

**PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AS HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE**

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to ascertain principals' perception of condition of service as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was utilized for this study. The population for the study comprised all the 297 public secondary school principals in Enugu State. It comprises of 244 female and 53 male public secondary school principals in Enugu State respectively. No sampling was done because the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, the developed instrument was given to three experts for validation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Reliability estimate. The instrument yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.71. The data collected with the questionnaire was analyzed using Mean (\bar{x}) with Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research question. However, the null hypothesis was tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. The analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Based on the results, the researcher concluded that condition of service is human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State. Similarly, there is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals' perception of condition of service as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State, but there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals' perception on human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to condition of service in Enugu State. The researcher recommended among others that there is need to review the condition of service for secondary school staff so as to ensure effective human resource management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Keywords: Principals, Perception, Conditions of Service, Human Resource Management, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

There are a number of factors that contribute to the success of an organization. These factors include capital, equipment, and manpower among others. Among these factors, the human factor which is manpower is the most significant of all, since it is the people that use all other resources, this is because without the productive efforts of workers, the material resources of an institution would be of no use. Furthermore, if the people who are in charge of these resources are not properly managed, then the utilization of the capital and material resources would not be optimal (Chandan, 2018). Hence, the place of human resource management in the productivity of any organization is indispensable, especially in the secondary school system. The success of secondary education depends largely on a careful and effective handling of educational resources in terms of allocation and utilization especially money, materials and machines put under the educational manager for efficient educational services (Babalola, 2016). Hence, the principal and government have a great task of effective resource management; ensuring that these resources work independently and inter-related, towards the stated goals. This is so because the success or failure of the school is first attributed to the principal, then the government, which is subject to the availability of resource and the management of same. Moreover, scholars and philosophers from ancient times to present day of science and technology

have identified the ineffective management of resources in the education sector as the cause of most educational crisis in Nigeria (Ibadin,2020). This is observable particularly in the secondary schools.

The problems of secondary schools in Nigeria are multi-dimensional especially with the recent legislation by some state governments on free and compulsory education from primary to secondary education (Akpan, 2018). Some of the management problems identified include; poor staffing, finance, infrastructure, communication, human relations and decision-making procedures (Akpan, 2018). However, Umosen (2020) stated that the main problem confronting education in less developed countries is the inability to coordinate and effectively manage available resources. This managerial ineffectiveness is said to have predictive effects on teachers' job performance which is reflected in low performance of students in public examinations (Olalube, 2016). Such ineffectiveness could be attributed to the various challenges facing school principals in the course of executing their tasks. In order to address the inefficiencies, therefore, there is the need to identify the challenges as perceived by the school principals. Various challenges have been reported to be encountered by human resource managers in schools (Adeyemi, 2018). Among these are the inconsistency in plan implementation and the insufficiency of the skills of teachers

(Adeyemi, 2018). This has, perhaps, made African countries predominant in low human development. Productivity has, however, continued to be low in virtually all sectors of the educational sector (Aliyu, 2021). Despite all the laudable policies of government, there seems to be inadequate supervision and monitoring of activities in schools (Adeyemi, 2018). Effective leadership seems to be absent in many schools, while little emphasis on the training of workers on-the-job are common phenomena. The result is perhaps the critical shortages of manpower in certain subject areas in the school system. These no doubt can be attributed to lack of Human Resource Management (HRM).

Human resources refer to the personnel, people or manpower of the organization. It deals with the activities undertaken to assist the employees or human resources in performing additional duties and assume positions of importance in the organizational hierarchy (Nwachukwu, 2019). Human resources management is considered as a process of increasing the knowledge, skills and capacities of all the people in a society or within an organization. In the opinion of Obi (2023) human resource management means all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organization and the employees. It is a systematic harnessing of the available human being, for the achievement of educational goals and objectives (Olurotimi, 2022). Olurotimi further noted that human resource management do not only involve examining the numerical adequacy and quality of human beings in relation with what is available but also considering how

well this is being managed and used in the enterprise especially among small scale enterprise. Study by Osagie and Okafor (2020), revealed some challenges of HRM in the secondary schools to include staff recruitment, staff training and development, performance evaluation, conditions of service and government policies. However, there is no evidence to the best knowledge of the researcher on the perception of the secondary school principals in Enugu State on these challenges, hence the need for this study.

