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PRINCIPALS' MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE AS PREDICTOR OF ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated principals' managerial competence as a predictor of organisational performance in Anambra State. Seven research questions guided the study and seven null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 267 principals in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The 267 principals were used as the sample of the study due to the manageable size of the population. A questionnaire titled "Principals' Managerial Competence on Organisational Performance Questionnaire (PMCOPQ)" was used for data collection. The instruments were face validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha method was used for a test of internal consistencies of the instruments which yielded coefficient value of 0.82, 0.76, 0.83, 0.65, 0.56, 0.57 and 0.73 respectively. Simple regression was used to answer research questions 1-7 and test hypotheses 1-7. The findings of the study revealed among others that principals' strategic planning competence, supervision competence, motivation competence, communication competence, personnel management, financial resource management and budget implementation are strong and significant predictors of organisational performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the Ministry of education in collaboration with Post Primary Schools Service Commission should organize training programmes like workshops, seminars, conferences, and inservice training for principals so that they can be educated and acquainted with the needs and procedures for adequate planning strategies in secondary schools and its implementation for the purpose of improving school performance. It was also recommended that Post Primary School Service Commission should pay periodic visits to schools to monitor and offer suggestions to improve supervisory skills of principals to bring improvement on the job commitment of teachers.

Keywords: Principal, managerial, competence, organisational performance, strategic planning, personnel management, financial management.

Introduction

Education is indispensable for nation-building, as it empowers citizens, ensures economic growth, enhances innovation and technological advancement. It also promotes social cohesion and civic engagement; it also fosters critical thinking and creativity, which will help bring solutions to complex national challenges. This is because human resources which play a significant role in nation-building are improved, enhanced, and empowered with the necessary skills to contribute to the development of the nation. Egboka and Olisah (2020) stressed that it is also a crucial medium for acquiring essential knowledge and skills that promote useful living and enable individuals contribute to the development of the society. Education remains the crucial instrument for furnishing individuals with skills for self-reliance, inculcating right values and morals in them for harmonious co-existence with other members of the society (Egboka and Onyeagba, 2024). This can be achieved through proper educational management.

A school manager who is the principal is one of the most important components for improving the quality of education. This is because a principal is responsible for the oversight and management of the teaching and learning process in the school. According to Mbon and Offem (2024), principal is the chief executive officer who carries out leadership responsibilities by coordinating curricular, co-curricular activities and engages in general administration of a secondary school. Principal is the administrator vested with the authority to control the daily operations of a secondary school. Arinze, Egboka and Nwosu (2024) described a principal as the administrator who leads, guides and directs the efforts of others towards the attainment of predetermined goals. This definition show that the principal is responsible for the effective management of the school, achievement of the students and the development of the society. The secondary school principal must possess managerial competencies to effectively manage the school.

Several scholars have defined managerial competence. Eziuzo, Ogbuanya and Eziamaka (2024) described managerial competences as the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for executing administrative tasks and activities. According to Uwaleke, Iyala and Yakubu (2021) managerial competencies are the skills of the principals that help him to effectively employ the various abilities in the management of human and material resources to achieve the stated goals in the school system. This means that the capabilities and knowledge needed to carry out management activities and achieve the goals and objectives of an organisation are thus referred to as managerial competencies. Ukozor and Edet (2024) defined managerial competences as the professional skills that could be applied by school principals to organise, cordinate , control and administer school human and material resources to realise the school's objectives. Similarly, Odu-Dikoro (2023) defined managerial competence as the abilities of principals to skillfully and successfully plan, supervise, organise, cordinate, control, make decisions and initiate actions that would aid and encourage teachers to achieve school goals and objectives. According to Ogbo, Ibeh and Toh (2025) principals' managerial competency is

the skill required for effective and efficient planning, staffing, organizing, coordinating, controlling and decision-making. Principals' managerial competence refers to the knowledge and capabilities required of a school principal to effectively and efficiently plan, control, cordinate, supervise, make decisions and take actions to achieve the set goals and objectives of the school. Principals' Managerial Competence have several components.

Some scholars have highlighted several components of managerial competencies. Obi, Ogbunude and Chukwudolue (2022) highlighted managerial competencies to include communication competence, supervisory competence, disciplinary competence and motivational competence. Similarly, Eziuzo, Ogbuanya and Eziamaka (2024) highlighted managerial competences to include: supervisory competence, communication competence, decision-making competence, planning competence, financial management competence and interpersonal relationships competence. Principals must be fully equipped with these managerial competences in order to effectively direct, control and coordinate the activities in the school to achieve the desired results. Managerial Competence of principals is needed to effectively manage and maximise the full potentials of human, material and financial resources in the school. This study focused on principals' strategic planning competence, personnel management, and financial resource management as predictors of organisational performance. For a successful performance, strategic planning is required in every organisation, the school not excluded.

