

**ADMINISTRATIVE NETWORKING STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPALS'
SUPERVISORY EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER
STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *This study assessed administrative networking strategies and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Three null hypotheses were formulated accordingly to direct the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Census technique was adopted in selecting the entire population of 667 secondary school administrators in Cross River State. The instruments used for data collection were two set of questionnaires designed by the researchers including: Administrative Networking Strategies Questionnaire (ANSQ)", and "Principals' Supervisory Effectiveness Questionnaire (PSEQ)" respectively. The reliability of the instruments was established through Cronbach Alpha, and reliability estimates of .89 and .92 were obtained for the two instruments respectively. The null hypotheses were all tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the aid of SPSS v21. Findings from the study revealed that; there is a significant relationship between principals' effective communication, school-community relationship, and teachers' involvement in decision-making, with their supervisory effectiveness respectively. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that; secondary school principals should endeavour to communicate relevant ideas, messages, and information to both teaching and non-academic staff of the school; and ensure that appropriate feedback mechanisms are provided based on such information.*

KEYWORDS: Networking, Administrative Networking, Supervision, Networking Strategies, Supervisory effectiveness, Principals.

INTRODUCTION

The rationale behind the establishment of any formal organization is traceable to the intended objectives such organization was designed to attain. Consequently, schools just like any other institution are established with the primary focus on modifying the behaviour of learners and transforming them into useful citizens of the nation. No economy in the world can witness rapid growth and development when much of the populace cannot read and write (Arop, Ekpang, Nwannunu, & Owan, 2018). For the effective training of the individual, the school has dynamic role to play in equipping learners with the needed skills to thrive and function effectively in the 21st century. This underscores the fact that proper training and learning experiences are expected to be provided to students at all levels of education in Nigeria.

The primary role of school managers revolves round the administration of human and material resources. These resources must be effectively managed and harnessed in order to provide an

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enabling environment for teachers to teach, and learners to learn. For the purpose of this study, emphasis was based on human resources because they support the school administrators in achieving stated goals. For every human in the organization to perform maximally, the manager's leadership style, communication patterns, supervisory effectiveness, and all other work-related variables must be provided adequately. These variables can make or mar the performance of teachers, students and other materials within the milieu of the school, depending on how much such administrative services are rendered. The school administrator is always expected to create a network where information dissemination, communication flow, and hierarchical chain of authority can be established and effectively managed. It is one thing to create networks within the school, as it is another thing to supervise the smooth running of these networks and ensuring that these networks run smoothly.

Supervisory effectiveness refers to the degree at which principals' show competence in their ability, attitudes, and skills to appropriately monitor, inspect, and evaluate the performance of his subordinates especially those within his or her jurisdiction, and to ensure that such subordinates perform their duties according to prescribe standards expected of them. For any school administrator to be considered as being supervisory competent, such characteristics as communication, conflict resolution, leadership, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, time and priority management, diversity and generational differences in the workplace and problem solving needs to be present (Brinich, 2016).

There is little doubt in passing out value judgment with respect to the supervisory effectiveness of most secondary school principals in Cross River State. Given the characteristics of a competent supervisor as highlighted above, not many principals in the area can boast of having met such criteria. Many teachers in Cross River State are rarely supervised during classroom instruction by their school principals. Thus, many principals only wait for external supervisors for supervision of teachers. They are also inactive in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, dairies, registers, time book, curricular and co-curricular activities in the school, and are often found to be nonchalant, negligent and lazy in the discharge of these duties. It is believed that many principals use their position to oppress their teachers, which has further contributed to teachers' ineffectiveness due to extinction. Against this background, the researcher considers poor networking techniques of secondary school managers as perhaps having a link to their own supervisory ineffectiveness. Administrative networking strategies refers to those techniques and approaches employed by administrators (principals) in integrating, and unifying human and materials resources in order that each individual or materials contribute its uniqueness to the growth and development of the organization (school). There are several networking strategies that secondary school administrators can adopt for the promotion of unity in schools. However, this study focused on only three of such strategies including effective communication, school-community relationship, and teachers' involvement in decision making.

According to Arop, Owan, and Ekpang (2018), effective communication is communication between two or more persons wherein the intended message is successfully delivered, received and understood. Asamu as cited in Arop, Owan, and Ekpang (2018), revealed that, effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship among parties in the organizations.

