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EXTENT OF PRINCIPALS UTILIZATION OF REINFORCEMENT AS INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION TECHNIQUE AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the extent of principal utilization of reinforcement as instructional supervision technique as perceived by teachers in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. One research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 1,934 teachers teaching in 31 public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. This comprises 1,625 female and 309 male teachers. The sample of the study comprised 198 teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts. In order to obtain the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered to 20 secondary school teachers made up of 10 male and 10 female teachers in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State using test retest method in two occasions at interval of one week. The generated scores were tested using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability which yielded 0.88. Mean, standard deviation and t-test was used to analyze data for the study. The finding of the study revealed that teachers opined that principals' utilize reinforcement as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone to a high extent. Finding also revealed that gender did not influence teachers' perception. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that the Enugu State Ministry of Education should provide professional development training to further improve the effectiveness of reinforcement techniques of instructional supervision.

Keywords: Principals, Utilization, Reinforcement, Instructional Supervision, Technique

Introduction

Secondary education in Nigeria is the level of education that serves as a link between primary education and tertiary education. Secondary education is intended to provide students with the information, skills, and attitudes required for higher education, vocational training, or entrance into the labour market. Teachers are vital stakeholders in ensuring the realization of the goals of secondary education in Nigeria. Their role is fundamental, as they directly influence students' learning experiences and outcomes. Effective teaching practices and dedication to their responsibilities are crucial for achieving educational objectives, making teachers indispensable to the educational system. However, there are concerns regarding teachers' performance in fulfilling their duties. Instances of inadequate lesson preparation, lack of engagement in practical activities, and insufficient support for struggling students have been observed in some secondary schools across Nigeria (Abdul, 2022; Madudili, 2021). These shortcomings can

hinder the overall effectiveness of the educational process and compromise students' learning experiences.

As the leaders of secondary schools, principals bear the responsibility of ensuring that teachers carry out their duties effectively. Abdul (2022) stated that principals play a critical role in setting academic standards, providing support and resources, and fostering an environment conducive to teaching and learning. Principals are tasked with monitoring instructional quality, facilitating professional development for teachers, and creating a school culture that emphasizes accountability and excellence ((Abari & Mohammed, 2018). Principals' leadership is essential in guiding teachers towards achieving the curriculum goals and enhancing student success in secondary education. Instructional leadership is a very important means through which principals guide teachers' instructional practices.

Instructional supervision is a process that concentrates on instruction and how teachers can improve their instructional skills in order to be able to enhance their professional growth. Glickman et al. (2017) defined instructional supervision as focusing on teacher's skills, attitude, knowledge and ability to make informed decisions and solve problems much better; which eventually may lead to quality in teaching and learning. Madudili (2021) on the other hand, defined instructional supervision as specifically concerned with the improvement of the curriculum instruction. This includes giving proficient teachers a chance to discover ways for improving professionally (Comighud et al., 2020). Instructional supervision also aims at providing support, encouragement and guidance. This can only be successful in an environment based on a collaborative culture and the existence of trust between the supervisors and the supervisees (Glickman et al., 2017). Madudili (2021) defined instructional supervision as a collaborative effort involving a series of activities designed to bring about improvements in teaching and learning within schools. It is also seen as the comprehensive efforts made by school officials to provide leadership to teachers and other educational staff, with the goal of enhancing instruction, encouraging professional growth, revising educational objectives, and evaluating instructional methods and materials (Agu et al., 2021). Reinforcement is an instructional supervision technique.

