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ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPALS' ROLE PERFORMANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH-CENTRAL ZONE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study focused on "Assessment of Principals' Role Performance in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria". Two objectives were set with corresponding Research Questions and Hypotheses to guide the study. Nigeria. Path House-Goal theory postulated by Robert J. House (1971) was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. A total of 20,358 population was arrived at. Research advisor (2006) was used to arrive at 378 samples among the three categories of respondents. Simple random sampling was used in selecting sample from the population. Data collected by the use of a structured questionnaire developed by Maina (2017) and adopted by the researchers were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, standard deviation and the mean scores. All the two hypotheses formulated were tested using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings indicated that the role performance of principals on interpersonal relationship in most secondary schools was poorly carried out, role performance of principals on supervision was not carried out well among others. Recommendations such as principals should endeavour to promote interpersonal relationship within and outside the school by forging acquaintance, principals should encourage supervision practices in school by delegation, among others were offered.

Keywords: Principal, Role Performance, Management, Secondary Schools, Supervision.

Introduction

The importance of education has been adequately discussed in many fora and in different literature. It is in realization of the importance of education of the child that the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in its 1999 constitution made a declaration of the right of every Nigerian child to education, irrespective of gender, tribe, religion or race. It makes sense to state that the lofty vision of education as enunciated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria would be realized if all school administrators perform their roles effectively.

The School is an organization of complex activities which are carried out by people and are coordinated by different persons. Thus, the principal's role is necessary in school to coordinate the various activities of the units for goal achievement. Role performance of the Principal in school entails working with and through teachers, non- teaching staff and students to get things done effectively. Their primary aim has to do with the improvement of teaching and learning, and all the activities of the school. A school principal is described as an executive head of his organization. He/she is a coordinator who has to organize activities in such a way that things work smoothly, quickly and effectively.

The roles of principals as overseers, managers and educational administrators are central to effective and functional secondary education system. For this reason it could be added that effective principals are valuable assets to their schools on curriculum development and instructional management, among others. The secondary school principal is an instructional leader who plays a very important role in curriculum and instructional management by making sure that he plans, organizes, coordinates, and controls teaching and learning activities in order to achieve the desired school and educational goals within the stipulated time frame.

The principal holds the key position in the administrative network of schools. He is the hub of the school activity. He is the centre of the whole organization of the school. All the things demand his attention and all the persons in the school look up to him for guidance and inspiration. Principals manage the day-to day activities of schools, they oversee staff and decision making that impacts the overall educational success of the school. A principal's ability to provide instructional leadership ensures that teachers receive the necessary support and guidance to enhance teaching and learning processes. Similarly, their role on inter-personal relations and internal super,vision is critical in maintaining a productive and committed teaching workforce, (Bishop, 2015). Also Bamire and Adelabu (2018) put it that effective school management is characterized by several key performance areas, including instructional leadership, staff motivation, financial administration, student discipline, interpersonal relationship, internal supervision, infrastructure management, and stakeholder engagement. A principal's ability to provide instructional leadership ensures that teachers receive the necessary support and guidance to enhance teaching and learning processes.

Secondary school principals must have strong interpersonal and leadership skills. Good interpersonal relationship is one of the keys to the success of any organization. School principals must find it challenging to promote interpersonal relationships within and outside the organization. They must be seen to encourage the sharing of ideas between individuals and organizations. It is the psychological aspect of administration in any organization. Probably that was why Follett (1964) in Burke & Oburu (2014) stated that it is not just the production and distribution of manufactured articles but to give opportunity for individual development and self-actualization through better organization of human relationships.

Secondary education occupies a unique position among all levels of education. The broad goals of secondary education include: the preparation of the individual for useful living within the

society and higher education, Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004). Thus, in order to achieve the stated goals, there is the need for effective supervision of instruction in secondary schools. Internal supervision is a critical administrative function in secondary schools, designed to monitor instructional delivery, support teachers' professional growth, and ensure that educational objectives are achieved. It is typically carried out by the school principal or designated senior staff through classroom observation, evaluation of lesson plans, and professional guidance aimed at improving teaching and learning processes. When this process is weak or ineffective, it results in poor instructional quality, reduced teacher accountability, and declining student outcomes. In general, instructional supervision is geared towards the improvement of the teaching and learning situation for the benefit of both the teachers and the learners. Evidence from previous studies conducted by scholars; Bilesanmi (2006), Okendu (2012), and Hali (2016) shows that instructional supervision has always been regarded as an essential and integral part of school administration and basically geared towards the improvement of all factors in teaching and learning.

