Relationship between Principals’ Information Management and Their Capacity to Control Staff in the Secondary Schools in Imo State, Nigeria

Carol Obiageli Ezeugbor (Ph.D)¹, Paul O. Anozie² and Emmanuel C. Asiegbu, (Ph.D)³

¹,²&³ Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
Email: co.ezeugbor@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract
This research investigated the relationship between principals’ information management and their capacity to control the staff of Imo State secondary schools. The paper focused on the relationship between principals’ information management and their staff motivation and staff disciplinary functions. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A total of 893 teachers were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in the first stage. At this stage, a sample of 113 secondary schools which represents 40% of the 279 public secondary schools in Imo State was drawn while in the second stage, 40% of teachers in each of the zones were selected from the 113 schools using random sampling technique. An instrument titled Information Management and Staff Control Questionnaire (IMSCQ) was used to collect data, which was validated by two lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one lecturer from the Department of Educational Foundations. The three lecturers who validated the instrument were from the faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study used Cronbach alpha analysis for test of reliability, and obtained an internal consistency of .78 which proved that the instrument was reliable. Data analysis was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The study found among others that a significant positive relationship existed between principals’ information management and their staff motivation and discipline functions. It recommended more proper management of information on the discipline, compensation and promotion of teachers, including the need to upgrade school libraries and improve internet access. It further called for the design of staff information management platforms that make allowance for discipline, motivation and other administrative practices which promote more effective control of staff.

Keywords: Information management, staff control, staff discipline, staff motivation.

Introduction
The success of any human endeavour is closely related to the quality of the personnel who perform the tasks necessary for the achievement of purposes of the group (Nwafor & Nwafor, 2012). Progress in any meaningful activity is also dependent on the ability of leadership in ensuring the enhancement of conditions necessary for the physical and mental wellbeing of
members of the organization (Udalla, 2012). In secondary schools, therefore, principals are expected to provide effective leadership mostly through influencing a high quality staff to perform functions that bring progress to the school.

One of the factors that contribute significantly to the success of any secondary school is the ability of the principal to demonstrate control over his or her staff. The principal cannot achieve success without the cooperation and support of members of staff that are amenable to administrative control. One key way of exerting control is through motivating staff members to pursue interests that align with organizational goals. Another is by instilling discipline (Anozie, 2016). The motivation of school staff is therefore a major task for secondary school administrators (Ofojebe, 2006). So is discipline a key issue in maximizing staff efficiency and effectiveness (Oku, Emenalo & Okeke, 2008).

Agulanna and Nwachukwu, (2004) defined motivation as an internal state that energises a person’s behavior, maintains it and directs it towards a goal so that a state of equilibrium is attained. Udalla, (2012) contended that motivation directs human energies towards maximum attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization. The major task of top management in motivation is that of inspiring the subordinates toward meaningful realization of its organizational objectives. The principal is duty bound to motivate his staff. This implies that he should strive towards those things he perceives that will help in satisfying the drives and desires of members of staff in order to induce them to behave in a desired manner. Ejidike, (1998) and Ugwoke, Ejionueme, Anyanwu, and Etonyeaku, (2013) held that a manager needs to find out in the first instance, what his subordinates’ motives are and how such motives can be activated positively. To do this effectively, the manager or the administrator must be fully aware of the various existing theories of motivation that have been tested and found workable in various circumstances. Without any doubt, Maslow’s theory of needs (Agulanna & Nwachukwu, 2004), cannot be left out in this case.

Staff Compensation is another aspect of motivation that helps organisations attract qualified staff. Included in school compensation systems are wages, salaries, and fringe benefits. Fringe benefits are important part of the compensation programme and influence recruitment, selection and employee motivation. Omenyi (2007) reported that fringe benefits represent 10 percent of total salary of teachers in primary and secondary schools. Principals play a crucial human resource function when they help their staff to secure their salaries as and when due, during situations when administrative delays hamper the proper disbursement of the salary of a particular teacher or group of teachers. This could be done when the principal writes a letter to the particular institution in charge of payment of salaries, (like the account department in state ministries) and or accompanies it with a visit, in his bid to press for the payment of these monies (Ejidike, 1998). Again, Obunadike (2008) stated that an administrator has to have an understanding of the needs of staff and the characteristics of those to promote in order to help them secure a position which will be in conformity with their current level of performance.

