

Principals' Characteristics and their Administration of Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria

Barr. Festus Obun Arop, Ph.D

*Department of Educational Administration and Planning
University of Calabar, Calabar
Cross River State, Nigeria
aropfestusobun@yahoo.com*

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of principals' characteristics on their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the ninety seven principals (97) and one thousand seven hundred and twenty two teachers in the study area. Census sampling technique was employed to sample the principals while 344 representing 20 percent of the teacher population was selected as sample. A 10-item four-option modified likert type questionnaire titled: "Principals' Characteristics and Administration of Discipline in Secondary Schools (PCADSS) questionnaire was used for data collection. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 alpha level using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test. The result revealed significant influence of principals' years of experience on their administration of discipline in public secondary schools. However, there was no significant influence of principals' gender on their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in the study area. It was recommended among others that appointment to position of principal should consider experience as a core requirement.

Keywords: Principals, Characteristics, Administrations and Discipline

Introduction

Discipline is a sine-qua-non for efficient school administration. Regrettably, today, schools are characterized by phenomenal growth in population coupled with the attendant sophistication as expressed in student gangsterism, cultism, militancy, examination malpractice and so on. Discipline is an important ingredient for peace, harmony and progress in any school. Lack of discipline in school exposes it to social vices (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2010). Administration of discipline in secondary school has become daunting following the enrolment explosion in secondary schools in recent times and this has provoked a lot of concern among stakeholders in the education project. Students' control is a central aspect of a conducive climate for effective teaching and learning; control of students is the most acute and accentuated in

schools, being a service organization which very often is confronted with students who have little or no desire for the services provided.

Also worrisome, is the fact that there is increased prevalence of indiscipline among teachers such as absenteeism, lateness to work, inappropriate teaching methods, truancy, engagement in extraneous activities during official time and so on. If administration is interpreted as things school administrators engage in for the purpose of creating a conducive environment for teaching/learning, it becomes crystal clear that administration of school discipline is one of their major task areas for efficient school administration (Kochlar, 2012). It has become very clear that school authorities have become negligent in the administration of discipline in our secondary schools in recent times. Arop (2017) observed that school punishment in public secondary schools in Cross River State had assumed a frightening dimension and has provoked a lot of concern in the education industry.

A “locus classicus” in this context is the case of Grace Okon Akpan, where a teacher at Duke Town secondary school, Calabar, flogged a 12 year old student with a cane as a form of punishment for noise making in class; she collapsed and later died in the hospital. This is one of the numerous cases where administration of school discipline ended in disaster (Peretomode, 2004). The principals’ diligent and proactive supervision resulting from experience would have prevented this disaster; however, the principal as the accounting officer of the school would be vicariously responsible. Anderson (2000) noted that the numbers of years a school principal puts in service will serve as a measure of instilling disciplinary action on teachers and students alike.

Indiscipline in secondary schools may not be unconnected with the role of the principals. The principals’ effective leadership is considered a veritable input in efficient school administration. The principal as the head is accountable for the success or failure of the school, his personality epitomizes the tone of his school, as he remains the conscience of his school. The principal has the primary duty of managing the behaviour of both the staff and students who form the population of the school with relevant norms so that they behave in a prescribed, coordinated and appropriate way. Shikokoti (2014) observed that principals experience is crucial because one is able to do, for instance as a counsellor, he is able to advise the students accordingly; this reduces on the cases of discipline in the school.

Since the principal is the “Ombudsman” and the “prime mover” in school administration, it is possible that some personal characteristics of the principals such as gender and years of experience on the job may be significantly related to the management of the school. Principalship was until recently perceived to be the

preserve of males. Whitaker and Lane (1990) reported in Heltebran and Rieg (2004) contended that myths and stereotypes about female administrators includes that women are too emotional and too weak physically to discipline older students. The influence of principals' gender and years of experience on administration of discipline in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria is the concern of this study.

Statement of problem

The administration of discipline in schools had remained daunting, particularly in view of the failure of the secondary school system to achieve its goals and objectives as enshrined in the policy document, National Policy of Education 2013. This issue has over the years outraged parents, education policy makers, educational sociologists/psychologists, among other spirited individuals. Concern over poor administration of discipline and the attendant consequences made government to strengthen its policy on school supervision to make principals and teachers doubly committed. Seminars and workshops for principals and teachers on achievement of school goals through effective administration of school discipline and other proactive measures are frequently organized to keep school functionaries updated in the task of maintaining a congenial school climate.