Supervision of instruction is one of the role performance of the secondary school Principal. Since it is vital to attainment of educational objectives, supervision must be given special regard because it deals with basic needs of schools, and helps in provision, of instructional materials, maintenance of infrastructure, assisting and proper placement of human and non- human materials in schools. Again the school principal supervises the teachers in order to ensure quality instructional delivery. As an instructional leader of his school, he has the unique opportunity to initiate curricular changes that reflects the demands of contemporary society. He therefore coordinates, supervises the curriculum and other instructional programmes and evaluates various experiences.

Secondary school principals must have strong interpersonal skills. Good interpersonal relationship is one of the keys to the success of any organization. School principals must find it challenging to promote interpersonal relationship within and outside the organization. They must be seen to encourage sharing of ideas between individuals and organizations. It is the psychological aspect of administration in any organization. Probably that was why Follett (1964) in Peretomode (2006) stated that it is not just the production and distribution of manufactured articles but to give opportunity for individual development and self-actualization through better organization of human relationships.

Several studies have emphasized the significance of interpersonal relations and internal supervision in achieving educational excellence. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, political interference, poor teacher motivation and incentives, infrastructural decay continue to hinder the ability of principals to perform optimally (Bamire & Adelabu, 2018). In the North-Central Zone, some principals struggle with balancing administrative duties and instructional leadership, often due to overwhelming workloads and systemic inefficiencies. Additionally, rural and urban disparities contribute to variations in school management performance, with schools in rural areas often facing more severe challenges in terms of resources and teacher availability (Bamire & Adelabu, 2018).

Given these realities, it is imperative to conduct an assessment of principals' role performance in the management of secondary schools in the North-Central Zone Nigeria. The North-Central Zone of Nigeria comprises states such as Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau, along with the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This region exhibits diverse socio-economic and cultural dynamics, which significantly influence the administration of secondary schools. The effectiveness of principals in managing schools in this zone is affected by various factors, including government policies, the availability of resources, community involvement, and

the competency levels of teachers. Given these complexities, evaluating principals' performance in managing schools provides valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of school leadership in the region.

This study seeks to assess how principals of secondary schools in the North-Central Zone of Nigeria execute their roles on interpersonal relations and internal supervision.

Statement of the Problem

According to recent research, Secondary education in Nigeria has been enduring deterioration in the quality of secondary school education delivery, and as a result, school success is not achieved (Nigeria Education Sector Analysis (NESA), 2014, in Bamire and Adelabu, 2018). Usman (2009) in Bamire and Adelabu (2018) continued that there is a general belief that the standard of education in Nigeria has dropped and continues to drop. This is evident in the inability of some secondary school leavers in Nigeria to do what a primary school leaver could do effectively some decades ago, such as writing good essays. Kotirde Yunus and Anat (2014) stressed that a recently concluded survey showed that many Nigerian students in secondary schools lack the basic literary, numeric, and life skills, and that the results of public and school examinations continue to show a declining capacity of secondary school students. Reports from the West African Examination Council, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, and other examination bodies show a yearly lowering of performance in many key subjects. Brown (2008) observed that these days, higher institutions demand that graduates from secondary schools take qualifying examinations before being considered admissions into degree programmes. The hurdle was not only there in the past when the academic performance of secondary students was higher.