Strategic planning competence is an indispensable managerial competence needed to develop and implement strategies to achieve organisational goals and objectives. Strategic planning according to Ngurukwem and Ugbai (2025) is the act of developing visions, deciding programmes, mapping out strategies and marshalling the available resources to attain set goals. Nwafor and Egboka (2020) noted that strategic planning addresses who, where, when and how of reaching desired goals and objectives. Anukaenyi and Sonni (2024) contributed that a strategic plan component at a minimum should generally include the following sections a vision statement, a mission statement, an outline of goals, objectives and activities, an assessment of current resources, and a strategic analysis. The principals' strategic plan components must be a systematic process that defines the mission and vision statements, outlining goals, objectives and activities to be carried out, and assessment of the available resources and a strategic analysis. Anukaenyi and Ene (2024) pointed out that strategic planning measures are processes which comprise definition of the goals, a valuation of the resources available for meeting the goals and developing strategies that are intended to achieve the goals. A school principal must possess strategic planning competence because it would help him to make decisions and choices that will lead to the growth and development of the school. Also, the school principal must plan effective personnel management strategies to improve learning outcome.

Personnel management is very crucial in every organisation. Difoni, Obi and Obona (2024) see personnel management practices

as the strategies and actions implemented by educational administrators to effectively manage staff and enhance their performance. Ikediugwu and Obiora (2021) see personnel management as the administrative task of mobilizing, controlling and getting things through the workforce of an organization. Onurah and Egbosi (2020) defined personnel management as an effective mobilization of human resources through appropriate recruitment, selection, training and placement to achieve the organization's set goals and objectives. It is the act of influencing the activities of workers to create favourable working conditions to ensure the success of an organization. Mbon and Okoi (2019) noted that personnel management practices include admission exercise, orientation, accommodation, medical services, library services, students; academic records, guidance and counseling, financial services, security services, co-curricular activities among others. The principal is responsible for personnel management in order to ensure effective teaching and learning which will lead to achieving the school goals and objectives. To effectively manage personnel, financial resources are important.

Financial management is key to the effective and successful management of school. Effective financial management ensures that all financial regulations and procedures are complied with; all financial transactions are recorded accurately; adequate controls are in place to ensure that expenditures do not exceed income; and only authorized expenditures are incurred (Ezeaku and Joseph 2025). Alavbare (2023) opted that school's financial management includes financial planning, cash regulating, cash budgeting, cash control, and cash auditing. Financial management helps to prevent wastage of resources and gives priority to essential needs in the organisation leading to it's success and efficient performance. According to Ejom, Nwoye and Odu (2025) effective financial management strategies are essential for ensuring that secondary schools operate efficiently, with adequate resources to enhance teaching, learning, and infrastructure. Kirui, Wamukuru, and Fedha (2022) emphasize that a school's financial management practice significantly influence its overall effectiveness. The efficient management of financial resources is crucial to the success of any school plans, programmes and goals which in turn enhances overall academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

The secondary school is essential as it lays the foundation for further academic endeavour, career training and development. To achieve the best possible educational results, educational managers must effectively manage people, material, and financial resources. It is observed that the competencies of school managers plays a significant role in shaping the quality of education. Nevertheless, some secondary school face a lot of challenges including incomplete syllabus coverage, teacher tardiness, conflicts, student truancy, and insufficient facilities and funding. These issues may result from principals' deficient managerial competence, hindering the necessary organisational changes required for improvement. With this in mind, this study aims to examine principals' managerial competence as a predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state with a view of

identifying strategies for improving school management and ultimately, student performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of principals' strategic planning competence on organisational performance in Anambra state?
2. What is the predictive value of principals' personnel management on organisational performance in Anambra state?
3. What is the predictive value of principals' financial management on organisational performance in Anambra state?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance.

1. Principals' strategic planning competence does not significantly predict organisational performance in Anambra state.
2. Principals' personnel management does not significantly predict organisational performance in Anambra state.
3. Principals' financial management does not significantly predict organisational performance in Anambra state.