It is worthy to note that management of secondary schools in Nigeria has suffered several setbacks which are primarily attributed to inadequate and mismanagement of resources. This situation calls for a serious concern being that the secondary education occupies an important place in the Nigeria education system, as it serve as a link between the basic education and tertiary level of education. Aleke (2016), posited that the goals of the secondary education cannot be achieved amidst instabilities and poor management as well as professional issues facing the implementation of the senior secondary schools. Murithi (2020), lamented that even though a lot has been done by the government to secondary education in Nigeria, the system seems to be challenged by various factors, which requires the attention of the government and society at large. Thus, the productivity in the secondary school setting is dependent on indispensable resources such as human, material and financial.

In the secondary school system human resources refer to the principal, teachers, students, parents, government

officials, members of education board and the non-academic staff (which includes clerks, messengers, cleaners among others). Momoh (2018), posited that the success of any educational programme depends, to a considerable extent on the availability and utilization of skilled manpower of all types and grades in the entire school system. Therefore, all the activities of any school system are initiated and determined by the persons who make-up the school. School plants, offices, machine, and other material resources are unproductive without the direction of human efforts (Nwafor, 2016). This underscores the place of Human Resource Management (HRM) in organizations, such as schools. There is, therefore, no gainsaying the fact that the smooth running of secondary schools is determined by effective HRM by principals. Hence, there is the need to ascertain the challenges which principals perceive as facing them in carrying out some of their duties like HRM. Study by Nwafor and Nwafor (2022), noted that the human resource management challenges faced by the secondary school principals include recruitment, deployment, training, retention, transfer, safety and retirement of employees from a school system. Nakpodia (2020), stated that HRM challenges in the secondary schools among others include; condition of service.

The conditions of service of secondary school teachers are very important and appear to influence their job performance and the administration of the school. It is obvious that, where the conditions of service are very poor, service delivery will be negatively affected because of low morale, a valuable of lack

of motivation. Nakpodia (2020), noted that if the conditions of service is not given adequate attention teachers will display indifferent attitudes over their jobs. Their punctuality and regularity to school, planning of their lessons, teaching of their subjects and their participation in other school activities will be negatively affected. The academic performance of the students will also be affected due to ineffective teaching and administration of the school. Ubaka (2018), opined that the efficiency of human resource management in Nigerian Schools is being called to question both within and outside the profession as a result of the poor conditions of service. Akpan (2023) observed that condition of service such as pay rise is one of the powerful tools used in increasing motivation for teacher job satisfaction. Fadeyi, Sofoluwe and Gbadeyan (2015) asserted that conditions of service are the strategies employed in motivating teachers for better job satisfaction. These are in form of salary increment, gratuity, regular promotion, ensuring job security, and establishing cordial relationship among teachers. According to these authors, teachers are the initiators, facilitators of teaching and learning activities therefore their conditions of services must be conducive in order for them to fill satisfied while working. They act as agent of changes in any school system because of these roles they perform; they can be regarded as the heart of quality improvement strategy. Fadeyi, Sofoluwe and Gbadeyan (2015) further identified three factors which are regarded as criteria or parameter for measuring teachers' job satisfaction. These are: students' examination results, absenteeism, and turnover. They stressed

that the presence or absence of each or all. Some scholars are of the view that school resources are being mismanaged and under-utilised simply because poor condition of service is calls for a serious concern and the need for this study. As secondary school principals perceptions of these challenges is deemed significant in this study.

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Principals are the chief executives of secondary schools. They are appointed based on qualification, experience and competence. Onyeike and Nwosu (2018), noted that principals are the uncompromising leaders of their schools as well as administrators in whose hands lies the future of the institution. Okoli (2015), asserted that the success or failure of secondary school programs depends on the individual principals' ability and leadership skills to maintain discipline in the school. Principals' behaviour according to Ngene (2016), normally encourages the subordinates to achieve and maintain the school standard by setting rules and guidelines pertaining to school standard. It is the duty of the secondary school principals to ensure that goals of educational policies and programs are realized. It is worthy to note that the goals of the educational policies and programmes can only be realized through a conducive school environment where discipline is upheld. Nwajagu (2017), asserted that the school principal is an indispensable figure for implementation and maintenance of the school goal, however, this is dependent on the leadership qualities of the secondary school principal which is equally affected by factors such as gender of the secondary school principal.

