

Management Strategies adopted by Public and Private Secondary School Principals for Quality Teaching and Learning in Secondary schools in Enugu State.

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Abstract

This study compared principals' management strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. From a population of 25,579 a sample of 1,278 participants made up of 860 private and 418 public secondary schools teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. A questionnaire titled "Principals' Management Strategies Questionnaire (PMSQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two from Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation) all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Internal consistency coefficients of 0.82, 0.86 and 0.81 and 0.84 were obtained for the three sections of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha method. An overall reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained for the entire questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean for the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses. The p-value was used to determine the significance of difference at 0.05 significant level. The result among others revealed that both public and private secondary school principals adopt instructional leadership strategies, and decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that Private secondary school principals in Enugu State should be encouraged through workshops and seminars to emulate public secondary schools in adoption of instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning. This will help them inculcate in teachers the needed skills, capacities and competences that will help them achieve instructional effectiveness.

Key words: Management, Management Strategies, Quality Teaching and Learning.

Introduction

The aim of any formal education, such as the primary, secondary and tertiary education in Nigeria, is to effect changes in children's behaviour by exposing them to relevant ways of learning and to acquire skills that will equip them for life. Secondary education, which is the focus of this study, establishes a critical link between primary and tertiary education and as such prepares the learners for higher studies. Secondary education equally provides opportunities for pupils to acquire additional knowledge, skills and traits beyond what is offered at primary school level.

Secondary schools in Nigeria are categorized as either public or private. According to Ugwu (2023), public secondary schools are post-primary institutions of learning established, controlled and financed by the government. Public secondary schools are day or boarding schools owned either by the federal or state governments, while private secondary schools are schools owned by the private sector as sole proprietors or joint partnership, such as individuals, churches and voluntary organizations. Both public and private secondary schools share similarities in using the same curriculum in teaching, although the main differences between a private and public school is how they are funded, the school size and class size. Private schools are not government funded and rely on other means of funding, such as endowments and donations. This means that tuition can be higher for a private school than a public one. Majority of the private secondary schools have limited number of students' in the school and in the classrooms (Iwamoto in Odoh, 2021). Even at the expensive nature of private secondary schools, a lot of parents still prefer to send their children and wards to private schools because they feel that private

school owners maintain quality education and high standards more than the public secondary schools.

At the head of every secondary school is a Principal whose role essentially is to cater for the character formation and intellectual development of the students. The principal is the chief executive who performs necessary leadership functions for the achievement of school goals. As the chief executive of the school, the principal owes it a duty to modify the attitude of staff and students and motivate them to put in their best towards achieving educational goals. This he does using various management strategies to ensure that consistent progress is made towards the achievement of quality teaching and learning.

Management strategies according to Ezeugbo and Emere (2017), involve the organization and utilization of human and material resources for the achievement of educational goals. Management strategies are set of guiding principles and management styles adopted by principals to improve competitiveness and school performances through the utilization of available resources. Izuehie (2024), noted that principals' managerial strategies could be assessed using the dimensions of their activities such as communication, good interpersonal relationships, discipline, use of resources, conflict resolution, integrity, motivating, delegating, building image, welfare management, availability for consultation, supervision and innovation in an organization. This study focused on the following management strategies: instructional leadership, decision making and staff development. The reason for choosing these three strategies is due to their importance in influencing quality teaching and learning in the school.

Instructional leadership is associated with measures that a principal takes or delegates to others to enhance students' learning. It involves the decisions, strategies and tactics which principals employ to ensure instructional effectiveness in the classroom. In this respect, the principal should provide direction, resources and support to both the educators and the learners (Van Deventer and Kruger, 2013). It is further applicable to best practices directed towards achieving schools' mission and objectives, managing the instructions and promoting positive school learning climate which the school leadership must take into cognizance. According to Bendikson, Robison and Hattie in Ezeugbor and Emere (2017), principals' instructional leadership practices can be direct (focused on improving teaching) or indirect (focused on creating the conditions for optimal teaching and learning). Direct instructional leadership is focused on the quality of teacher practice itself, whereas indirect instructional leadership is particularly important for secondary school principals because much of the direct leadership is carried out by deputies and heads of departments.

Decision-making on the other hand can be seen as the process of selecting the most preferred and workable action among other options or alternative courses of action available, either towards solving problems or the achievement of an objective (Ezuehie, 2024). Decision-making is a sequential process ending in a single decision or series of decisions (choices) which stimulate or cause some actions. Teachers perform at utmost level in an enabling environment where the principal possesses a high level of imagination, initiative, vision, and techniques in making a decision.