Methods

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 267 principals in all the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. No sample was determined from the population due to the manageable size of the population. A questionnaire titled "Principals' Managerial Competence on Organisational Performance Questionnaire (PMCOPQ)" was used for data collection. These instruments were validated by three experts and tested for reliability. Cronbach alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded reliability indices of 0.82, 0.76, 0.83, 0.65, 0.56, 0.57 and 0.73 respectively. Simple regression using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to answer the research questions and to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the predictive value of principals' strategic planning competence on organisational performance in Anambra state?

Table 1: The summary of simple regression on principals' strategic planning competence as predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Remark
Strategic Planning Competence	. 785	.617	.613	.22235	Strong

Result in Table 1 revealed that the correlation coefficient of simple regression analysis between principals' strategic planning competence and organisational performance is 0.785 with a coefficient determination of 0.617. This shows that 61.7% change in organisational performance could be explained by principals' strategic planning competence. The regression coefficient R of 0.785 indicate that principals' strategic planning competence is a strong predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Hypothesis 1: Principals' strategic planning competence is not a significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Table 2: The Summary of simple regression on principals' strategic planning competence as predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Predicator	R	R Square	F	P-value	Remark
Strategic Planning Competence	. 785	.617	159.343	.000	Significant

As shown in Table 2, the simple regression coefficient of R is 0.785, while the R Square is 0.617 showing that principals' strategic planning competence can account for 61.7% variation on organisational performance. The F(1,99)= 159.343 and the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, principals' strategic planning competence is a significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of principals' personnel management on organisational performance in Anambra state?

Table 3: The summary of simple regression on principals' personnel management as predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of Estimate	Remark
Personnel Management	. 751	. 565	. 560	.23703	Strong

Result in Table 3 revealed that the correlation coefficient of simple regression analysis between principals' personnel management and organisational performance is 0.751 with

a coefficient determination of 0.565. This shows that 56.5% change in organisational performance could be explained by principals' personnel management. The regression coefficient R of 0.751 indicate that principals' personnel management is a strong predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Hypothesis 2: Principal' personnel management is not a significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Table 4: The Summary of simple regression on principals' personnel management as predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Predicator	R	R-Square	F	P-value	Remark
Personnel Management	. 751	. 565	128.327	.000	Significant

As shown in Table 4, the simple regression coefficient of R is 0.751, while the R Square is 0.565 showing that principals' personnel management can account for 56.5% variation on organisational performance. The F(1,99)= 128.327 and the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, principals' personnel management is a significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Research Question 3: What is the predictive value of principals' financial management on organisational performance in Anambra state?

Table 5: The summary of simple regression on principals' financial management as predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of Estimate	Remark
Financial Management	. 658	. 433	. 428	. 27036	Moderate

Result in Table 5 revealed that the correlation coefficient of simple regression analysis between principals' financial management and organisational performance is 0.658 with a coefficient determination of 0.433. This shows that 43.3% change in organisational performance could be explained by principals' financial management. The regression coefficient R of 0.658 indicate that principals' personnel management is a moderate predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Hypothesis 5: Principal' financial management is not a significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Table 6: The Summary of simple regression on principals' financial management as predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Predicator	R	R-Square	F	P-value	Remark
Financial Management	. 658	. 433	75.733	.000	Significant

As shown in Table 6, the simple regression coefficient of R is 0.658, while the R Square is 0.433 showing that principals' financial management can account for 43.3% variation on organisational performance. The F (1,99) = 75.733 and the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, principals' financial management is a significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that there is a strong positive correlation between principals' strategic planning and organisational performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study by Ngurukwem and Ugbai (2025) revealed that principals' apply strategic planning measures for effective teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ogoja Educational Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. This agreed with the finding of Nwafor and Egboka (2020) who indicated that principals apply strategic planning practices in secondary schools. The similarity in time span could account for the agreement between the findings. This agreed with the findings of Alubisia (2022) which confirmed that practices of strategic planning are indispensable in public secondary school, and therefore need to be undertaken and enhanced. Alubisia (2022) also confirmed that schools which plan thoroughly, engage stakeholders, and execute strategically tend to perform better in exams, extracurriculars, and overall school culture. However, when planning lacks depth or commitment, it has little effect. This study has established that principals' strategic planning competence plays a pivotal role in enhancing the organizational performance of public secondary schools. Strategic planning also helps in attracting and retaining best students to favourably compete with those of other schools; enhancement of best school culture and forges towards realization of the school mission and therefore improve stakeholders' satisfaction among others. The similarities in the findings can be attributed to their shared focus on principals' strategic planning practices, the use of performance metrics such as student outcomes and resource management, and the common educational challenges faced in public secondary schools.

