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INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to determine the extent interpersonal skill predicted job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. The study was conducted in Awka education zone of Anambra State and the co-relational research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 1,694 teachers in Awka education zone. Data for this study were collected by means of two structured questionnaires developed by the researchers. The face validity of the instruments were established using the opinions of three experts while the reliability of the instruments was established using 20 teachers in Ogidi education zone. The scores obtained were analyzed using Cronbach alpha and the reliability coefficients of 0.75 and 0.72 were obtained respectively for the first and second clusters of the instrument. The data for the study were collected by administering copies of the questionnaires personally by the researchers on the respondents with four research assistants. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions while regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. The result showed a strong correlation between interpersonal skills and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra. The test of the hypotheses indicated that interpersonal skills predicted job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. In the light of the findings, it was among others recommended that school management should enhance teachers' interpersonal skills through participative leadership in order to increase school organizational productivity. It was also recommended that teachers should develop their interpersonal skills in order to enhance their job performance in secondary schools.

Keywords: Interpersonal Skills; Prediction; Job Performance; Teachers; and Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Education plays a very important role in the economic development of a country as it is aimed at supplying the economy with human capital that can convert effectively and efficiently other resources into output of high value. It is perceived as the corner stone of economic and social development and a principal means of providing for the welfare of individuals. The role of education in solving the problems affecting the growth and development in the society cannot be over-emphasized.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) indicated that accomplishment of the goals of education solely depends on defining the structure and strategies for educational provision, setting guidelines and required standards for its delivery, managing the education system for quality control and quality assurance, improving teacher quality through professionalizing the teaching profession in Nigeria and the provision of more in-service training opportunities, other incentives for teachers. The accomplishment of the goal of education, attaining quality standards and

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maintaining effective control and service delivery is something that should start right from the primary school through the secondary school to higher institutions. Secondary education serves as a link between primary education and higher education. The emphasis in this work is on secondary education.

Secondary education is a very important level of education in Nigeria where solid foundation for higher education and useful living is laid. Secondary education occupies a central position in the Nigerian educational system because it is the level of education that prepares students for higher education. It is the level of education that determines the academic and professional career of students. Perhaps, it is the basis of this understanding that the FRN (2013) articulated the broad aim of secondary education to include preparation of students for useful living in the society and preparation for higher education. The aim of secondary education in Nigeria therefore cannot be successfully achieved without quality teachers' service delivery.

Teachers are instructors who implement educational policies at the classroom level with the aim that students can function effectively in their environment. Abbasi and Hollman (2010) explained that teachers are charged with important responsibilities of offering guidance and counselling to students in both academic and social matters, disciplining them, managing classroom activities that include learning and participating in curriculum development panels. Teachers are likely to be motivated to effectively play their role and make a solid contribution to quality secondary education where principals have good interpersonal skills.

Interpersonal skills are the tools people use to interact and communicate with one another in an organized environment. They are measures of how adept or how much skilled or proficient a person is at interacting with others. When conflicts arise, one uses ones interpersonal skills to resolve them. People learn interpersonal skills by interacting with family member, going to school, and socializing with their peers. Healthy interpersonal• skills reduce stress, resolve conflict, improve communication, enhance intimacy, increase understanding, and promote joy (Allison & Paolim, 2015). Interpersonal skills are broadly defined as those skills which one needs in order to communicate effectively with another person or a group of people (Rungapadiachy, 2019). Although there are some variations in the literature over the exact skills that qualify under this heading (Jenkinson, Randle & Russell, 2012), some authors such as Hargie and Dickson, (2014) agreed on a number of core areas in which competency is essential for effective interpersonal interactions among the internal and external stakeholders of the organization. Interpersonal skills, which are also identified as essential skills, are the critical skills that demonstrate interpersonal competence and organizational communication effectiveness which are essential for managerial or administrative success. The centrality of interpersonal skills in workforce performance and productivity in organizations has been validated by numerous studies in the past decade (Asher & Hindi, 2014). It follows then that, interpersonal skills are the skills people use every day to interact with one and another. They are the most intelligible mode of communication among human persons.

People are not born with interpersonal skills but develop them as they grow and learn in the course of human existence, interaction and life. This, probably made Robles (2012) defined interpersonal skills as qualities that people use to interact with one which are also known as people skills, and personal attributes, including integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic. Operationally, interpersonal skills are a capability or skill possessed by someone who is not a talent but is the result of training or

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education and experience in communication, understanding others and managing conflict (leading individuals or groups).

Interpersonal skills are among the factors that have important roles in determining a person's performance in carrying out their work in an organization. A research conducted by Kanthasamy (2019) showed there was a positive relationship between interpersonal skills and workers' performance. Interpersonal skills possessed by an employee or worker in an organization will have an influence on the performance produced by the employee itself. A worker's interpersonal skills can be influenced by gender.