Radner and Bobek, (2016) put it that some secondary school principals are lacking supervisory role competencies, resulting in low quality of instruction, indiscipline among staff and students. Brown (2008) observed that recently in our schools, cases of indiscipline are high among the teachers; act of indiscipline which include among others laziness, absenteeism, eye service, laxity, and witch-hunting percolates the system to base of the system. Over the years principals have been criticized for non-performance of their supervisory role performance, they have been said to be inefficient and ineffective in their supervisory role as they fail to provide direction for their teachers (Oyebade, 2014 in Bamire and Adelabu, 2018). All these may be traceable to inefficient interpersonal and internal supervisory role performance of the principal in managing school, and these problems reoccur continually and are transformed into major challenges in the school.

A large body of Nigerian research conceptualizes internal supervision as a mechanism for improving teachers' effectiveness rather than as a leadership function requiring performance evaluation. For example, Ofangbonmu & Eimuhi (2021) put it that a study conducted in Edo State investigated the influence of internal supervision on teacher performance using classroom visitation, observation, and evaluation techniques, finding that supervision positively improved teachers' work outcomes. Similarly, Nwigwe (2023) states that research in Ebonyi State examined internal supervision in relation to teachers' productivity and concluded that supervision promotes teaching and learning effectiveness. These studies treat supervision primarily as an independent variable affecting teachers**,** leaving unanswered questions such as:

1. How competently principals carry out supervision,
2. Whether principals possess the required supervisory skills,
3. How consistently they implement supervisory responsibilities.

Also DiPaola and Kouzes (2018) posit that a study examining principals' leadership styles in Anambra State focused on how leadership patterns influence teachers' performance rather than

evaluating interpersonal relational practices directly. These works treat interpersonal relations as embedded within leadership constructs, leaving a conceptual gap regarding how principals deliberately perform interpersonal roles such as conflict mediation, staff cohesion, and professional trust-building. There is no doubt the roles of principal in today's world of education have enlarged considerably, and the demands on school principals have changed, the expectations from school principal are dramatically move more than before. The changed conditions in our society required principals who are trained and skilled administrators capable of performing their roles effectively and detailed control of the school they led. It is in view of the need for principal to adopt appropriate roles performance relevant to their school, which is capable of reversing the problems outlined above and even other problems that can be further identified in the secondary school system that this study, wishes to address. Thus, the study focuses on the assessment of principals' role performance in the management secondary schools in North-Central zone, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The aim study was set to:

1. assess the Role performance of Principals' in Interpersonal relationships in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-central Zone, Nigeria;
2. examine the Role Performance of Principals' in Supervisory Role in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-central Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the Principals' Role Performance on Interpersonal Relationship in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria?
2. In what way do Principals' Perform Roles on Internal Supervision in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

$H0_1$: There is no Significant Difference in the Opinions of Principals, Teachers, and Officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on Principals' Role Performance on Interpersonal Relationship in Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria;

$H0_2$: There is no Significant Difference in the Opinions of Principals, Teachers, and Officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on Principals' Role Performance on Internal Supervision in Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hunched on the Path House-Goal theory. This is a leadership theory postulated by Martin G. Evans in 1970 but it was letter developed and expanded by Robert J. House in 1971. The theory lays emphasis on the behavior a leader should exhibit as to ensure subordinates attain organizational goals. The house path-goal theory sees the leader as the source of the subordinates desires and willingness to work. It emphasizes that the leader therefore should do everything possible to encourage the subordinate take the accepted and easier path to goal attainment. Leaders can adopt their goals by clarifying the path to goal achievement, removing obstacle, and providing support. The Path House-Goal theory provides a strong theoretical lens for examining principals' role performance in school management. The theory explains how leaders

enhance subordinates' motivation, satisfaction, and performance by clarifying goals, removing obstacles, and providing the necessary support to achieve organizational objectives.