Regrettably, despite all efforts by government and other stakeholders to reverse this ugly trend, indiscipline among teachers such as absenteeism, lateness to work, truancy and so on, remains prevalent. The implication is that if the right attitude is not exhibited by both teachers and students, then of course the achievement of the goals of secondary education will remain a far cry. Concerned by this trending scenario, the researcher got motivated to identify principals' characteristics that may be connected with their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of principals' characteristics on their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State. To this end, the study is specifically directed at finding out if:

1. Principals' years of experience on the job influence their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.
2. Principals' gender influences their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone.

Research questions

1. How does principals' experience influence their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone?
2. How does principals' gender influence their administration of discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

H₀₁ Principals' job experience does not significantly influence their administration of discipline in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone.

H₀₂ Principals' gender does not significantly influence their administration of discipline in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. This is because large samples had to be drawn from the large population, study its characteristics and generalize the result obtained from the sample to the entire population. The population of the study consisted of all the 97 principals and one thousand, seven hundred and twenty-two (1722) teachers in the study area. Census sampling technique was employed to sample the principals while stratified random sampling method was used to select 344 teachers as the sample for the teachers. A questionnaire titled Principals Characteristics and Administration of Discipline in Secondary School (PCADSS) Questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was divided in two parts. Part one comprised demographic information of the respondents while part two of the instrument had ten (10) items measuring administration of discipline in school. The items were developed in a pattern of a modified four point Likert-type scale and scored thus SA-Strongly Agree (4 points), A-Agree (3 points), D-Disagree (2 points), SD-Strongly Disagree (1point); the scoring was reversed when the items in the questionnaire were negatively worded. Expert in Measurement and Evaluation subjected the instrument to scrutiny. The instrument was both face and content validated. The instrument was administered to 50 respondents from which a reliability coefficient of .91 was estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test statistics were employed to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Hypothesis one: Principals' job experience does not significantly influence their administration of discipline in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone.

This hypothesis states that Principals' years of job experience does not significantly influence their administration of discipline in schools. The independent variable of this hypothesis is principals' years of job experience which is classified into four categories (10 years and below, 11-20 years, 21-30 years and 31 years and above) while the dependent variable is administration of discipline in schools. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the influence of principals' years of job experience on the administration of discipline in schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.

Job experience	N	Mean	SD
10 years and below	45	27.20	8.13
11-20 years	170	24.07	8.48
21-30 years	145	24.18	8.69
31 years and above	81	27.45	7.97
Total	441	25.05	8.52

Table 2: ANOVA on the influence of principals' years of job experience on the administration of discipline in schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.

Sources of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between groups	946.52	3	315.50	4.44	*.004
Within groups	31053.27	437	71.060		
Total	31999.80	440			

$P < .05$, $df = 3, 437$

The result in Table 2 shows that the calculated F-value of 4.44 is significant at p-value of .004 with .05 level of significance with 3 and 437 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implies that principals' years of job experience have a significant influence on the administration of discipline in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. In order to find out which of the numbers of principals' years of experience had the most influence on the administration of discipline in secondary schools, a post-hoc test was conducted as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Post Hoc tests on the influence of principals' years of job experience on the administration of discipline in schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. Multiple comparisons

LSD			
(I) Job Experience	(J) Job Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
10 years and above	11-20 years	-3.12353*	.028
	21-30 years	3.01379*	.037
	Above 30 years	-.25679	.870
11-20 years	Below 10 years	3.12353*	.028
	21-30 years	-.10974	.908
	Above 30 years	-3.38032*	.003
21-30 years	Below 10 years	-3.01379*	.037
	11-20 years	.10974	.908
	Above 30 years	-3.27058*	.005
30 years and above	Below 10 years	.25679	.870
	11-20 years	3.38032*	.003
	21-30 years	3.27058*	.005

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

It can be seen from table 3 that principals' job experience of 11-20years category provide more influence on administration of discipline than below 10 years (mean difference = 3.12, $p < .05$). In the same vein job experience of 21-30 years provides more influence on administration of discipline than below 10 years (mean difference = 3.01, $p < .05$) In a related development, principals' job experience of above 30years provide more influence on administration of discipline than below 10 years (mean difference = .257, $p > .05$). In another development, principals' job experience of 21-30 years provides more influence on administration of discipline than 11-20 years (mean difference = .109, $p > .05$). In a similar vein, principals' job experience of above 30years provide more influence on administration of discipline than 21-30 years (mean difference = 3.271, $p > .05$). However, the difference between 21-30 years and 11-20 years and above 30years and below 10 years was not significant at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis two: Principals' gender does not significantly influence their administration of discipline in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone.

