicating that the principal is democratic. A mean score less than three was taken as indicating that the principal is undemocratic. In Section B, the teacher rated his/her principal's general performance in the management of formal instructional programmes using 25 items on a four-point rating scale. All the 25 items were summed up and this was regarded as the principal's single score in instructional management performance. An average overall score of 2.70 and above was considered high and a mean score less than 2.70 was considered low performance.

Statistics

The data were treated using descriptive statistics (percentage, mean scores, standard deviation) and inferential statistics – the t-test.

Data Analysis and Findings

A computer was used to analyse the data. The analysis of data and presentation of the results are structured according to the specific research objectives and null hypotheses.

Research Objective I

Determining the current performance level (high or low) of principals in the overall management of instructional programmes in Rivers State Secondary Schools.

The results related to this research objective are presented in Table 1. An examination of the table 1 shows that the principal's mean score in overall management of instructional programme was 71.3 with a standard deviation of 7.2. The 95% confidence limits also indicate that at the population level, the mean score of all principals in the school system is not below 69.5. The maximum possible score on the PIMP/RS is 100 points. Hence the population mean score can be judged to be high.

TABLE 1
95% CONFIDENCE LIMITS FOR PRINCIPALS' PERFORMANCE IN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

n	MAX. SCORE	MEAN SCORE	SD	SEM	95% CL OF POP MEAN	REMARK ON POP MEAN
58	100	71.3	7.2	.9	71.3+1.8 (69.5 to 73.1)	Over70% HIGH

POP = Population

The Tests of Null Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses were tested by the application of the t-test for independent samples. The level of statistical significance was set at .05 (i.e. 5% level of significance).

HO1: There is no significant difference in the instructional programme management performance between male and female principals. Table 2 presents the results of the test of HO1.

The data in Table 2 reveals that the table value (2.0) of t for 56 df (degrees of freedom) at the .05 level of significance exceeds the calculated t value (.40), the difference in mean scores between male and female principals was judged as non-significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in

TABLE 2
T-TEST OF DIFFERENCE IN INSTRUCTIONAL
MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE BETWEEN MALE
AND FEMALE PRINCIPALS

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D.	DF	T-TEST
Male	44	71.5	6.7	56	0.42* ($p > .05$)
Female	14	70.6	9.0		

* Not significant at .05 level since calculated t (0.42) is less than table t (2.0)
SD = Standard Deviation
DF = Degrees of Freedom

instructional management performance between male and female principals. In other words, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female principals in instructional management is accepted ($t = .40$, $df = 56$, $p > .05$).

H02: There is no significant difference in instructional programme management between principals with predominantly democratic leadership style and those with predominantly undemocratic leadership style. The results relating to null hypothesis 2 (H02) are presented in table 3.

An inspection of table 3 shows that the calculated value of t (3.5) was greater than the table critical value (2.0) for 56 df at the .05 level of significance. H2 was therefore rejected, and the alternative hypothesis, that there is a significant difference in instructional management performance between principals with a predominantly undemocratic leadership style and those with a predominantly democratic leadership style, was accepted. The table also reveals that the undemocratic principals (mean = 72.6) tend to perform significantly better than their democratic colleagues (mean = 64.2).

In summary, the findings of this investigation show that principals' mean performance ratings (by teachers) in the overall management of instructional programmes is high in Rivers State of Nigeria. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in instructional programme ratings between male and female principals. However, significant difference exists in the instructional management performance rating between democratic and undemocratic principals, with undemocratic principals being rated more highly than democratic principals in overall instructional management.

Discussion and Conclusions

The high mean performance rating of principals in their overall instructional management by teachers could be as a result of principals selection being based on very high standards of past performance records. It could also be possible that teachers rated their principals highly to show them up in good light. The overall high performance rating finding implies that the principals are doing well on their part in this area of responsibility and

whatever is currently wrong with instructional programmes management in Rivers State Secondary schools may be very well beyond the controlling powers of the individual principal.

TABLE 3
T-TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE IN IN-
STRUCTIONAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT BE-
TWEEN DEMOCRATIC AND UNDEMOCRATIC
PRINCIPALS

GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D.	DF	T-TEST
Undemocratic leadership	49	72.6	6.4	56	3.05**
Democratic Leadership	9	64.2	7.8		(p < .05)

** Significant at 0.5 level since calculated t (3.05) is greater than table t (2.0)

SD = Standard Deviation

DF = Degrees of Freedom

The non-significant difference in the instructional management performance rating of male and female principals shows that regardless of a principal's gender, he or she can work to attain any possible level in the performance of instructional management.

This finding, however, does not agree with those which reported that female principals are better instructional programme managers (Bossert and others, 1982; California Legislative Analyst, 1977; Hemphill and others, 1962). The implication of this finding is that the appointment of principals without regard to sex alone is an empirically justifiable practice.

The finding of this study that undemocratic principals are better managers of instructional programmes than democratic principals is in consonant with the point emphasized by Bossert and his colleagues (1982). Following an extensive review of the literature, Bossert and his associates pointed out that one of the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools is strong administrative leadership without which the desperate elements of good schooling cannot be brought together. Besides, undemocratic principals are more likely to be task oriented. Such principals, as Jiboyewa (1981) observes, tend to devote their energies to their primary goal of task accomplishment. Consequently, they are more likely to be effective managers of instructional programmes. As Hoy and Miskel (1987) also noted, it is not always beneficial for school administrators to always involve others in decision-making. The concept of "Zone of Acceptance" provided a basis to determine under what conditions others must be involved in the management of instructional programmes.

Apparently, an undemocratic principal can achieve a lot in terms of decisions and actions with positive overall effects on the instructional work of the school. It can be argued that in Rivers State, the few available principals characterised by democratic leadership style may be using it indiscriminately that is why their rating in instructional programme management is slightly lower than that of undemocratic principals.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that specialized workshops should be organized for principals (by the State Ministry of Education and/or Secondary Schools Board) to develop and make principals aware of the limitations of the democratic leadership style in the special context of school instructional

management. The point that needs to be emphasized in such workshops is that no single style of management is appropriate for all schools in instructional programme management. Principals, therefore, must find a style and structure most suited to their own local situation (Clark and others, 1980; Averich and Others, 1972).

For the purpose of further research, it is suggested that future studies should examine principals' performance in specific instructional programme management subfunctions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Future studies should also determine if there would be significant group difference in principals instructional management performance if grouping were done on the basis of principals' experience, training/educational qualifications and curriculum type. Studies similar to this one should be conducted at other levels (primary and tertiary) of the Nigerian education system.

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