Applying this theory to secondary school administration helps to explain how principals' leadership behaviours influence teachers' effectiveness, interpersonal climate, and overall school performance. The theory integrates supervision and interpersonal relations: The theory combines task-oriented roles (instructional supervision) and Human-relations roles (staff motivation and welfare). This dual focus aligns precisely with assessing principals' managerial and relational effectiveness in the school system.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Thus, the opinions of principals, teachers, and officials of the School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on role performance of principals in the management of secondary schools in North-Central zone, Nigeria were gathered. A total of 20,358 population comprising 1,822 principals, 18,012 teachers, and 524 SBMCs officials in the seven states of the North-Central Zone, Nigeria were used. Research advisor (2006) was used to arrive at 378 samples among the three categories of respondents as follows: 130 principals, 169 teachers, and 79 SBMCs officials from the four states were selected for the study. Simple random sampling was used in selecting sample from the population. Data collected by the use of a structured questionnaire developed by Maina (2017) and adopted by the researchers were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, standard deviation and the mean scores. The name of the questionnaire is title; "Questionnaire on Principals' Role Performance in the Management of Secondary Schools" (QRPPMSS Questionnaire). It consisted of two parts. Part one of the instrument sought the respondents' biodata, namely status, highest educational qualification, gender, age, and years of working experience. Part two is the main questionnaire divided into two sections of A-B. As follows: Section 'A' asked information on principals' role performance in interpersonal relationship in secondary schools in North-central Zone, section 'B' asked questions on the role performance of principal in internal supervision in secondary schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria. The questionnaire items were rated using a five-point Likert-type scale of measurement as follows: strongly agree-5, agree-4, undecided-3, disagree-2, strongly disagree-1 for sections A-B. By using these sets of graduated response options, individual respondents are expected to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The total score obtained when the responses are summed up indicates their standing on the variable or attribute being measured. A higher value indicates a more positive response than a lower value, thus the bench mark is gotten: 5+4+3+2+1=15÷5 (ratings) =3 as bench mark. The research instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Management Department Federal University of Education Pankshin for content validity, a total of (20) twenty copies of questionnaire was administered to eleven teachers (11), six (6) principals and tree (3) SBMCs officials were used for pilot study and Cronbach's correlation coefficient was used to test the result. The result yielded 0.826 for Cronbach Alfa 0.905for spearman coefficient and 0.900 for Guttman Split-half reliability coefficient. All the two hypotheses formulated were tested using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the Principals' Role Performance on Interpersonal Relationship in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents' Responses on Assessment of Principals' Role Performance on Interpersonal Relationship in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

S/No	Item Statement	Categories	Mean	Ag. Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	The principal in my school interacts with his/her subordinates freely	Principal	2.41	2.32	0.48	Rejected
		Teachers	2.22		0.46	
		SBMCs	2.32		0.43	
2	The principal encourages teachers to work in harmony	Principals	2.19	2.58	0.49	Rejected
		Teachers	2.34		0.43	
		SBMCs	3.21		0.41	
3	The principal encourages teachers to have good interpersonal relationships with students	Principals	3.22	2.19	0.49	Rejected
		Teachers	2.11		0.45	
		SBMCs	1.24		0.41	
4	The principal in my school does not emphasis on peaceful coexistence among students	Principals	2.31	3.51	0.56	Rejected
		Teachers	4.22		0.60	
		SBMCs	4.01		0.51	
	Aggregate		**2.65**		**0.48**	**Rejected**

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 3.0 = Accepted; Otherwise Rejected

Table One showed the respondents' responses on assessment of principals' role performance on interpersonal relationship in the management of secondary schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria. The table has an aggregate mean of 2.65 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.48. The overall aggregate average of the mean score is 2.65 which is below the aggregate mean of 3.0; therefore, Principals' role on interpersonal relationship has not been achieved in the management of secondary schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: In what way do Principals' Perform roles on Internal Supervision in the management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' Responses on Assessment of Principals' Role Performance on Internal Supervision in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

S/No	Item Statement	Categories	Mean	Ag. Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
5	The Principal goes round the classrooms every day to ensure instructions are taking place	Principal	2.33	1.92	0.48	Rejected
		Teachers	2.21		0.46	
		SBMCs	1.22		0.43	
6	The Principal ensures that teachers make entries in the scheme of work every week	Principals	2.45	2.74	0.49	Rejected
		Teachers	2.55		0.43	
		SBMCs	3.22		0.41	
7	The principal ensures that teachers prepare lesson plans and lesson notes before they go to class	Principals	1.23	2.30	0.49	Rejected
		Teachers	2.67		0.45	
		SBMC	3.00		0.41	
8	The Principal ensures that teachers only teach areas they specialized on	Principals	2.34	2.11	0.56	Rejected
		Teachers	2.33		0.60	
		SBMCs	1.67		0.51	
	Aggregate		**2.27**		**0.48**	**Rejected**