Discipline is also one of the human resource management functions which enable a principal to exert control over school staff. According to Thompson & Kleiner, (2005) discipline helps to direct the behavior of members of staff towards achieving the goals of the organization. Ejidike, (1998) maintains that strict disciplinary measures help to guard against the occurrence of unprofessional behavior and acts of misconduct among staff members. So important is the place of discipline in the life of a school teacher that it is rigorously policed by many stakeholders in education. The Teachers Registration Council (2005), for instance,
mandates all heads of educational institutions (principals inclusive) to report all cases of misconduct by a registered teacher to the Teachers Investigation Panel. It reads:

Section 11(1) of the Act makes it mandatory for the heads of educational institutions to report any case of misconduct by a registered teacher. Parents, colleagues, students and the general public equally have a duty to report cases of professional misconduct to the Panel (TRCN, 2005 p.30). Most of the literature on discipline and motivation of staff seemed to have shown a considerable neglect for proper information management, in spite of the fact that data and information are among the chief resources upon which measures aimed at motivating and disciplining school staff are based. There is thus a compelling need to bring principals’ information management practices into focus in studies that seriously look into issues of motivation and discipline of school staff.

A comprehensive view of Information Management sees it largely as a discipline and as a function. Starting with the former, Haspolat (2007) sees it as a discipline focused on updating the perpetual information capacity of an institutional environment, to provide the consisting information attainable, and it contains the descriptions of the necessary processes to reach this information, its analysis and provision for sharing with the employees of the enterprise. In a sweeping definition, Squire (2006) states that information management is a discipline that embraces information management (processes) in addition to the technical labours in the process of datum, information and knowledge creation.

The later view is represented by Moisescu & Badescu (2012) who presented a view of information management as harnessing of the information resources and capabilities of the organization in order to add and create value for itself and for its clients and customers. A clearer definition by the same authors sees the concept as the management of organizational processes and systems that acquire, create, organize, distribute and use information. Continuing, they regard the term as including all activities involved in the identification, collection, filtering, fusing, processing, focusing, dissemination and usage of information.

Information management in secondary schools therefore refers to the process of harnessing data and information resources of schools for administrative uses. It includes the identification, collection filtering and processing of educationally relevant data, and the organization, storage and retrieval of books, newspapers, magazines, and other written information. The challenge created by the enormous need to align information with the management of human resources, especially discipline and motivation of staff, have given rise to the development of the Human Resource Information System (HRIS). There is thus a great need to see if an empirical justification for the link between information management and the discipline and motivation of staff could be made. Based on the above need, this research investigated if a relationship exists between information management and the motivation and discipline of secondary school staff in Imo State.

Statement of the Problem
Staff control is a crucial practice that enables management to translate the aims of organizations into reality. It consists of activities like supervision, motivation, evaluation and discipline of staff. Over time, it was accepted that effective staff control can only be achieved when management performs these functions with maximum effect.
Research and observation of past events however show that despite considerable emphasis on supervision, motivation and discipline of school staff, most principals have not been able to develop a high quality staff that would drive school progress. The present research identified information management as the likely variable that has not been taken into account in studying the successes and failures of staff control measures in schools and proceeded to study it. This study is thus set to determine if principals’ staff information management is linked to effective staff control in Imo State secondary schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between principals’ information management and their capacity to control staff in the secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study determined the;

1) Relationship between principals’ information management scores and their scores in staff motivation practices.

2) Relationship between principals’ information management scores and their scores in staff disciplinary practices.

**Research questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1) What is the relationship between principals' information management scores and their scores in staff motivation practices?

2) What is the relationship between principals’ information management scores and their scores in staff disciplinary practices?

**Hypotheses**

The following two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance, was developed for the study.

1) There is no significant relationship between principals’ information management scores and their scores in staff motivation practices.

2) There is no significant relationship between principal’s information management scores and their scores in staff disciplinary practices.

**Methodology**

A correlational research design was adopted in this study because it is an investigation into the relationship between two variables. The study covers the entire public secondary schools in Imo State. The population of the study was 4764 teachers in the 279 public secondary schools in Imo State Public School System (Source; Imo State Secondary Education Board (SEMB), 2016). A two-stage sampling technique was used for the study, which used a proportionate stratified sampling technique in drawing a sample of 113 secondary schools,
and then random sampling technique in drawing a sample of 893 teachers from the 113 schools already sampled. The “Human Resource and Information Management Questionnaire (HRIMF)” was used to elicit information from the information management and human resource management segments of the questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by 2 experts who are lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and an expert in measurement and evaluation from the Department of Education Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The Cronbach alpha method was used in testing the reliability of the questionnaire which was administered and collected by the researchers and three other research assistants who received training from the researchers on the procedures for administration of questionnaire. Thereafter, Pearson’s product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions and also test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

