

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' MENTORSHIP ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF SUBORDINATE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of principals' mentorship on the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia state. The population of the study is 4476 consisting of 207 vice principals and 4269 teachers in public secondary schools in Abia State (SEMB, 2015). A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Three research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study which was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample size of 509 respondents' consisting of 83 vice-principals and 426 teachers were selected from 4476 population using a stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Influence of Principal's Mentorship on Job Performance of Subordinate Questionnaire" (IPMJPSQ). A 15-item questionnaire was designed using a four-point rating scale and validated by three experts in the Department of Science Education and the Department of Educational Management. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient of 0.86. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviations to answer the research questions and t-test statistics to test the hypothesis. The result of the analysis revealed that the opinions of vice principals and teachers with regard to principals' exposure of vice principals and teachers on their task performance to instructional leadership, fostering a friendly atmosphere, keeping good and community relations, were to a high extent. The study, hence recommended that Proper principal mentorship skills and strategies should be adequately put in place in secondary schools in Abia State to improve our educational system and tasks performed by subordinates, proper in-service training should be provided to vice principals and teachers in school and School principals as administrators should properly guide and communicate to vice principals and teachers on the rules and regulations of the school as well as the things they are supposed to do and the ones

they are not supposed to do. Finally, school principals as administrators should mentor new teachers in different school locations in Abia State.

Keywords: Principals' Mentorship, Task Performance, Subordinates, Secondary Schools

Introduction

Mentoring is a term generally used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual, called a mentee or protégé, and a more experienced individual known as a mentor. Traditionally, mentoring is viewed as a dyadic, face-to-face, long-term relationship between a supervisory adult and a novice teacher that fosters the mentee's professional, academic, or personal development (Donaldson, Ensher, & Grant-Vallone, 2000). It is important to acknowledge that the term "mentor" is borrowed from the male guide, Mentor, in Greek mythology, and this historical context has informed traditional manifestations of mentoring.

Mentoring then became common practice in the time of the guild and trade apprenticeships when young people, having acquired technical skills, often benefited from the patronage of more experienced and established professionals. Most successful people in any walk of life probably have had one or more people over the years who have established particularly a strong influence over their lives and careers. Mentoring therefore can be seen as a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced one with the agreed-upon goal of having the less experienced person grow and develop specific competencies (Murry & Owen 1991). Also, mentoring according to Chukwu (2014) connotes a guideline given to an individual to enable him/her to grow in the profession. In the same vein, Okundayo (2007) defines mentoring as a relationship which is between the mentor (principals) and the mentee (teachers) to assist the mentee in coping with a new situation like a new job or a change in personal circumstances or career development. Bozeman and Feeney in Chukwu (2014) defined mentorship as a process of informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development which entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and enduring a sustained period, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience (the mentor) and the person perceived to have less (the mentee).

Mentoring is accepted to be a process which involves experts (the principals) bringing out time, to help in the personal development and relationship that will improve the job performance of the subordinates (vice principals and teachers) in public secondary schools in Abia state. The principals in this study as mentors are expected to give their expert knowledge so that their subordinates (vice principals and teachers) will develop their full potential while carrying out their tasks in the profession. Mentoring in the context of this study is seen as the process of guiding and

bringing experiences to the mentee by the mentor to enhance and encourage him/her in their task performance which is geared towards achieving educational goals. However, Chukwu (2014) stated that true mentoring is more than just answering occasional questions or rendering ad hoc assistance but an ongoing relationship of learning, dialogue and challenge. One can deduce from all these definitions above that mentorship is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person (which in this study are the school principals) helps to guide the less experienced and less knowledgeable person, (which are the vice principals and teachers).

Mentoring has been adopted in many different contexts and for a variety of purposes the idea of bringing novices who are entering the teaching profession and those already in the profession with a wise, experienced guide and role model dates back to ancient times and has gained widespread acceptance in many fields of life. In public education, mentoring for vice principals and teachers started to spread in the early 1980s as part of efforts to reduce attrition and improve instruction quality (Daloz 1986). Having a quality relationship with school principals is important to novice teachers because the principal's support determines teachers' job satisfaction, task performance and decisions to remain in the field of teaching.

In this study, the researcher uses the "task as duty" approach which defines a task as "a piece of work to be done". Also, Catheter, in Asiegbu (2012) observed that teachers' work constitutes all the expected school duties and functions assigned to the position of teachers that facilitate students learning in the school. Task according to the researcher is what the employee does in an organization as a duty assigned to him to promote the growth of the organization.