This hypothesis states that principals' gender does not significantly influence their supervision of school discipline in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on gender differences of Principal and the administration of school discipline

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p	Result
Males	317	25.14	8.60	439	.353	.724	Not significant
Females	124	24.82	8.36				

*Significant at .05 level

Table 4 shows that the mean scores of male and female principals are 25.14 and 24.82 and standard deviation of 8.60 and 8.36 respectively. Independent t-test statistical analysis was employed to compare the scores of both male and female principals which indicated a calculated t-value of .353 with a p-value of .724 which is not significant at .05 level. Therefore the hypothesis was retained. This result therefore implies that principals' gender does not significantly influence their administration of school discipline.

Discussion

The study revealed that principal years of job experience have a significant influence on the administration of discipline in secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Anderson (2000) who noted that the number of years a school principal puts in service will serve as a measure of instilling disciplinary action on teachers and the students alike. He equally stressed that the point of discipline is not so much to tame the body but to tame the mind so that it can boss over the body and put it to good use. The finding also agrees with the findings of Shikokoti (2014) that principals' experience is crucial in the administration of discipline among students in his charge. His experience will afford him the initiative to tame the students through counselling and advisement towards attaining self-discipline.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the male and female principals regarding their supervision of school discipline. The finding disagrees with Asiabaka (2008) reported in Shikokoti (2014) who noted that a careful consideration of statistic of gender in Nigeria reveals that schools headed by female have low indiscipline cases as compared to the once headed by males. The result of the present study indicated that the mean average performance of male principals was 0.32 points above that of their female counterparts. The mean scores of males and females were 25.14 and 24.82 respectively. However the reason for the insignificant difference that existed between the male and female principals

regarding the administration of discipline in schools may be due to their commitment in ensuring that the right values in character and learning are instilled in the students for a better society.

Conclusion

The spate of indiscipline of our secondary school students and the neglect by some principals in curbing it is alarming in our society. Principalship is a call to service, and so those who aspire to such roles should have the necessary attributes for the effective discharge of these roles. Principals with enormous years of job experience irrespective of their gender should ensure that indiscipline is checked in the school system so as to instill good values into the learners for a better society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Appointment to principalship should consider experience on the job as a core requirement
2. Males and females should have parity consideration in the appointment for principalship

References

- Ajayi, A. I. & Ayodele, J. B. (2010). *Foundations of Educational Management*. Ado Ekiti: Greenline publishers
- Anderson, G. (2000). *Teacher Performance characteristics and Pupils Outcomes within Science Classroom in Kuwaiti High Schools*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Hull, United Kingdom.
- Arop, F. O. (2017). Administration and supervision of school punishment in Cross River State: Implications for school administrators. *Education for Today*, 13(1).
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2013). National Policy on Education
- Helterbran, V. R. & Rieg, S. A. (2004) Women as school principals: What is the challenge? *Journal of Woman in Educational Leadership*. Retrieved on 14.04.18 <http://digitalcommes.unl.edu/jwel/107>
- Kochlar, S. K. (2012). Secondary school administration, Retrieved on December 19, 2013 from [http://books.google.com.ng/books?id-tvell.x-adc\(\\$pg=PA323spq-](http://books.google.com.ng/books?id-tvell.x-adc($pg=PA323spq-)
- Peretomode, V. F. (2004). *Education Law: Principles, Cases and Materials on Schools*. Owerri. International University Press Limited.
- Schuler, G. W. (2001). *The Effect of Teaching Experience on Teachers' Perceptions of their Teachers Preparations Programme*. Unpublished EDD Thesis, Temple University. USA Dissertation abstract on CD Rom.
- Shikokoti (2014). *Influence of principals' characteristics on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Kakamega central, Kakamega Country, Kenya*. Unpublished MED project, University of Nairobi