Reinforcement as any action that enhanced or increased the probability of a behaviour being repeated. In the context of instructional supervision, Musa (2019) highlighted that reinforcement involved acknowledging and rewarding teachers for their effective teaching practices, which, in turn, motivated them to maintain high standards in their instructional delivery. Mohammed et al. (2015) viewed reinforcement as a vital element of educational supervision, focusing on the recognition of teachers' efforts and successes. Muhammed et al. (2015) further emphasised that appropriate reinforcement boosted teacher morale and performance, ultimately having a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. Egbebi et al (2019) described reinforcement as a supervisory approach aimed at improving teachers' performance through systematic feedback and rewards. Egbebi et al. averred that when teachers

received constructive feedback and were acknowledged for their accomplishments, they were more likely to adopt innovative teaching strategies and enhance their overall effectiveness.

Reinforcement as an instructional supervision technique has been extensively explored in educational research. Studies demonstrate that effective reinforcement strategies can have a profound effect on teacher performance and student achievement. For instance, Brophy in Fitriati et al (2017) highlighted the significance of contingent praise and positive feedback in cultivating a supportive teaching environment. Brophy observed that when teachers received specific praise for their efforts, they were more inclined to repeat those behaviours, resulting in improved instructional quality. Similarly, Musa (2019) highlighted the role of reinforcement in enhancing student engagement and academic achievement. He suggested that when teachers are trained in effective reinforcement techniques, they create a more motivating classroom atmosphere, which positively affects student learning. Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of instructional supervision strategies often vary based on the gender of the principal. Female principals may sometimes be perceived as less authoritative or less effective in implementing these strategies, potentially due to longstanding cultural biases surrounding gender roles in leadership (Uwaleke et al., 2021). Teachers may also be less receptive to feedback or observations from female administrators compared to their male counterparts. However, the extent to which these perceptions hold true has not been empirically validated in public secondary schools within the Enugu Education Zone. Against this backdrop, that the researcher sought to determine the extent of principal utilization of reinforcement as instructional supervision technique as perceived by teachers in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of instruction in secondary schools is crucial to achieving the goals outlined in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's (2013) National Policy on Education. However, the standard of education in some secondary schools within the Enugu Education Zone appears to fall below the expected level. Field observations by the researcher suggest that some teachers in these schools exhibit a lack of commitment to fulfilling their instructional duties. Additionally, the researcher's observations indicate that some teachers appear disinterested in ensuring quality instructional delivery. The researcher is worried that if this situation continues it will negatively impact the quality of education service delivery in the Education Zone. Leading to the production poor quality human capital in the state and the nation at large. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of the instructional supervision provided by the principals, particularly in the area of reinforcing teachers' efforts.

Research Question

To what extent do teachers' perceive principals' utilization of reinforcement as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers' perception of principals' use of reinforcement as instructional supervisory

technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

Research Method

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study which was conducted in Enugu Education Zone. The population of the study consisted of 1,934 teachers teaching in 31 public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. This comprises 1,625 female and 309 male teachers. The sample of the study comprised 198 teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. Cluster sampling technique was used to sample a total of 198 teachers for the study which represents 10% of the total population. Each of the three Local Government Areas was regarded as a cluster. Three schools were selected from each of the clusters using simple random sampling technique of balloting to produce nine (9) schools. Twenty two (22) teachers were drawn from each of the nine schools using systematic random technique. Through this method, a sample of 198 teachers was produced.

The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire tagged Questionnaire on Extent of Principals' Utilization of Reinforcement Technique as Perceived by Teachers (QTPURTPT). The questionnaire was divided into two sections vis: A and B. section A consists of items requesting for bio-data of the respondents while Section B contains the questionnaire items six items on extent of principals utilization of observation technique. The instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE). The research instrument was given to three experts for face validity. Two of the experts are in Educational Management while one is from Measurement and Evaluation Department from Peaceland University, Enugu. In order to obtain the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered to 20 secondary school teachers made up of 10 male and 10 female teachers in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State using test retest method in two occasions at interval of one week. The generated scores were tested using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability which yielded 0.88. This indicated that the instrument is reliable. The researcher engaged the services of one research assistant to assist in the administration and collection of the copies of the instrument. The researcher properly briefed the assistant on how to administer and collect the instrument. 198 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 194 copies were returned, representing 97.97% return rate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question and t-test was used to test the hypothesis. Mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as High Extent while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as Low Extent. The null hypotheses will be rejected when the calculated t-value is equal to or higher than the table t-value at 0.05 level of significance, and will be accepted when the calculated t-value is less than the table t-value.