Gender is described as the biological sex of an individual in terms of being male or female. It has to do with socially expected behaviours of male and females. In Nigerian society, there are differences and inequalities in the assignment of responsibilities between women and men, activities taken, access to and control over resources as well as possession of some

qualities (Adigwu, 2018). Eunice, Selpher and David (2015), stated that there is significant relationship between secondary school principals' gender and effectiveness in management of secondary school. Alhourani (2017), observed that female principals are found to encourage discipline in the school than their male counterparts. Luga (2016) submitted that male principals were not significantly better in human resource management than their female counterparts. Manning (2021), showed that male principals pay more attention to school challenges than the female principals. The observed difference is probably due to man's assumption of their ability to handle and deal with issues, unlike women who may not be prepared to adapt under poor conditions or situations in the school. The issue of gender has gained much attention with little or no conclusion especially as regards the principals' perception of conditions of service as Human Resource Management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State.

This researcher is worried that if adequate measures and attention is not paid to principals' perception of conditions of service as Human Resource Management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State, education delivery might be jeopardized. This is because no meaningful teaching and learning can occur in an environment characterized by poor human resource management. In this case, both the teachers and students will be demoralized and education delivery disregarded. The principals on the other hand will be unable to enforce rules and regulations that will enhance effective education delivery. This situation will

scare away students from school and encourage teachers' absenteeism. When this happens, teachers' productivity will be affected and by extension, students' performance in both internal and external examinations will be adversely affected. As human resource management has been proved to be productive in inculcating discipline and effectiveness in secondary schools, it has become imperative that principals' perception of conditions of service as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State, should be explored. It is against this background that the researcher is motivated to carry out this research on principals' perception of conditions of service as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State. This constitutes the gap that this study intends to fill.

Statement of the Problem

The place of Human Resource Management in the efficient running of schools cannot be overemphasized. For educational objectives to be achieved in any society there is the need to properly harness the resources in the schools. Human resources which include teaching and non-teaching staff of schools are key to the effective utilization of other non-human resources (classrooms, laboratories, and libraries). When the human resources are not well managed, the other resources may suffer as a result, and when this is the case, the achievement of educational objectives will be affected negatively. Principals are, by training and experience, expected to be the control room of the school system. They monitor and

supervise the implementation of educational policies at the school level. Hence, effective teaching and learning can be influenced by principals' successful (or otherwise) management of human resources under their care. Contemporary researchers have, however, reported poor achievement of students in examinations, especially in secondary schools. Some of the causes of such development have been attributed to the poor management of human resources in schools. Furthermore, research findings also report that principals' effective management of human resources are often beset by a myriad of challenges. Such challenges hinder them from successfully discharging of their duties. Based on this, the problem of this study is, 'what are the principals' perception of conditions of service as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State'?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain principals' perception of conditions of service as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to examine;

1. conditions of service as perceived by secondary school principals in Enugu State;

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are principals' perceptions of human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to conditions of service?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance and at appropriate degree of freedom:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals' perception on human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to conditions of service.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was utilized for this study. Descriptive survey research design, according to Nworgu (2015), is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. A descriptive survey research is concerned with specified population of persons, item or situation, in a defined geographical location. It involves the collection of relevant data for or about the population that enables the description of the person, items or situations the way they are (Odunze, 2023). The descriptive survey research design was considered suitable since the study solicited information from the respondents directly and afforded all the respondents equal chance of being chosen for the study. The population for the study comprised all the 297 secondary school principals in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. It comprises of 244 female 53 male principals in the public secondary schools in Enugu State respectively. The entire population of 297 secondary school principals was used for the study. No sampling was done because the population

was small and manageable. A structured questionnaire named “Principals’ Perception of Condition of Service as Human Resource Management Challenges in Secondary Schools Questionnaire’ (PPCS-HRMCSSQ), developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument has two sections; A and B. Section A contains the respondents bio data while section B has 11 items, structured to assist the researcher in providing answer to the research question that guided the study. The response format for the instrument was 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Each response option had a numerical value assigned to it as follows; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with scores 4,3,2, and 1 respectively.

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, draft copies of the instrument together with the research topic, purpose of the study, research question, hypothesis, scope of the study and the developed instrument were given to three experts. Two experts were from the Department of Educational Management while the other expert was from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The experts were requested to assess the relevance, adequacy, suitability and comprehensiveness of the items in addressing the research questions as well as the clarity of the instruction to the respondents. 5 items were added to the initial 6 items, which increased the number of items to 11 as suggested by the validators, while barrel questions and

grammatical errors were corrected as well. The validators’ comments were used to draft the final instrument that was used for data collection.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering 30 copies of the questionnaire to a sample of 18 male and 12 female principals from public secondary schools in Ebonyi State, in a trial testing to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The choice for Ebonyi State was dictated by the fact that both states have the same educational characteristics in terms of administration, population and environment. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of all the information they supplied. Data collected from the respondents’ responses were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.71, indicating that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study.