According to Rilay (2017), gender refers to qualitative and interdependent character of women's and men's position in society and differs from sex which is the biological state of being male or female. There is a danger to confuse "gender" with "women" Ostergaad (2012) posited that the concept of gender is not limited to the male or female species, but goes further to assess the relations between them. As are constantly being renegotiated in the context of changing political, economic, social and cultural environments at the local, national and supra national levels.

Statement of the Problem

From preliminary investigations and researchers' personal experiences, it is evident that Anambra State and Awka education zone has shown considerable interest in developing secondary education. There is increase in facilities which seemingly contributed to the excellent performance of secondary school students in the state in external examinations. However, it is important to note that most that communication gap still exist between principals and teachers as well as teachers and their fellow teachers. Informal interaction with some teachers gave an insight that some principals do not relate necessary information to their teachers and even when they seemingly do, the information communicated is distorted. Therefore, it is important to note that communication process if observed adequately has a relationship on teachers' job performance. It is therefore necessary to see the true picture of interpersonal skills correlating with teachers' job performance.

Management of many secondary schools in Anambra State and Awka education zone leave much to be desired in terms of cohesion and understanding. Some principals communicate with their staff as if the staff members are slaves and not colleagues. Some molest staff about, shout at them, criticize them even in front of students and go to the extent of even abusing them out rightly. During supervision, many principals criticize and condemn teachers in front of the students. Nworah (2020) observed that some school heads hoard vital information from staff and use unclear statements in delegating tasks. The result is role ambiguity and role conflict that hinder school administration.

In a similar dimension, some teachers gossip against their principals. Rather than seek first hand information from principals, some staff prefer gathering what Barnette and Greenough (2014, p.12) called "painted information" from typists, messengers and grapevine. It is not rare to see teachers using rude words in response to principals' directives and even demanding resources from principals in defiant, rude and abusive languages (Onah, 2021). These situations imply poor organization climate in schools which is incapable of ushering in a school environment where observation, guidance, inquiry and interactions among staff would bring about desired instructional improvement.

With all these inadequacies and problems surrounding schools, there exists a big gap between what the administrative position of principals of secondary schools ought to be and what it is currently. One still wonders and

questions whether principals use interpersonal skills to improve teachers' job performance in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study.

1: What is the extent interpersonal skill predicts job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

2: What is the extent interpersonal skill predicts job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

1: Interpersonal skills do not significantly predict job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

2: Interpersonal skills are not significant predictors of job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Research Method

This study was conducted in Awka education zone of Anambra State. It adopted the co-relational research design. The population of the study comprised 1,694 teachers in Awka education zone, (Post Primary Schools Service Commission Awka, 2020). Data for this study were collected by means of two structured questionnaires developed by the researchers. The first instrument is titled "Interpersonal Skills Questionnaire" (ISQ) while the second instrument is titled "Teachers Job Performance Scale" (TJPS). The face validity of the instruments were established using the opinions of three experts: two from educational management and one expert from measurement and evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instruments was established using 20 teachers in Ogidi education zone. The scores obtained were analised using Cronbach coefficient alpha method. The reliability coefficients of 0.75 and 0.72 were obtained respectively for the first and second clusters of the instrument. The data for the study were collected by administering copies of the questionnaires personally by the researchers on the respondents with four research assistants who were briefed on the modalities for the administration and collection of the questionnaires. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions while regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. The research questions were interpreted using the real limit of numbers of: 0.10 - 0.39 weak prediction; 0.40 - 0.59 Moderate prediction; and 0.60-0.99 Strong prediction. In interpreting the null hypotheses, p-value coefficient was employed to determine the significance of the variables. Thus, in interpreting the values of the null hypotheses, when p-value was less than or equal to 0.5 ($P \leq 0.5$), the null hypothesis was rejected and when the p-value was greater [than 0.5 alpha level ($P > 0.05$), the null hypothesis was not be rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent interpersonal skill predicts job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

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Table 1: Pearson's Analysis of the Extent Interpersonal Skill Predicts Job Performance of Teachers in Secondary Schools

Variables	N	R	P
INT.PER.SK.	1694	520**	0.000
T. JOB.PERF.	1694		

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result of the Pearson correlation analysis in table 1 showed a strong correlation between interpersonal skills and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra. The outcome of the result showed that the p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance while the r-value of .52 showed a strong predictive power between the dependent and independent variable (r = .52, p = .000). This means that increase in interpersonal skills can lead to increase in the teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Awka education zone.

