

Assessing Disciplinary and Participatory Practices of Principals: Implication for Administrative Performance of Public Secondary Schools in Makurdi

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Abstract

In this study, assessing disciplinary and participatory practices of principals: implication for administrative performance of public secondary schools in Makurdi was investigated. The study adopted the survey design in collecting data. A self designed instrument tagged, influence of human resource management practices of principals on school administration questionnaire (IHRMPPSAQ) was used to collect data from 673 school administrators across 32 secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. This includes 96 respondents for the principal category and 577 respondents for the non-principal category. Statistical mean was used to analyse and answer the research questions while t-test was adopted for analysis and testing of the null hypotheses at 0.05% level of significance. Results reveal that the practices of disciplinary measures and participatory decision making all have influence on school administration. Findings further show that the perceptions of principal category and non-principal category of the respondents with regard to how practices of motivational rewards, disciplinary measures and participatory decision influence school administration did not differ. Based on these results, the study recommends among others that the ministry of education should prioritize staff discipline and conduct in the schools by regularly promptly and professionally addressing staff disciplinary recommendations of the principals. This would encourage the principal to uphold disciplinary measures that have proven to be strongly and positively related with school administration.

Keywords: disciplinary, participatory, practices, principals, school, performance.

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Introduction

Human resource management is an exciting and interesting area because of the roles it plays in helping organizations to recruit, orientate, train, develop, motivate and maintain their human assets (Okoro & Ibara, 2020). Human resource management practices involve the management of human resources in various educational institutions in order to achieve the desired improvement in school administration which in turn make achievement of educational objectives achievable (Okafor & Aruoture, 2022). Hence, human resources management in education is the process of motivating workers to maximize their performance in order to obtain maximum output starting from the day they are recruited, which means utilizing people to perform duties and functions in the schools.

In the school system, both students and staff personal (teachers) functions are performed by the school administrators (Principals) with a view to achieving the goals and objectives of the school (Okoro & Ibara, 2020). Principals' management of teachers in the school is associated with many aspects which include providing enabling environment, provision of teaching and learning resources, provision of adequate teachers and facilitating staff development. These aspects have an influence on teachers and students' performance. Similarly, the functions of the principal as a human resource manager are: to plan and direct activities necessary to select and assign the best qualified individual staff and students, in providing opportunities for the growth in service of these individuals; and to maintain good interpersonal relationship.

School administration is the entire process of putting into good use administrative processes, among which are planning, controlling, directing, budgeting, recruiting, motivating, evaluating, disciplining, et cetera. In line with this, Surbhi (2022) posited that administration is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formal and informal organized human and material resources within an integrate system designed specifically to achieve predetermined objectives. This is interpreted to mean that administration entails planning, coordinating, commanding, organizing and controlling various functions to achieve defined goals. That is the bringing together of people with a common purpose to achieve a specific recognized goal. It is the management of human, material, financial and time resources in order to ensure that set goals are met according to specifications.

School administration entails the activities of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, commanding, directing, evaluating, and motivating teachers (lecturers), non-teaching staff members, students and other non-human resources towards the attainment of the overall goals of the educational system. Educational administration is a key determinant for the realization of desired outcomes and success in both public and private educational institutions. Hence it is seen as very critical by all stakeholders.

Effective observation of these processes by the principal and those in administrative positions has the capacity to transform the school for better. Administering a school is task-ladden, as the roles are strategic for jumpstarting the school. Similarly, Pitan (2022) pointed out that the school administrators' roles and strategies in the management has to be effective, else, the aim will be defeated.

However, observed persistent lateness, absenteeism, misconduct and missing of classes among staff in secondary schools in Benue state seems to suggest lapses in management of human resource in the state. This raises some questions about how directed at lapses in the administration of public secondary schools in the State. Imagine what could happened if the principal and those in administrative positions apply relevant human resource management practices to the fullest. Supporting this, Nakpodia (2020) argued that Benue state schools would achieve more in schools, administrative wise if the unfavourable working conditions surrounding their staff job is adequately taken care of. Continuing, Nakpodia pointed out that administrative effectiveness in the state is way below its potential, but could be improved upon.

It is the duty of the principal as the chief administrator of a school to adopt and sustain the application of the various human resource management practices towards improving general school administration. Based on the foregoing background, this study assesses the disciplinary and participatory practices of principals: implication for administrative performance of public secondary schools in Makurdi.