The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the researcher with the help of six research assistants that were briefed on the content of the questionnaire and its administration to ensure that the questionnaire was properly administered. Appointments were booked with the respondents for collection at a later date for those who were not able to fill their own copies of the instrument because of the nature of their job. Out of the 297 copies of the instrument distributed, only 295 were correctly retrieved, 2 copies were not returned. The data collected with the questionnaire were analyzed using Mean (\bar{x}) with Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research question. However, each of the null

hypothesis was tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. The analysis was done using of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The decision rule; real limit of the mean scores was applied, therefore, the upper and lower limits of the mean were as follows; Mean scores from 3.50 – 4.49

Strongly Agree (SA)., Mean scores from 2.50 – 3.49 Agree (A)., Mean scores from 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree (D), and Mean scores from 0.50 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD). The null hypothesis was not rejected when the significant level was less than 0.05 and was rejected when the significant level was more than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are principals' perceptions of human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to conditions of service?

Table 1: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Principals' Perceptions of Human Resource Management Challenges in Secondary Schools with Respect to Conditions of Service. N=295

S/N	Principals' Perceptions of Human Resource Management Challenges in Secondary Schools with Respect to Conditions of Service include;	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DEC
1	poor teaching environment	82	81	85	47	2.67	1.048	A
2	lack of teaching aid	106	93	94	2	3.03	.841	A
3	poor provision of teaching incentives	76	98	88	33	2.74	.968	A
4	poor salaries	75	80	94	46	2.62	1.029	A
5	lack of promotion as and when due	83	79	87	46	2.67	1.048	A
6	late payment of salaries	76	98	88	33	2.74	.968	A
7	poor reward system	83	79	87	46	2.67	1.048	A
8	low status of the society	75	80	94	46	2.62	1.029	A
9	disregard to staff welfare	83	79	87	46	2.67	1.048	A
10	poor access to internet facilities	76	98	88	33	2.74	.968	A
11	poor payment of gratuities	75	80	94	46	2.62	1.029	A
Grand Mean/Overall SD						2.71	1.002	A

From Table 1 above, the results of data analysis for research question 1 indicates that all the items has mean responses that are higher than the cut-off point of 2.50. The value of the grand mean was also high at 2.71. The standard deviation is small signifying that its closeness shows unanimity among the respondents in respect to their responses to the items. This implies that the respondents agree that

condition of service is perceived as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals' perception on human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to condition of service

Table 2: t-test on the Mean Scores of Male and Female Principals' Perception on Human Resource Management Challenges in Secondary Schools with Respect to Condition of Service.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Dec.
Male	53	3.05	.500	-.420	293	.044	NS
Female	242	2.78	.490				

Table 2 shows that the t value for the difference in mean scores of male and female principals' perception on human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to condition of service is -.420, significant at .044 level of significance, which is higher than 0.05 set for the study. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals' perception on human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to condition of service in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding showed that condition of service was perceived as human resource management challenges in secondary schools in Enugu State. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals' perception on human resource management challenges in secondary schools with respect to condition of service in Enugu State. This finding is in

consonance with Nakpodia (2020), who noted that if the condition of service is not given adequate attention, teachers will display indifferent attitudes over their jobs. Consequently, Ubaka (2018), opined that the efficiency of human resource management in Nigerian Schools is being called to question both within and outside the profession as a result of the poor conditions of service. Thus, there is need to review the condition of service for secondary school staff so as to ensure effective human resource management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Educational Implication of the Findings

The implications of this study are that;

1. If the condition of service are not reviewed or improved on, this may encourage poor attitude of staff and decline in students' performance.
2. The performances of the teachers should be properly evaluated, if not, some of them might be going contrary to the norms and values of the secondary school system, thereby, having an adverse impact on the students' performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made.

1. There is need to review the condition of service for secondary school staff so as to ensure effective human resource management in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Periodic staff development workshops, conferences and seminars should be organized to address condition of service challenge in secondary schools in Enugu State.
3. Performance evaluation should be encouraged to enhance human resource management in secondary schools in Enugu State.

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