Apart from decision making, the principals should also ensure continuous improvement in the knowledge and skills of his staff through staff development. According to Nwokeocha (2014), staff development is the process of preparing teachers to be fit and proper for effective discharge of their duties in the school system. Teachers' professional development encompasses the pre-service and in-service dimensions of teachers' preparation. The in-service dimension entails on-the-job training (workshops, seminars, conferences, and holiday programmes) and studies away from work in the form of trainings leading to higher academic qualifications. Teachers' professional development according to Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017), will enable students to develop mastery of challenging content, problem-solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction which can lead to teacher effectiveness. To ensure that teachers possess such skills and technological tools, principals must engage in strategies that support staff professional training and development such as mentoring. Effective staff development can enhance quality teaching and learning in the school.

Quality teaching can be seen as that which leads to improved students' achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success (Coe, Aloisi, Higgs and Elliot, in Okeke 2020). Quality teaching and learning is the ability of the teacher and the students to be in conformity with the education laws and policies which will at the end make the product of a school (students) to render useful services to the society and themselves. It can also be seen as the process of ensuring that the degree of excellence specified is achieved.

Quality teaching and learning will be greatly enhanced if public and private secondary school principals employ various management strategies in the administration of secondary education in Nigeria and indeed Enugu State. However, the situation in some public and private secondary schools in Enugu State casts a shadow of doubt as to whether principals actually adopt management strategies in the administration of secondary schools in the State. This is because principals of public secondary schools appear to be grappling with management challenges such as poor learning environment, lack of teamwork, poor instructional supervision as well as poor staff development (Mbanefo 2023). On the other hand, the National Center for Education Statistics, NCES (2017), reports that private schools are better than public schools in a number of policy areas such as discipline, effective communication, decision making and students' health and welfare services. Ugwu (2023), however argued that principals in public secondary schools seem to be more experienced and knowledgeable in terms of discipline, instructional supervision and staff development when compared with their counterparts in private schools.

More so, the prevalence of several indicators of indiscipline cutting across public and private schools in Enugu State such as lateness to school, bullying, insolence, failure to carry out assignments, insubordination, aggression, damage to school facilities is altogether worrisome. These situations therefore made it imperative to comparatively analyze public and private secondary school principals' management strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Principals of secondary schools whether private or public are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations and communication experts, facility managers as well as guardians of various legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives. However, the situation in some public and private secondary schools in Enugu State casts a shadow of doubt as to whether principals are actually living up to these expectations.

Some public secondary schools in Enugu State appear to be grappling with management challenges such as poor learning environment, lack of teamwork, ineffective communication, persistent conflicts as well as poor instructional supervision. The surge in the number of private secondary schools in the State some of which are yet to secure approval from government and the seeming preference for private schools by parents and guardians is a testament that all may not be well with public schools in the State. Private schools appear better than public schools in a number of policy areas such as discipline, effective communication, decision making and students' health and welfare services. On the contrary, some researchers have argued that the whelming interest of private schools in profit making negatively affects the quality of teachers they employ, provision of infrastructure, students' discipline, staff development and motivation among other areas. This study therefore compared public and private secondary school principals' management strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

This study compared public and private secondary school principals' management strategies for quality teaching and learning in Enugu State Nigeria. Specifically, this study compared:

1. public and private secondary school principals' instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. public and private secondary school principals' decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State.
3. public and private secondary school principals' staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the public and private secondary school principals' instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. What are the public and private secondary school principals' decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State?

3. What are the public and private secondary school principals' staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on their principals' instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on their principals' decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on their principals' staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?

Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 25,579 teachers, a sample of 1,278 consisting 860 private and 418 public secondary school teachers was drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. A researchers' developed instrument titled Principals' Management Strategies Questionnaire (PMSQ) which was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.82, 0.86 and 0.81 for the four parts of the PMSQ. The instrument was considered reliable in line with Nworgu (2015), who stated that if the co-efficient obtained for an instrument is up to 0.70 and above, the instrument should be considered good enough to be used for a study. The direct administration and retrieval method was used for data collection. A total of 1,278 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 1,022 representing 80% were retrieved and was used for data analysis. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, a mean rating of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agree while mean rating of less than 2.50 was interpreted as disagree. The null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value associated with the t-cal was less than 0.05 whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where the p-value was greater than 0.05.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Principals' Instructional Leadership Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Public and Private Secondary schools in Enugu State

The Principal of my school:	Public (n=415)			Private (n=607)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Observes teaching to assess the teaching process in the school.	3.28	.82	Agree	3.13	.90	Agree
2. Checks to see if curriculum content is covered or not.	3.27	.76	Agree	2.96	.88	Agree
3. Monitors to see that the school's curricular objectives are achieved.	3.20	.82	Agree	3.12	.80	Agree
4. Meets with subject teachers to discuss student progress.	3.31	.64	Agree	3.13	.74	Agree
5. Encourages teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	3.18	.73	Agree	3.04	.78	Agree
6. Displays awareness and knowledge of recent research about instructional leadership.	2.86	.83	Agree	2.81	.80	Agree