Theoretical Framework

Theory X

McGregor (1960) formulated theory X which advocates for the centralization of power in management style, in which the school leadership controls and superimposes his ideas in the course of making decisions that he believes might positively influence productivity in teaching in the school. In school as educational organisations, the management employs the basic principles of theory X in making the teachers carry out their responsibilities effectively. A school principal who operates based on the principles of this theory is result-driven; intolerant, concerned with deadlines and ultimatums; disciplined and strict; accompany instructions with threats of punishing offenders; subdue subordinates' views in decision making process; unconcerned about staff welfare; do not like to fairly reward employees; often seek for culprits to apportion blame on failures, and are not interested in delegating responsibilities to teachers. In addition, such schools believe the best way to make teachers productive is by controlling and forcing them through disciplinary measures.

Furthermore, schools which apply assumptions of theory X in managing its human resource use mainly facts and figures as the basis for checkmating a teacher's performance. The retention or sacking policies in schools which value the principles in theory X are strictly based on teacher's performance that are proven by numbers and figures. The school management believe that linking sanctions and punishment to performance by number will motivate the teacher to pursue activities that would enable him actualize the figure that will guarantee his job retention. It is understandable that teachers are important human resource in the school system, and the application of the aforementioned human resource management practices in getting the best of the teachers cannot be overemphasized. This explains why schools adopt such measures as ways of managing and motivating the human resource (the teacher) towards attainment of improved performance on the teaching job.

The theory X is related to this study because it explains the underlying principles in the application of disciplinary measures, as ways of making the employees more productive and effective on the job they are employed to do. Thus, the theory X is relevant to current study which seeks to examine how HRM practices, such as disciplinary practices impact on school administration in Makurdi, Benue state.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the research question:

1. In what ways do disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA?
2. What is the influence of participatory decision making practices of principals on the administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA?

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis guiding the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.
2. There is no significant difference in mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how participatory decision making practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Research method

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Brito and Oliveira (2016) explained descriptive research as one which involves eliciting responses from a relatively large number of respondents by administering pertinent instruments for collecting primary data on a portion of the population known as sample. A self designed instrument tagged, influence of human resource management practices of principals on school administration questionnaire (IHRMPPSAQ) was used to collect data from 673 school administrators across 32 secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. This is made up of 96 respondents for the principal category and 577 respondents for the non-principal category (Benue State Ministry of Education, 2023). Simple Mean was used to analyse and answer the research questions, and t-test was adopted for analysis and testing of the null hypotheses at 0.05% level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: In what ways do disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA?

Table 1. Mean rating of principal category and non-principal category on the disciplinary practices of principals that influence the administration of public secondary schools.

S/N	Items	Principal category (n=71)	Remark	Non- Principal Category (n=429)	Remark
		Mean		Mean	
1.	Preparing and making copies of the school's rules and regulations accessible to teachers.	2.56	Agree	2.76	Agree
2.	Monitoring teachers dressing to ensure compliance with school's dressing code.	2.60	Agree	2.66	Agree
3.	Issuance of query to teachers who are negligent of their duties.	2.77	Agree	2.65	Agree

4.	Administering appropriate sanctions on teachers found to have failed in carrying out assigned duties.	2.80	Agree	2.76	Agree
5.	Supervising teachers' classroom attendance.	2.51	Agree	2.71	Agree
6	Monitoring teachers class assessment and records to avert possibilities in faking students' scores and grades.	2.67	Agree	2.71	Agree
7	Monitoring teachers' truancy through attendance and movement books.	2.68	Agree	2.59	Agree
8	Supervising teachers lesson delivery.	2.67	Agree	2.66	Agree
9	Recommending difficult/erring teachers for appropriate sanctions.	2.69	Agree	2.64	Agree
10	Ensuring that teachers have lesson plans and notes before going to class.	2.60	Agree	2.63	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.67		2.68	

In Table 1, it is revealed that mean ratings from principal category and non-principal on each item is greater than or equal 2.50 being the cut-off or point of acceptance or rejection of any suggested practice. The cluster mean of 2.67 for principal category rating and 2.68 for non-principal category rating is also an affirmation that all the suggested disciplinary practices were consented to by the respondents. This could be interpreted to mean that disciplinary practices of principals do influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of participatory decision making practices of principals on the administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA?

Table 2. Mean rating of principal category and non-principal category on the participatory decision making practices of principals that influence the administration of public secondary schools.