The findings of this study also revealed a strong and significant correlation between principals' personnel management and the organisational performance of public secondary schools in Anambra state. This suggests that principals who effectively recruit, develop, motivate, and manage staff foster a conducive environment for teaching and learning, thereby enhancing overall institutional outcomes. This is in line with Amobi, Onye and Anyaogu (2024) who examined principals' personnel management practices in the administration of public and

private secondary schools in Abia State. Their findings revealed that principals actively engage in essential personnel management functions, particularly in the management of students as a critical human resource in schools. The study underscores the importance of effective personnel management competence by principals in ensuring orderly school administration and promoting effective educational outcomes. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the geographical location and participants of the study. This agreed with the findings of Difoni, Obi and Obona (2024) which showed that principals' personnel management practices particularly staff development and compensation management had a statistically significant positive relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that when principals more actively manage teacher development (e.g training, mentoring) and compensation, teachers tend to perform better. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the participants of the study. The finding is also in line with Ikediugwu and Obiora (2021) who asserted that principals effectively applied personnel management practices, particularly in the orientation of newly recruited teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. These orientation practices were part of how principals manage and support teachers, with the aim of improving their performance. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the geographical location of the study.

In line with these observations, effective personnel management is a critical determinant of organisational performance, as it ensures the right placement of staff, promotes teamwork, and reduces instances of staff turnover and conflict. The findings of the present study, therefore, confirm that when principals apply sound personnel management practices, their schools benefit from a motivated, competent, and committed staff, leading to improved organisational performance.

The findings of this study also revealed that principals' financial management practices have a moderate and significant correlation with the organisational performance of public secondary schools in Anambra State. This result suggests that when principals competently plan, allocate, monitor, and utilize financial resources, their schools achieve better academic and operational outcomes. This agrees with the findings of Ezeaku and Joseph (2025) which showed an average positive and significant relationship between principals' financial management practices and effective school administration in public secondary schools in Anambra State. According to Ezeaku and Joseph (2025) for principals to effectively administer the day-to-day activities of secondary schools they have to effectively apply financial management practices of building trust, being visionary leaders, communicating effectively the vision of the school to all stakeholders and keep proper record of their stewardships. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the similarity in geographical location and respondents used for the study. This is in line with the finding of Ejom, Nwoye and Odu (2025) which revealed that Principals' financial management strategies especially financial planning and expenditure control are significantly and positively related to overall school system effectiveness in Cross

River State. This means that when principals engage in systematic financial planning, budgeting, and controlling expenditures, the effectiveness of school operations improves substantially. These practices help schools allocate resources more appropriately, align spending with priorities, enhance accountability, and improve the environment for teaching and learning. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the time frame and the respondents used for the study. This affirms that sound financial management practices enable principals to align available resources with institutional priorities, thereby ensuring that academic and infrastructural needs are met effectively. These findings highlight the role of financial management competence as a core leadership quality required for principals to drive performance improvement and ensure accountability in resource utilization.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals' managerial competence is a positive and significant predictor of organisational performance in Anambra state. Principals' managerial competence in strategic planning, personnel management, and financial management are positive and significant predictors of organisational performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals who exhibit high levels in these managerial domains are more likely to enable effective goal settings, enhance staff coordination and foster positive school climate leading to improved academic performances, enhanced staff productivity, better resource utilisation and the achievement of educational objectives. Together, these competencies position principals as key drivers of organisational success in schools. The study therefore underscores the need for continuous capacity building for principals in these managerial areas to sustain and further enhance the performance of public secondary schools in Anambra State. Education stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, should prioritize training programs, workshops, and policy frameworks that support principals in strengthening these competencies to ensure long-term school effectiveness and quality education delivery.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Ministry of Education in collaboration with Post Primary Schools Service Commission should organize training programmes like workshops, seminars, conferences, inservice training for principals so that they can be educated and acquainted with the needs and procedures for adequate planning strategies in secondary schools and its implementation for the purpose of improving school performance.
2. School principals should strive to acquire managerial competencies by involving teachers' in decision making, organizing seminars and workshops for professional advancement of teachers, providing incentives for students' and orientating new staff and students for effective personnel management in schools.

3. Principals should also establish transparent and accountable financial systems, ensuring that financial transactions are properly documented and stakeholders are informed about financial decisions in order to enhance effective financial management of the school.

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