7. Creates professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	3.04	.80	Agree	2.88	.81	Agree
8. Contacts parents and guardians to communicate improved or exemplary student performance.	2.93	.65	Agree	2.82	.72	Agree
9. Supports teachers actively in their recognition and reward of students' contributions to the class.	2.79	.81	Agree	2.74	.82	Agree

The result in Table 1 shows the mean ratings of respondents on principals' instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in public and private secondary schools Enugu State. The mean rating shows that teachers in public and private schools agreed that their principals adopt all the nine listed instructional leadership strategies in their schools for quality teaching and learning. However, the mean ratings for public school principals for all the nine items were greater than that of their counterparts in private schools on instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning. The mean for public secondary school principals ranged from 2.79 to 3.31 while that of private school principals ranged from 2.74 to 3.13.

Table 2: Mean Ratings on Principals' Decision Making Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State

	Public (n=415)			Private (n=607)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
10. Consults teachers before decisions are made in the school.	3.05	.66	Agree	2.87	.74	Agree
11. Takes decisions about the school all by himself.	3.10	.58	Agree	3.08	.65	Agree
12. Ensures that everyone concerned in any issue is given fair hearing before final decisions are taken.	3.12	.54	Agree	3.04	.61	Agree
13. Takes job decisions based on accurate and complete information.	3.20	.64	Agree	3.17	.71	Agree
14. Explains reasons for making certain decisions to all concerned.	3.19	.70	Agree	3.10	.73	Agree
15. Does not apply all job related decisions consistently to all affected teachers.	3.09	.82	Agree	2.95	.84	Agree
16. Is open minded when taking decisions concerning the school.	2.91	.73	Agree	2.85	.78	Agree
17. Allows staff to participate in decision making in the school.	2.91	.80	Agree	2.91	.78	Agree
18. Considers the moral aspect of available alternatives in finding solution to problems.	3.10	.76	Agree	3.02	.76	Agree

Analysis displayed in Table 2, the respondents' mean rating on decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in public and private secondary schools Enugu State. The analysis shows that principals of public and private secondary schools in Enugu State adopt all the nine listed decision making strategies in their schools for quality teaching and learning. The mean ratings however show that principals of public schools were rated slightly higher than their private school counterparts in eight of the nine items (item, 10-16 and item 18) while both public and private secondary school principals were rated the same in the remaining item (item 17). The mean for public secondary school principals ranged from 2.91 to 3.20 while that of private school principals ranged from 2.87 to 3.10.

Table 3: Mean Ratings on Principals' Staff Development Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State

	Public (n=415)			Private (n=607)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
19. Encourages staff attendance to workshop/conferences for effective teaching	3.27	.67	Agree	3.20	.70	Agree

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20. Organizes workshops on matters of school and classroom instruction for effective teaching	3.23	.66	Agree	3.18	.64	Agree
21. Created an on-line group where teachers learn for effective teaching	3.20	.66	Agree	3.10	.70	Agree
22. Sometimes offers to help pay for workshop for effective teaching	3.03	.71	Agree	3.00	.73	Agree
23. Ensures that teachers practice what they learnt from workshop/conference for effective teaching	3.13	.66	Agree	3.06	.67	Agree
24. Recommends teachers that bring relevant feedbacks for effective teaching	3.11	.62	Agree	3.06	.66	Agree
25. Puts in place explicit school-based process for using those learning in classrooms for effective teaching.	3.01	.78	Agree	2.96	.78	Agree
26. Recognizes the need to support teachers and help to develop teachers professionally through conferences for effective teaching	3.04	.74	Agree	2.99	.80	Agree
27. Encourages teachers inputs in scheduling workshops for effective teaching	3.01	.73	Agree	2.93	.78	Agree
28. Seeks out information in order to help teachers grow and improve as professionals for effective teaching	3.23	.81	Agree	3.09	.80	Agree

The result in Table 3 shows the mean ratings of respondents on principals' staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in public and private secondary schools Enugu State. The mean rating shows that teachers in public and private schools agreed that their principals adopt all the 10 listed staff development strategies in their schools for quality teaching and learning. However, the mean ratings for public school principals for all the nine items were greater than that of their counterparts in private schools on staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning. The mean for public secondary school principals ranged from 3.01 to 3.27 while that of private school principals ranged from 2.93 to 3.20.