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 3.0 = Accepted; Otherwise Rejected

Table Two showed the respondents' responses on the assessment of the principal role on internal supervision in the management of secondary schools in the North-Central Zone, Nigeria. The

overall aggregate average of the mean score is 2.27 which is below the mean of 3.00; therefore, Principals' Role on Internal Supervision has not been achieved in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance on the Opinions of Principals, Teachers, and Officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on Interpersonal Relationship Role in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	2805.707	3	1402.853	16.466	.000	Sig.
Within Groups	69776.916	819	85.198			
Total	72582.623	821				

Significant at p< 0.05

The One-way ANOVA conducted in Table 3 showed a statistically significant difference because the p-value of 0.00 obtained is less than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that a significant difference exists between the opinions of Principals, Teachers, and officials of SBMCs on the Principals' Interpersonal Relationship role in the Management of Secondary Schools in the North-Central Zone, Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference in the opinions of Principals, Teachers, and officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on the Principals' Interpersonal relationship Role in the Management of Secondary Schools in the North-Central Zone, Nigeria was consequently rejected.

Table 4: Result of Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Multiple Comparison on the Opinions of Principals, Teachers and Officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on Interpersonal Relationship Role in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

(I) Status	(J) Status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Remark
Principals	Teachers	1.33852	.72321	0.18	Not Sig.
	SBMCs Officials	-3.65725*	.90662	0.00	Sig.
Teachers	Principals	-1.33852	.72321	0.18	Not Sig.
	SBMCs Officials	-4.99577*	.87146	0.00	Sig.
SBMCs Officials	Principals	3.65725*	.90662	0.00	Sig.
	Teachers	4.99577*	.87146	0.00	Sig.

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Scheffe's post hoc test in Table four revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the opinion of Principals and officials of SBMCs (0.00 < 0.05) and between the opinions of teachers and officials of SBMCs (p = 0.00 < 0.05). On the other hand, no statistically significant difference was found between the opinion of Principals and teachers (0.18 > 0.05).

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Table 5: Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance on the Opinions of Principals, Teachers and Officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on Supervisory Role Performance of Principals in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	7105.063	3	3552.531	17.639	0.00	Sig.
Within Groups	164947.361	819	201.401			
Total	172052.423	821				

Significant at p< 0.05

The One-way ANOVA conducted in Table 5 showed statistically significant difference because the p-value of 0.00 was obtained and is less than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that a significant difference exists in the opinions of Principals, Teachers and officials of SBMCs on Principals' Supervisory Role in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria. Thus, the Null Hypothesis, which stated that there is no Significant Difference in the Opinions of Principals, Teachers and officials of SBMCs on Principals' Supervisory Role Performance in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria was rejected.

Table 6: Result of Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Multiple Comparison on the Opinions of Principals, Teachers and Officials of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) on Supervisory Role in the Management of Secondary Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria.

(I) Status	(J) Status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Remark
Principals	Teachers	2.08493	1.11195	0.17	Not Sig.
	SBMCs Officials	8.19632*	1.39393	0.00	Sig.
Teachers	Principals	-2.08493	1.11195	0.17	Not Sig.
	SBMCs Officials	6.11140*	1.33987	0.00	Sig.
SBMCs Officials	Principals	-8.19632*	1.39393	0.00	Sig.
	Teachers	-6.11140*	1.33987	0.00	Sig.