In the context of this study, vice principals' and teachers' task performance indicates the extent to which subordinates perform their duties through effective and adequate mentoring. Peine (2007) emphasized that an effective subordinate is concerned with the content of the learning task to be achieved and the social psychological process enabling the content to be imparted successfully. Vice principals and teachers' task performance includes teaching skills, creating a good learning atmosphere, discipline, knowledge of learners, mastery of contents and impact on learning. Chukwu (2015) has it that teachers' performance is enhanced and encouraged positively by pairing a mentee with a mentor to guide and direct in the field of teaching.

Mentoring in the school system according to Chukwu (2014) could be likened to maintaining and facilitating professional growth and effective task performance among subordinates in Abia state. Therefore, for principals in Abia state secondary schools to fulfil these mentoring roles to their subordinates (teachers and vice principals) they have to create conditions and a good atmosphere which promote the growth of these subordinates within their various schools irrespective of locations. Good atmosphere encourages teachers to carry out or execute a given task. They can do

this by exposing teachers in Abia state to see the school in their location as an educational institution set aside to perform specific functions.

Also, principals have to introduce conditions for the development of teachers in schools by bringing in instructional leadership. The development of teachers is a means of helping teachers to improve or achieve their best in a given task through instructional leadership. Instructional leadership can be defined as those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning (Flath in Chukwu 2014). School principals can expose their subordinates to instructional leadership, by promoting ongoing evaluation and professional development of these teachers.

They will also ensure that their relationship with other teachers is of high quality and supported with time for planning and collaboration. If principals are to take the role of instructional leader seriously, they will have to free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and focus their efforts towards improving teaching and learning.

Also, principals act as mentors to their subordinates by encouraging a friendly atmosphere among their subordinates which in turn will create rapport and a conducive atmosphere among teachers for effective teaching and learning to take place. Principals also mentor teachers by supporting their career development through various means like in-service training programmes; seminars and workshops and occasional teachers' group discussions (Chukwu 2014). Furthermore, since secondary schools in Abia state bring up their students to grow into useful members of the community, it is then necessary for principals as mentors to create avenues which will encourage teachers to keep good school-community relationships.

Igwe in Modebelu (2014) observed that a school in a sense is both a community of its own and at the same time a part of the wider community within which it is located. The school should then relate the educational content to the local needs and conditions of the community where it is located. Thus, it is the community that dictates what needs to be taught. In line with Mgbodile (2003) school community relations can be described as the degree of understanding and goodwill achieved between the school and the community. Principals can promote school-community relationships, by making sure that the Parent Teachers' Association is in place in the school for parents and teachers interaction and also by allowing teachers to participate in important community functions around their school location.

The extent to which principals in secondary schools in Abia State act as mentors to their sub-ordinates (vice principals and teachers) is yet unknown. Having identified the significance of mentorship on the effective actualization of better performance and educational goals, the researcher deemed it necessary to assess the influence of principals' mentorship on the task performance of subordinates (vice principals and teachers) in secondary schools in Abia state.

Statement of the Problem

The influence of principals' mentorship of vice principals and teachers in secondary schools which is geared towards improving their task performance, is worth investigating as mentoring is a concept that cannot be left out in the growth and development of schools in particular and the general performance and achievement of educational goals and objectives in Abia state in particular and Nigeria as a whole. Looking at the supports of mentoring in school administration such as increasing satisfaction and retention rate to members of school organization, increasing excellent performance, increasing self-confidence, developing competence, encouraging collaboration and not competition among teachers in schools, the school system in Abia state seems to have ignored mentoring in school administration. Of the several factors that have been found to account for this ugly state of affairs, other factors such as the inability of principals in Abia state to expose teachers to instructional leadership or encouraging a friendly atmosphere, their inability to manage personnel and to ensure good school community partnership in schools seem very glaring.

This can be witnessed where principals in Abia State ignore staff induction, thereby leaving new teachers in the areas to find their way in schools without proper orientation exercise which will enable them to know the school do's and don'ts to better their performance in carrying out a given task. This situation causes these teachers to be frustrated and they end up not performing well in their teaching roles. Even those teachers who are not new are left without workshops, seminars and enlightenment programmes that will help them update their knowledge of the current practices in the teaching profession. Based on the foregoing, the problem of the study put in question is: to what extent does principals' mentorship influence the task performance of subordinates in secondary schools in Abia state?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of principals' mentorship on the task performance of subordinates (vice principals and teachers) in Abia state secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent to which principals' instructional leadership influences the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia.
2. Determine the extent to which principals' friendly atmosphere influences the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia state.
3. Identify the extent to which principals' keeping good school community relationships influences the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia state.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were posed.

1. To what extent does principals' instructional leadership influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia?

2. To what extent does principals' friendly atmosphere influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools of Abia state?
3. To what extent does keeping good school community relationships influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools Abia state?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance

H0₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of vice principals and teachers on the extent principals' instructional leadership influences task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia state.

Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 4,476 consisting of 207 vice principals and 4,269 teachers in public secondary schools in Abia State (Secondary Education Management Board SEMB, 2015). A sample size of 509 respondents' consisting of 83 vice-principals and 426 teachers were selected from 4476 population using a stratified random sampling technique. Three research questions and one null hypothesis were raised in the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Influence of Principal's Mentorship on Task Performance of Subordinate Questionnaire" (IPMTPSQ). A 15-item questionnaire was designed using a four-point rating scale and validated by three experts in the Department of Science Education and the Department of Educational Management. Determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability index of 0.86 which indicates that the instrument was reliable for the study. Five hundred and nine copies of the questionnaire were administered to the selected vice-principals and teachers with authority from the zonal offices. From the 509 copies administered, 492 copies of the questionnaire were returned which represents 96% of the instruments that were filled and returned. Making decisions on research questions depended on the level of dispersion of the mean. This was answered using a real limit of numbers; That is, any mean between 0.05-1.49= very low extent, 1.50-2.49= low extent, 2.50-3.49=high extent and 3.50- 4.00 = very high extent. The t-test statistics were used to test the hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results were presented below and in line with the research Questions and the hypothesis that guided the study.

Research Question 1

To what extent does principals' instructional leadership influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary school in Abia?

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent school principals' instructional leadership influences task performance of subordinates in public secondary school in Abia State.

S/N	Item	Respondents	N	Mean	Sd	
1.	Allowing teachers make input on issues relating to good teaching strategy in their school location.	Vice principals	83	3.16	0.37	High
	extent	Teachers	409	2.94	0.28	High
2.	Encouraging teachers to use teaching facilities to improve their task performance.	Vice principals	83	3.12	0.32	High
	extent	Teachers	409	2.89	0.38	High
3.	Monitoring and supporting the on-going appraisal of new teachers.	Vice principal	83	3.19	0.39	High
	extent	Teachers	409	2.71	0.56	High
4.	Assisting teachers with ideas that will help them prepare and write lesson notes.	Vice principals	83	3.13	0.34	High
	extent	Teachers	409	2.94	0.32	High
5.	Delegating teachers to duties that promote growth in student learning	Vice principals	83	3.18	0.38	High
	extent	Teachers	426	2.70	0.46	High
	extent					
	Pooled mean	Vice principals	3.15			High
	Extent	Teachers	2.83			High
	extent					

The results in Table 1 show the mean response of vice principals and teachers about the school principals' instructional leadership influence on the task performance of subordinates. The mean values of vice principals and teachers for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 were 3.16/2.94, 3.12/2.89, 3.19/2.71, 3.13/2.94, 3.18/2.70 respectively. All the mean responses are within the real limit range of 2.50-3.49. The overall cluster mean for vice principals was 3.15 indicating a high extent rating mean. while the overall cluster mean for teachers was 2.83 indicating also high extent mean rating. These overall mean values indicate that the opinion of vice principals and teachers about principals' instructional leadership influence on the task performance of subordinates was to a high extent.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of vice principals and teachers on the extent principals' instructional leadership influences task performance of the subordinates in public secondary schools.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the difference between mean rating of the opinion of vice principals and teachers on the extent to which principals' instructional leadership influences task performance subordinates

Variables	N	Mean	Sd	t-value	df	t-crit.
Vice principals	83	3.15	0.11	7.61	490	1.98
Teachers	409	2.83	0.11			

Table 2 reveals the t-test value. The t-value of the items indicates that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of vice principals and teachers about the extent principals' instructional leadership influences the task performance of subordinates. The t-value was 7.61 which is greater than the t-tabulated value of 1.98, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) was rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of vice principals and teachers on the extent to which principals' instructional leadership influence the task performance of subordinates.

Research Question 2

To what extent does principals' friendly atmosphere influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools of Abia state?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent school principals' friendly atmosphere influences task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia State

S/N Items	Respondents	N	Mean	Sd	Dec.
6.Appreciating subordinate for a job well done. extent	Vice principals	83	3.04	0.43	High
	Teachers	409	2.90	0.32	
High extent					
7.Allowing subordinate say their views during staff meeting. extent	Vice principals	83	3.15	0.36	High
	Teachers	409	3.00	0.22	High
High extent					
8.Creating relationship that will allow Staff to attend occasion of colleagues and plan for end of the year party. extent	Vice principals	83	3.00	0.27	High
	Teachers	409	2.99	0.15	High
High extent					
9.Delegating responsibility fairly among Their subordinates so as to build relationship. extent	Vice principals	83	2.45	0.68	Low
	Teachers	409	2.32	0.55	Low
High extent					
10.Establishing a friendly atmosphere to enable subordinate do their work well extent	Vice principals	83	3.00	0.00	High
	Teachers	409	2.94	0.30	High
High extent					
Pooled mean	Vice principals		2.92		High extent
	Teachers		2.83		High extent