Table 4: t-test Comparison of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on Their Principals' Instructional Leadership Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Public	415	3.10	.56	1020	4.28	.00	Sig
Private	607	2.96	.48				

The results in Table 4 shows that the mean score for public secondary school teachers ($M=3.10$, $SD=.56$) was significantly greater than that of those in private schools ($M=2.96$, $SD=.48$); $t(1020)=4.28$, $p=.00$. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on their principals' instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State was therefore rejected.

Table 5: t-test Comparison of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on Their Principals' Decision Making Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Public	415	3.07	.58	1020	2.09	.03	Sig
Private	607	3.00	.53				

Table 5 shows that the mean score for public secondary school teachers ($M=3.07$, $SD=.58$) was significantly greater than that of those in private schools ($M=3.000$, $SD=.593$; $t(1020)=2.09$, $p=.03$). The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on their principals' decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State was therefore rejected.

Table 6: t-test Comparison of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on Their Principals' Staff Development Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Public	415	3.11	.50	1020	1.29	.19	Not-Sig
Private	607	3.07	.55				

As shown in Table 6, the mean score for public secondary school teachers ($M=3.11$, $SD=.50$) was not significantly greater than that of those in private schools ($M=3.07$, $SD=.55$; $t(1020)=1.29$, $p=.00$). The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on their principals' staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State was therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Public and Private Secondary School Principals' Instructional Leadership Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Findings of the study showed that both public and private secondary school principals adopt instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State. The mean for public secondary school principals ranged from 2.79 to 3.31 while that of private school principals ranged from 2.74 to 3.13 indicating that public secondary school principals were rated higher than their private school counterpart in instructional leadership. This finding is not consistent with Duze (2012) who found that instructional leadership strategies adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools in Anambra State showed no significant differences. This difference in finding between Duze (2012) and the present study may be as a result of difference in time frame and location. The study by Duze was carried out in 2012 in Anambra State whereas the present study was carried out in 2024 in Enugu State.

The finding of the hypothesis revealed there was a significant difference between public and private secondary school principals' instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning in Enugu State. This finding contradicts Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017) whose finding revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on principals' application of time management strategies for secondary school effectiveness in secondary schools in Oyo State.

Public and private secondary school principals' decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State

This study found that public and private secondary school principals adopt decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State. The mean for public secondary school principals ranged from 2.91 to 3.20 while that of private school principals ranged from 2.87 to 3.10. This indicates that public secondary school principals were rated higher than their private school counterpart in adoption of decision making strategies. This finding doesn't appear surprising because most principals in public schools have great experiences in terms of making decision in the school. Unlike their private school counterparts who in most cases have their hands tied and can only act on directives from the owners. The finding of this study is consistent with that of Bernard (2012) who found that principals of public schools are aware of the importance of effective decision making in achieving administrative effectiveness in the school. This finding corroborates Duze (2011) who found that principals in their bid to achieve teachers' commitment and performance adopt effective decision making strategies.

Public and Private Secondary School Principals' Staff Development Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

The finding of the study revealed that public and private secondary school principals adopt staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State. The mean ratings for public secondary school principals ranged from 3.01 to 3.27 while that of private school principals ranged from 2.93 to 3.20 indicating that public secondary school principals were rated higher than their private counterpart in staff development. This finding was not a surprise given the efforts the state government is making towards teachers' development in the state.

The finding of this study is consistent with that of other scholars such as Ngerem and Okonkwo (2017) and Oleforo, Ikpe and Bassey (2015) who found that teachers have more opportunity for in-service training in public owned schools. The finding of the study also conforms with Ayeni (2011) as well as Ezeugbor, Onyali and Okoye (2018) who evidenced that public school principals organize workshops to enlighten teachers about innovations on teaching methodologies and encourage teachers to attend conferences in order to up-date their knowledge.

The findings of the hypothesis indicated no significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on their principals' staff development strategies for quality teaching and learning in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that private schools perform better than their public school counterpart in instructional supervision. Whereas public secondary school principals perform better than their private school counterpart in decision making and staff development.

Recommendations

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

1. Private secondary school principals in Enugu State should be encouraged through workshops and seminars to emulate public secondary schools in adoption of instructional leadership strategies for quality teaching and learning. This will help them inculcate in teachers the needed skills, capacities and competences that will help them achieve instructional effectiveness.
2. Private secondary school principals should be advised to emulate their colleagues in public secondary schools in adopting decision making strategies for quality teaching and learning.
3. The State Education Management Board should organize refresher courses or training programs in form of seminars and workshops for public secondary school principals. This will help improve their quality of instructional supervision so they can give teachers professional guidance and assistance that will improve the quality of their instructional delivery.
4. Enugu State Post Primary School Management Board should mandate private secondary school owner and their principals to always make provisions for constant development of their staff. This will help in improving the quality of their teachers and get them even more prepared to effectively discharge their duties

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