School community relationship is a two-way symbiotic arrangement through which the school and the community co-operate with each other for the realization of goals of the community and those of the school. It is the degree of understanding and goodwill, which exists between the school and the community (Okorie, Ememe & Egu 2009). School as a training centre helps develop pupils into efficient social beings and trains them to further educate the backward and unprogressive members of the society.

Teachers' involvement in decision making has been advanced for a variety of reason. Most often, participation is thought to enhance communication among teachers and administrators and improve the quality of educational decision making. It is also thought that participation in decision making may contribute to the quality of teachers work life (Algoush, 2010). Furthermore, because teachers have an opportunity to be involved in and to exert influence on decision-making processes, their participation is believed to increase their willingness to implement such policies in class, hence, to promote educational productivity (Griffin, cited in Somech, 2010).

The need for school principals to involve teachers in decision making cannot be over-stressed because teachers are also very integral in supporting the school to reach its objectives. It is based on this background that this study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between administrative networking strategies and principals' supervisory effectiveness in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Empirical studies

It will make sense to examine empirical studies in order to evaluate the methods, instruments, and findings of previous researches as they relate to the major aspects of this study. Some empirical literatures related to this study were reviewed and presented under the following the sub-headings:

Principals' effective communication and supervisory effectiveness

Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo (2015) examined the role of effective communication on organizational performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The sample size of 166 was determined using Taro Yamane technique and stratified random sampling. The findings from the study revealed that effective communication is the remedy to effective and efficient supervision and management performance of employees in an organization. The study recommended that; there is need for every organization to endeavour and make effective communication an essential or integral part of its management strategies and to map out strategic ways of storing information because it will also reduce loss and will help minimize organizational conflict, less misunderstanding and enhance information management.

Similarly, Fashiku (2016), investigated the influence of leaders' communication pattern on lecturers' job performance in Kwara State Colleges of Education, Nigeria. Five hundred respondents were sampled from the Colleges using proportional simple random sampling technique to select 200 academic staff and 300 students from the Colleges. The results of the investigation revealed that; a significant relationship existed between leaders' democratic communication pattern and lecturers' performance; leaders' autocratic pattern did not significantly relate to lecturers' performance; leaders' laissez faire pattern was not significantly related to lecturers' performance; leaders' communication pattern is significantly related to lecturers'

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performance; and a significant relationship exist between communication and effective supervision of lecturers' task performance.

School-community relationship and supervisory effectiveness

Uzoechina (2016) investigated the status and barriers to good school-community relationship in secondary schools in Anambra State. Guided by two research questions, the sample was 1,818 respondents (80 principals, 1678 teachers and 60 community rulers) selected through stratified random sampling. The findings revealed that the school-community relationships existing in secondary schools in Anambra state was poor. Fraud, principals'/teachers' attitudes, community apathy and illiteracy among community members were similarly identified by principals, teachers and community rulers as the barriers to good school-community relationship. It was recommended among other things that; principals and teachers should encourage good rapport between them and the community leaders. They should make more efforts to see community involvement in school affairs not as threat but as one way of enhancing its quality.

In a similar study, Ugwuanyi (2003) examined strategies for involving the community in secondary school administration in Nsukka education zone of Enugu State. Data were analysed using mean and t- test statistics. The findings of the study revealed that principals have a positive perception towards community participation in school administration with a grand mean of 3.62 which was above the criterion mean of 2.50. It showed that communities are actively involved in secondary school administration with a grand mean of 3.76 above the mean of 2.50. It was also revealed that strategies such as employing non-professional staff from the community, decentralization of administrative power to embrace communities, sharing of information and decision-making with communities, and involving the P. T. A. in school disciplinary committee can be used to involve communities in active administration of secondary schools.

Teachers' involvement in decision making and supervisory effectiveness

Dincer and Osman (2015) examined the relationship between school administrators' decision-making styles and teachers' job satisfaction levels. In total, 483 teachers and 167 administrators from primary schools in Sakarya Province, Turkey, were surveyed. The results showed that the job satisfaction levels of teachers and administrators who participated in the survey were high. It was concluded that administrators mostly use rational decision-making style, and they rarely use avoidant decision-making style. Regression analysis results showed that teacher job satisfaction levels were predicted significantly by administrators' decision-making styles. The following recommendations were made; in-service education about the decision-making process and different decision-making styles should be provided to school administrators responsible for increasing teachers' leadership programs and problem-solving skills training, should also be offered to school administrator candidates.