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Scheffe's post hoc test in Table 6 revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the opinion of Principals and SBMCs officials and between SBMCs Officials, Principals and teachers as indicated by the p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance. On the other hand, no statistically significant difference was found between the opinion of Principals and Teachers as p-values of 0.17 was greater 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the first research question reveal that the principal in the school has poor interpersonal relations and does not interact freely with his/her subordinates. This may be as a result of the lack of openness by the principal to the subordinates. The principal must relate well to ensure the cooperation of the staff in the school. In support of the above assertion, Hargreaves (2004) emphasizes that collaborative school cultures enhance teacher commitment and reduce professional isolation, thereby improving classroom practices. Similarly, strong interpersonal ties among teachers encourage knowledge sharing, peer mentoring, and collective problem-solving, which contribute to sustained school improvement (Fullan, 2007). Epstein (2011) also argues that

strong school–family partnerships enhance students' academic success by aligning expectations and support systems between home and school. In secondary education, where adolescents face complex developmental challenges, collaborative relationships between teachers and parents become even more essential for guiding students' academic and moral development. Positive interpersonal relations in secondary schools are grounded in mutual respect, trust, effective communication, and shared responsibility among stakeholders.

The second findings on the second research question revealed that internal supervision is poorly carried out by the school principal. The principal does not go round the classrooms to ensure instructions are taking place, does not ensures that teachers make entries in the scheme of work every week. This implies that supervision is grossly lacking in the school and this may affect the academic performance of students and also the staff productivity. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2013) assert that supervision is a moral and professional responsibility that promotes reflective teaching and continuous improvement. When properly implemented, it encourages teachers to adopt innovative methodologies, manage classrooms effectively, and address students' diverse learning needs. The Principals must ensure that teachers adhere to schemes of work, maintain lesson plans, assess students appropriately, and complete syllabus coverage within stipulated timeframes. According to Nolan and Hoover (2011), supervision fosters professional accountability by creating clear expectations and monitoring instructional performance. This accountability mechanism is essential in maintaining educational standards and preventing instructional lapses.

Conclusion

This study examined principals' role performance in the management of secondary schools in the North Central Zone of Nigeria, with particular focus on interpersonal relationships and internal supervision. The findings revealed that these two critical dimensions of school leadership were not properly carried out, thereby limiting the effectiveness of school administration and the attainment of educational goals. The inadequacy in interpersonal relationships suggests that many principals have not sufficiently fostered collaborative, trust-based, and communicative environments necessary for effective teaching and learning. Weak interaction patterns among principals, teachers, students, and other stakeholders (SMB) were found to reduce staff motivation, hinder teamwork, and create administrative gaps that negatively influence school climate and productivity. Since schools function as social systems, ineffective human relations undermine collective responsibility and the shared commitment required for achieving instructional excellence. Similarly, the study established that internal supervision was not effectively implemented. Irregular classroom observations, limited professional guidance, and insufficient monitoring of instructional activities weakened the support structure needed to enhance teachers' performance. Without consistent supervisory practices such as mentoring, feedback, and instructional evaluation, teachers are deprived of opportunities for professional growth, resulting in lapses in curriculum delivery and reduced academic outcomes for students. Overall, the study concludes that ineffective performance of principals in the areas of interpersonal relationships and internal supervision has contributed significantly to managerial and instructional challenges in secondary schools within the North Central Zone. For secondary schools to function optimally, principals must move beyond routine administration to embrace relational leadership and structured supervisory practices that promote collaboration, accountability, and continuous professional development. Strengthening these competencies is essential for improving school effectiveness, enhancing teacher performance, and achieving sustainable educational development in the North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Educational authorities should organize regular training, workshops, and seminars for principals on interpersonal and communication skills, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and team building. This will enhance principals' ability to build trust, promote collaboration, and maintain harmonious working relationships among staff and students.
2. Schools should develop clear supervision schedules that include regular classroom observations, lesson plan reviews, and follow-up feedback sessions. A systematic approach will ensure consistency and accountability in instructional monitoring.
3. Internal supervision should be linked with continuous professional development through in-service training opportunities, mentoring, peer collaboration, demonstration lessons, and instructional coaching. This will transform supervision from fault-finding to a supportive process aimed at improving teaching effectiveness.
4. Government and school boards should provide adequate administrative support staff to reduce principals' routine burdens, allowing them to concentrate more on instructional leadership and relationship management.
5. Principals should encourage professional learning communities, regular staff meetings, and open communication channels that promote teamwork, shared responsibility, and mutual respect among teachers.

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