Presentation of Results

Research Question: To what extent do teachers' perceive principals' utilization of reinforcement as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone?

Table 1: Mean Scores of the Responses on Principals' Utilization of Reinforcement Technique **(N=194)**

ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
Verbal appreciation of the teacher by the principal during classroom supervision	2.97	1.10	High Extent
Applauding the teacher by pupils on the principal's instruction during teaching and learning	2.73	1.13	High Extent
Reward to the teacher for quality instruction by the principal	3.11	0.88	High Extent
Keep teachers abreast of changes in teaching and learning	3.23	1.06	High Extent
Recommending the teacher for promotion	2.97	1.02	High Extent
Cluster Grand Mean	**3.00**		**High Extent**

Source: Field Study, 2024

Result of data analysis in Table 1 above shows the grand mean score of teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone as 3.00. Since the above mean scores are greater than the acceptable mean score of 2.50, the implication is that teachers' opined that principals' utilize reinforcement as instructional supervision technique to a high extent. Furthermore, the standard deviation scores ranging between 0.88 and 1.12 indicate that the teachers' opinions were related.

Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers' perception of principals' use of reinforcement as instructional supervisory technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

Table 2: Summary of T-Test Statistics Verifying the Significant Difference between Male and Female Teachers in Their Perception of Principals' Utilization of Observation as Instructional Supervisory Technique

Variable	No.	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Decision
Male	31	2.92	1.17	192	1.52	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected
Female	163	3.08	0.95					

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2 shows the value of t-calculated as 1.52 at 1.92 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significant differences while the critical value was 1.960. Since the critical value is greater than the calculated value, the null hypothesis tested is not rejected. This implies that the teachers' perception of principals' utilization of

reinforcement as instructional supervision technique is not based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

Finding revealed that teachers' opined that principals' utilize reinforcement as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone to a high extent. The teachers mean score was 3.00. The findings is in agreement with the views of Musa (2019) who asserts that reinforcement is a driving force which propels one to attempt to achieve a goal or objective in order to satisfy their need. When reinforcement is properly utilized it spurs teachers and students to do those things which they hope will satisfy their drives and desires and induce the subordinate to act in a desired manner. Fitriati et al (2017) observed that reinforcement could be seen as the perceptions, methods, activities used by the management for the purpose of providing a climate that is conducive to the satisfaction of the various needs of teachers so that they may become satisfied, dedicated and effective task performers. Fitriati et al maintained that reinforcement is that fuel which provides energy for human action. Reinforcement is an internal psychological process whose presence or absence can only be detected from observed behaviour. Furthermore, finding of the study revealed that male and female teachers did not differ in their opinion on the extent principals utilize reinforcement as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. This finding indicate that teachers irrespective of gender are in agreement on the extent to which principals utilize reinforcement as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that principals utilize reinforcement as an instructional supervision technique in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone to a high extent. Reinforcement as an instructional supervision technique would help promote the quality of instructional delivery and teaching practices in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. It is therefore imperative that measure are put in place to continuously promote principals application of reinforcement technique as they carry out their role of instructional supervision in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. The Enugu State Ministry of Education should provide professional development training to further improve the effectiveness of reinforcement techniques of instructional supervision. This training should include workshops on providing constructive feedback, recognising teachers' achievements and fostering a positive school climate that encourages collaboration and motivation among staff.
2. Principals should establish a structured reinforcement programme so as to systematically acknowledge and reward teachers' efforts and achievements. This programme

could include regular observations, recognition events and a framework for providing targeted support to teachers, thereby promoting sustained high-quality instructional delivery across in secondary schools.

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