Newman (2012) examined the influence of teacher participation in decision-making on their morale in Zimbabwean schools. Data were collected from 5 secondary schools in the Gweru Education District of Zimbabwe. The population sample comprised of 5 secondary school heads and 20 secondary school teachers who were purposefully selected. The study established that insignificant teacher participation in critical school issues result in low staff morale and this

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culminate in stressful school governance. The study recommends teacher empowerment in decision-making.

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate administrative networking strategies and principals' supervisory effectiveness in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to examine the relationship between:

- i. principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school;
- ii. school community relationship strategies and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school;
- iii. teachers' involvement in decision making and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school.

Statement of the problem

The supervisory effectiveness of many secondary school principals in Cross River is questionable. There is little doubt in passing out value judgment with respect to the supervisory effectiveness of most secondary school principals. The reason results in part, due to the high level of teachers' ineffectiveness especially in rural secondary schools of the state. Many teachers are rarely supervised during classroom instruction by their school principals. Secondary school managers who were supposed to be active in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, dairies, registers, time book, curricular and co-curricular activities, are often found to be nonchalant, negligent and lazy in the discharge of these duties.

They rarely leave the comfort of their offices to monitor activities and other on-goings within the school environment. This issue of poor supervision by most secondary school principals have raised the eyebrows of many curious minds. Although efforts are regularly made by the government to improve the quality of supervision delivered to secondary schools through external supervision and invigilation, this has not yielded any corresponding effect on the supervisory effectiveness of most secondary school managers. Many principals are of the opinion that supervision is the sole duty of external invigilators hence, they sit back and wait, while their primary duty lag in perpetuity.

There is need for this menace to be put on hold given the need for the school to achieve set goals. On this note, the researcher considers administrative networking strategies as having a contributory role on secondary school principals' supervisory effectiveness. This is because, a manager with good working relationship with his personnel should be able to discharge duties freely. Where this is not achieved implies that the school will suffer and also witness ineffectiveness. Thus, the major problem of this study is, how does administrative networking strategies relate with principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school in Cross River State? An attempt to provide an answer to this question necessitated the conduct of this study.

Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between school-community relationship and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between teachers' involvement in decision making and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised 667 secondary school administrators distributed across 271 secondary schools in Cross River State. This population was made of 271 principals and 396 deputy principals. Census technique was adopted in selecting the entire population of 667 secondary school administrators. Three (3) teachers were randomly selected from each secondary school to assess the supervisory effectiveness of their administrators. Thus, a sample of 813 teachers were eventually selected for this purpose.

The instruments used for data collection were two set of questionnaires designed by the researchers and titled: Administrative Networking Strategies Questionnaire (ANSQ)", and "Principals' Supervisory Effectiveness Questionnaire (PSEQ)" respectively. The former was made of 30-items that were organized on a four-point Likert Scale, and completed by the administrators. While the latter comprised 40 items that were also arranged on a four-point Likert Scale, and was filled by secondary school teachers to assess principals' supervisory effectiveness. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach Alpha, and reliability estimates of .89 and .92 were obtained for instruments respectively. The data collected were coded and prepared on a person-by-item matrix using Microsoft Excel v365; and were further analysed using descriptive statistics. The null hypotheses were all tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the aid of SPSS v21.

RESULTS

Presentation/Interpretation of results

The results of this study were presented in line with the hypotheses of this study as follows:

Hypothesis One (Ho₁)

There is no significant relationship between principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school. The results from the analysis of data is presented on Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Summary of Pearson product moment correlation results of the relationship between principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school (N = 667)

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cal. r	Sig.
Effective Communication	25.240	9.129	1	
Supervision of teachers' notes	24.88	9.126	.115**	.003
Supervision of teachers' instructional delivery	25.29	8.821	.185**	.000
Supervision of students' records	24.95	9.014	.168**	.000
Supervision of non-academic activities	25.12	8.831	.168**	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; df = 665

The results presented in Table 1 indicates that the p-values .003, .000, .000, .000, for supervision of teachers' notes, supervision of teachers' instructional delivery, supervision of students' records and supervision of non-academic activities respectively, are all less than .05 level of significance at 665 degrees of freedom. With these results, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that; there is a significant relationship between principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school.