The result in Table 3 shows the mean response of vice principals and teachers about the extent to which school principals' friendly atmosphere influences the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools. The mean values of vice principals and

teachers for items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 were 3.04/2.90, 3.15/3.00, 3.00/2.99, 2.45/2.32, 3.00/2.94 respectively. All the mean responses were within the real limit range of 2.50-3.49 except item 9 for vice principals and teachers. four mean values for vice principal were high extent and one was low extent. Overall cluster mean for vice principals had mean rating of 2.92 whereas the teachers had four high extent rating mean and one low extent. The overall cluster mean for teachers was 2.83 which indicates that the opinion of vice principals and teachers about principals’ friendly atmosphere influence on the task performance of subordinates was to a high extent

Research Question 3

To what extent does principals’ keeping good school community relationships influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools Abia state?

Table 4: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent school principals’ keeping of good school community relationships influences task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia State

S/N	Items	Respondents	N	Mean	Sd	
Dec.						
11.	Maintaining a good channel of Communication with the parent’s Teachers association for the purpose of getting new ideas.	Vice principals	83	2.96	0.18	High extent
		Teachers	409	2.74	0.45	High extent
12.	Delegating teachers to participate in Community development projects in their area.	Vice principals	83	3.02	0.21	High extent
		Teachers	409	2.74	0.45	High extent
13.	.Encouraging school visitation by parents and teachers interaction.	Vice principals	83	3.07	0.34	High extent
		Teachers	409	2.76	0.44	High extent.
	Encouraging teachers to evaluate and Report students’ progress to their parents.	Vice principals	83	3.03	0.36	High extent
		Teachers	409	2.75	0.46	High extent
14.	.Teaching teachers the need of involving Community members in decision-making In their locations.	Vice principals	83	3.00	0.00	High extent
		Teachers	409	2.74	0.46	High extent
	Pooled mean	Vice principals		2.74		High extent
		Teachers	3.01		High	extent

The result in Table 4 shows the mean response of vice principals and teachers about the influence of school principals keeping good school community relationships on task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools. The mean values of vice principals and teachers for items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 were 2.96/2.74, 3.02/2.74, 3.07/2.76, 3.03/2.75, 3.00/2.74 respectively. All the mean responses are within the real limit range of 2.50-3.49. Five mean values for vice principals were high-extent mean ratings. The overall cluster mean for vice principals was 3.01. While teachers had five high extents rating mean. The overall cluster mean for teachers was 2.74. This overall mean value indicates that the opinion of vice principals and teachers about the influence of the principals' exposure in keeping good community relationships on the task performance of subordinates was to a high extent.

Discussions

The finding of the study shows that vice principals and teachers in secondary schools in Abia State agreed that principals' instructional leadership influence their subordinates' task performance in Abia State to a high extent. This is in line with the findings of Getty (2010) who mentioned that instructional leadership skills are necessary for mentoring secondary school principals. Also, the findings of Chukwu (2014) showed that instructional leadership is very necessary for mentoring secondary school principals.

The result also shows that school principals keeping a friendly atmosphere influence task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia State to a high extent. The findings are in line with Chukwu (2014) who found in a similar study that fostering friendliness to subordinates in secondary school is necessary for principals' mentorship. The finding also agrees with Ogunu (2008), who revealed that effective principals are those who carry their subordinates along in decision-making that affects their school's well-being.

Finally, the results showed that school principals' keeping good community relationships influence to a high extent the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools in Abia State. The findings are in line with Mgbodile (2003) who pointed out that all the members of the school community are affected by what happens in the larger community and the school cannot be isolated from the influence of the community.

Conclusion

This study is survey research to investigate the influence of school principals' mentorship on the task performance of subordinates in public Secondary Schools of Abia State. However, based on the findings, the study concludes as follows:

The vice principals and teachers agreed that principals' use of instructional leadership, fostering of a friendly atmosphere and keeping good school community relationships to a high extent influence the task performance of subordinates in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Proper Principal mentorship skills and strategies should be adequately put in place in secondary schools in Abia State to improve the educational system and tasks performed by subordinates.
2. Proper in-service training should be provided to vice principals and teachers in school. These help in the development and better performance in carrying out tasks by vice principals and teachers as part of mentoring strategies.
3. School principals as administrators should mentor new teachers in different school locations in Abia State on the things required of them to do in the schools to achieve educational goals and objectives.

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