Research Question 2: What is the extent interpersonal skill predicts job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson's Analysis of the Extent Interpersonal Skill Predicts Job Performance of Male and Female Teachers in Secondary Schools

Variables	N	Female	Male	R	P
T. JOB.PERF	1694	1,091	603	600**	0.000
INT.PER.SK	1694				

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results in table 2 revealed that the calculated value of correlations is 0.600% while the (P) value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 alpha level of significant. This implies that work environment predict teacher's job performance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. This means that interpersonal skills can lead to increase in the teacher's job performance in secondary schools.

Hypothesis One: Interpersonal skills do not significantly predict job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Correlation between Interpersonal Skills and Teachers' Job Performance in Secondary Schools

Variables	N	Coff	a level	DF	t-test	P	Decision
T. JOB.PERF	1, 694	0.47	0.05	1,692	25.786	0.000	
INT.PER.SK	1, 694	0.16	0.05		3.075	0.02	Significant

$F = 9.456$, $r^2 = .51$, adjusted $r^2 = .51$, dw = 1.6

Results in Table 3 show outcome of simple regression analysis of the correlation among interpersonal skills and teacher's job performance in secondary schools. The results indicate that interpersonal skill significantly predicted job performance of teachers in secondary schools. As indicated, critical t = 3.075, p = 002. The f-test of 9.456 shows the overall statistical significant of the model and this implies that the dependent variable

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predicted independent variable in the school system. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that interpersonal skills significantly predicted job performance of teachers in secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two: Interpersonal skills are not significant predictors of job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Interpersonal Skills as Predictors of Job Performance of Male and Female Teachers in Secondary Schools in Awka Education Zone

Variables	N	Coff	a level	DF	t-test	P	Decision
T.JOB. PERF	603	.760	0.05	601	19.07	0.000	
INT.PER.SK	603	.190	0.05		2.13	0.001	Significant

F = 11.519, r^2 = .51, adjusted r^2 = .51, dw = 1.7

Results in table 4 showed outcome of simple regression analysis on interpersonal skills as predictor of job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools. The result indicated that interpersonal skills significantly predicted job performance of male and female teachers in secondary school schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State, critical t = 2.13, p = 0.001. The f-test of 11.519 shows the overall statistical significant of the model, which implies that the dependent variables predicted independent variables in the model. T-test = 2.13 (0.001) measures the individual statistical significance of the variables, in the strength of the findings, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that interpersonal skills predicted job performance of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study indicated that interpersonal skill significantly predicted teachers' job performance in secondary schools. This finding was in line with the finding of Mugisa (2017) who studied the influence of interpersonal relationship on academic performance of learners with hearing impairments. Teachers' interaction with students in a classroom creates emotional support for learners who would benefit from an effective curriculum. Hughes and Chen (2011) also found that supportive positive relationships between teacher and students ultimately promote a sense of school belonging and encourage the students to participate cooperative1y. Again, a study by Hughes and Chen, (2011) revealed that supportive teacher-learners relationships were significantly related to behavioural and emotional learners' engagement and predictor of reading. Also, the finding agreed with the finding of Asonaba and Yankyera, (2015) the process of achieving this goals starts from the classrooms. The principals of schools play an important and a key role in the achievement of this goal. Personnel characteristic skills are the varieties of abilities and techniques that the principals of the schools could use to improve teachers' willingness and ability that could lead to achievement of schools goals.

This finding was consistent with Asonaba and Yankyera, (2015) who found that interpersonal relation skill can be referred to as skill that the principal adopt that give room for good human interaction in the school. Basically, the tasks ahead of any school administrators are so enormous such that it requires a lot of approaches in order to "live-up-to-expectations." The approaches apart from their personal qualities include, having good rapport with their members of staff, delegating part of their responsibilities with authorities to their staff

members. This delegation enhances trust, cordiality and confidence between the school managers and staff, it also enhances the development of staff. In a school where the principal shows his/her cares about the staff, there is a greater tendency for such staff to feel more concerned with achieving the various tasks which they are called to perform.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that interpersonal skills have a positive predictive powers over teachers' job performance. The ability to attract, keep and motivate high-performance in secondary schools through interpersonal skills is becoming increasingly important in today's school management. The study also revealed that interpersonal skills predict teachers' job performance.

Recommendations

i. School management should enhance teachers' interpersonal skills through participative leadership in order to increase school organizational productivity.
ii. Teachers should develop their interpersonal skills in order to enhance their higher productivity.
iii. The school organization should have a good program in place for teachers' interpersonal skills as this can be a great factor in motivating and retaining them in the teaching profession.
iv. School management should find means of communicating their goals and strategies to their employees through effective interpersonal skills in order to maximize teachers' performance.

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