Hypothesis Two (H_0)

There is no significant relationship between school-community relationship and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school. The results from the analysis of data using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis is presented on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Results showing school-community relationship and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school (N = 667)

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cal. r	Sig.
School-community relationship	25.28	9.103	1	
Supervision of teachers' notes	24.88	9.126	.221**	.000
Supervision of teachers' instructional delivery	25.29	8.821	.219**	.000
Supervision of students' records	24.95	9.014	.238**	.000
Supervision of non-academic activities	25.12	8.831	.211**	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; df = 665

The results of the relationship as presented in Table 2 above, disclosed that the p-values for supervision of teachers' notes, supervision of teachers' instructional delivery, supervision of

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students' records and supervision of non-academic activities respectively, are all less than .05 level of significance (i.e. .000, .000, .000, .000 < .05 alpha level) at 665 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis which states that; there is a significant relationship between school-community relationship and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school was upheld.

Hypothesis Three (H_03)

There is no significant relationship between teachers' involvement in decision making and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school. The results from the analysis of data using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis is presented on Table 3.

TABLE 3

Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Results of the relationship between teachers' involvement in decision making and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school (N = 667)

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cal. r	Sig.
Teachers' involvement in decision-making	25.14	9.212	1	
Supervision of teachers' notes	24.88	9.126	.239**	.000
Supervision of teachers' instructional delivery	25.29	8.821	.202**	.000
Supervision of students' records	24.95	9.014	.259**	.000
Supervision of non-academic activities	25.12	8.831	.252**	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; df = 665

From the results presented in Table 3, it was discovered that the p-values .000, .000, .000, and .000 for supervision of teachers' notes, supervision of teachers' instructional delivery, supervision of students' records and supervision of non-academic activities respectively, are all less than .05 level of significance at 665 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that; there is a significant relationship between teachers' involvement in decision making and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results presented in Table 1 established that; there is a significant relationship between principals' effective communication and their supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school. This finding supports the finding of Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo (2015) which revealed that effective communication is the remedy to effective and efficient supervision and management performance of employees in an organization. The study recommends that there is need for every organization to endeavour and make effective communication an essential integral part of its management strategies and map out strategic ways of storing information because it will

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also reduce loss of essential information and it will help to minimize organizational conflict, less misunderstanding and enhance information management. This finding implies however that, managers who demonstrate communication effectiveness tends to be more competent in supervising academic and non-academic activities of both staff and students in the school than their counterparts who do not.

The results of this study as presented in Table 2, disclosed that there is a significant relationship between school-community relationship and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school was upheld. This means that when secondary school principals relate well with their host communities through their leaders, they tend to create an environment of mutual understanding. This will create a platform for active participation by both parties in the activities of others. Conversely, a poor relationship between the school and the community will hinder the growth and flow of activities in the school. In line with this, Uzoechina (2016) revealed that the school-community relationships existing in secondary schools in Anambra state was poor. Fraud, principals/teachers' attitudes, community apathy and illiteracy among community members were similarly identified by principals, teachers and community rulers as the barriers to good school-community relationship. However, Ugwuanyi (2003) revealed that strategies such as employing nonprofessional staff from the community, decentralization of administrative power to embrace communities, sharing of information and decision making with communities, and involving the P. T. A. in school disciplinary committee can be used to involve communities in active administration of secondary schools.

It was also established through the findings of this study from the third hypothesis that; there is a significant relationship between teachers' involvement in decision making and principals' supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' notes of lesson, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records, and non-academic activities of the school. This finding corroborates the findings of Dincer and Osman (2015) whose results showed that teacher job satisfaction levels were predicted significantly by administrators' decision-making styles. The following recommendations were made; In-service education about the decision-making process and different decision-making styles should be provided to school administrators responsible for increasing teachers and; leadership programs, and problem-solving skills training, should be offered to school administrator candidates. Newman (2012) also recommended teacher empowerment in decision-making.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded generally that; administrative networking strategies has significant relationship with secondary school principals' supervisory effectiveness in Cross River State. Thus, school managers who utilized such administrative networking strategies as effective communication, school-community relationship, and involving teachers in decision-making displayed better supervisory effectiveness in assessing teachers' note, teachers' instructional delivery, students' records and non-academic activities.

Recommendations

It was recommended based on the findings of the study that:

- i. Secondary school principals should endeavour to communicate relevant ideas, messages, and information to both teaching and non-academic staff of the school; and ensure that appropriate feedback mechanisms are provided based on such information.
- ii. The principal and community leaders should maintain a symbiotic (two-way) relationship where there is cooperation between both parties, and the willingness to allow others utilize resources and facilities when the need arises.
- iii. Principals should also make sure that teachers are involved actively in making certain decisions for the school. Duties should also be delegated to every staff based on their specialisation and/or competence.

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