S/N	Items	Principal category (n=71)	Remark	Non- Principal Category (n=429)	Remark
		Mean		Mean	
1.	Involvement of teachers in taking decisions on best ways of evaluating teachers' job productivity.	2.82	Agree	2.84	Agree
2.	Involvement of teachers in taking decisions on how to provide remedial class for academically weak students	2.69	Agree	2.68	Agree
3.	Involvement of teachers in taking decision on students' disciplinary issues	2.75	Agree	2.69	Agree
4.	Involvement of teachers on taking decision on parents and staff relationship	2.83	Agree	2.79	Agree
5.	Involvement of teachers on the best way of getting them motivated	2.66	Agree	2.69	Agree
6	Involvement of teachers in determining when and how instructional supervisions are to be carried out internally	2.71	Agree	2.87	Agree
7	Involvement of teachers in recommending staff for appointments within the school	2.68	Agree	2.58	Agree
8	Involvement of teachers in deciding appropriate teaching-learning materials to be used	2.67	Agree	2.69	Agree
9	Involvement of teachers in classifying and assigning students to classes.	2.77	Agree	2.84	Agree
10	Involvement of teachers in recommending suitable staff training programmes	2.76	Agree	2.76	Agree
	Cluster Mean	2.73		2.74	

In Table 2, it can be seen that mean ratings from principal category and non-principal on each item is greater than or equal 2.50 being the cut-off or point of acceptance or rejection of any suggested practice. The cluster mean of 2.73 for principal category rating and 2.74 for non-principal category rating is also an affirmation that all the suggested participatory decision making practices were consented to by the respondents. By implication, participatory decision making practices of principals have influence on administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Table 3. t-test for mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-crit	t-cal	DF	α	Remark
Principals category	71	2.67	0.82	1.96	0.42	498	0.05	Not rejected
Non-principal category	429	2.68	0.88					

Table 3 revealed that the t-crit is 1.96 while t-cal is 0.42 at 498 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that t-crit (1.96) is greater than t-cal (0.42), leading to the null hypothesis not being rejected. This implies that the mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA did not differ significantly.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how participatory decision making practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Table 4. t-test for mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how participatory decision making practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-crit	t-cal	DF	α	Remark
Principals category	71	2.73	1.00	1.96	0.72	498	0.05	Not rejected
Non-principal category	429	2.74	1.01					

A look at Table 4 reveals that t-crit is 1.96 while t-cal is 0.72 at 498 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that t-crit (1.96) is greater than t-cal (0.72), leading to the null hypothesis not being rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how participatory decision making practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Discussion of Results

The study reported that disciplinary practices of principals that influence the administration of public secondary schools include: preparing and making copies of the school's rules and regulations accessible to teachers; monitoring teachers dressing to ensure compliance with school's dressing code; issuance of query to teachers who are negligent of their duties; administering appropriate sanctions on teachers found to have failed in carrying out assigned duties; supervising teachers' classroom attendance; monitoring teachers class assessment and records to avert possibilities in faking students' scores and grades; monitoring teachers' truancy through attendance and movement books; supervising teachers lesson delivery; recommending difficult/erring teachers for appropriate sanctions, and ensuring that teachers have lesson plans and notes before going to class. Its disciplinary practices report further revealed that the mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how disciplinary practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA did not differ significantly. This aligns with the view of Akpan and Awu (2020) who opined that disciplinary practices in schools help in the review of employee performance regularly, development of structure, documentation, as well as curtail liability issues.

Furthermore, the study reported that participatory decision making practices of principals that influence the administration of public secondary schools involves: involvement of teachers in taking decisions on best ways of evaluating teachers' job productivity; involvement of teachers in taking decisions on how to provide remedial class for academically weak students; involvement of teachers in taking decision on students' disciplinary issues; involvement of teachers on taking decision on parents and staff relationship; involvement of teachers on the best way of getting them motivated; involvement of teachers in determining when and how instructional supervisions are to be carried out internally; involvement of teachers in recommending staff for appointments within the school; involvement of teachers in deciding appropriate teaching-learning materials to be used; involvement of teachers in classifying and assigning students to classes, and involvement of teachers in recommending suitable staff training programmes. This agrees with Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) who asserted that teachers' participation in decision making process in schools ensures that they accept responsibilities in implementing the decisions, as well as defending the decisions through collaborative means. Finally, the study reported that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of principal category and non-principal category on how participatory decision making practices of principals influence administration of public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, it is evident that the practices of disciplinary measures and participatory decision making all have influence on school administration. Furthermore, results reveal that the perceptions of principal category and non-principal category of the respondents with regard to how practices of motivational rewards, disciplinary measures and participatory decision influence school administration did not differ. Based on these results, the study recommends among others that the Ministry of Education should prioritize staff discipline and conduct in the schools by regularly promptly and professionally addressing staff disciplinary recommendations of the principals. This would encourage the principal to uphold disciplinary measures that have proven to be strongly and positively related with school administration. In like vein, the principal should continue to be liberal and accommodating in terms of permitting members of staff, especially teachers to be directly involved in relevant decision making process in the school. This could further improve teachers' sense of belonging and commitment in discharging their responsibilities.

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