Results

Research Question One

Table 1. Pearson's Correlation Between Principals' Information Management Scores and their Staff Motivation Practices Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Principals' Information Management Scores</th>
<th>Principals' Staff Motivation Practices Scores</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals' Information Management Scores</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>Highly positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals' Staff Motivation Practices Scores</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>.895**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, r. (113) = .895. This shows that there is a very strong positive correlation between principals' information management and their staff motivation practices. This shows that if there is an increase in principals' performance in information management, the effectiveness of staff motivation will also increase.
Research Question Two

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation between Principals' Information Management Scores and their Staff Disciplinary Practices Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Principals' Information Management Scores</th>
<th>Principals' Staff Disciplinary Scores</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the above table, the relationship between principals' information scores and their scores in staff disciplinary practices was highly positive. This is shown by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, \( r \) which is .813. This is an indication that an enhanced principals' information management will most likely lead to an increase in the performance of their staff disciplinary practices.

Hypothesis One

Table 3. Test of Significance of Pearson's Correlation Between Principals' Information Management Scores and their Staff Motivation Practices Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Principals' Information Management Scores</th>
<th>Principals' Staff Motivation Practices</th>
<th>( P )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>*S</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data in table 3 shows that there was a significant positive relationship between principals' information management scores and their staff motivation practices scores, \( r \) (113) = .895, \( P \)-value <0.05. The null hypothesis was rejected.
Hypothesis Two

Table 4. Test of Significance of Pearson’s Correlation between Principals’ Information Management Scores and their Staff Disciplinary Practices scores

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Principals’ Information Management Scores</th>
<th>Principals’ Staff Discipline Scores</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 4 above, there was a significant positive relationship between principals' information management and their staff disciplinary practices scores, r.(113) = .813, P<0.05. The null hypothesis which indicated no significant relationship was rejected.

Major Findings of the Study

The following were the major findings of the study:

1) There was a strong positive relationship between principals’ information management and their staff motivation practices. This implies that an increase in principal’s performance in information management leads to the increase in the effectiveness of staff with respect to motivation. The test of hypothesis also showed that the relationship was significant.

2) The relationship between principals’ information management and their staff disciplinary practices was highly positive. This implies that an enhanced principals’ information management will lead to an increase in the performance of their staff disciplinary practices. The test of hypothesis revealed that the relationship was significant.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study revealed a strong positive relationship between information management and staff motivation in secondary schools in Imo State. This implies that improvement in principals’ information management will most likely have a multiplier effect on their ability to effectively motivate their staff. On the other hand, principals who cannot manage information about their staff to a high extent will not be able to effectively carry out staff motivation functions. This conforms to the findings of Coombs (2001) that effective information management, aided by functional information technology tools, enables an organization to improve its human resource management, especially on the ability to reward, promote and evaluate staff. This is equally supported by the findings of Asafo-Adjei, (2010) and Hayajneh, al-Omaei, Al-Mobaideen and Ahawiah, (2013) that effective information management aids reward and disciplinary measures by the management of organisations. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between principals’ information management and their staff motivation practices in Imo State secondary schools did not stand the test of empirical analysis. This shows that poor management of staff
information could hinder effective discharge of staff motivation measures like compensation and promotion. This could further lower staff productivity as witnessed in Imo State secondary schools.

It was also found that a strong positive relationship exists between principals’ information management and their staff disciplinary practices. This suggests that an enhanced principals’ information management will most likely lead to an increase in their performance of staff disciplinary functions. By implication, principals’ inability to manage information about their staff will tend to occur at the same time with a decrease in their ability to discipline their staff. This concurs with the findings of Coombs (2001) and Hajajneh et al., (2013) who explained that a good HRIS enables an organisation to accurately gauge the time it requires to fill certain jobs, estimate the return on human capital investment and human value added. This role of HRIS furnishes management with what they will use for a just and justified discipline of staff. This agrees with the findings of Ugwoke, Ejiwueme, Anyanwu, and Etonyeaku (2013) that principals’ performance on discipline and punishment of erring members of staff has consistently remained low in Nigerian public schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between principals’ information management and their staff disciplinary practices in Imo State secondary schools was not validated by available evidence. This is because poor staff information management could be a hindrance in the use of staff disciplinary measures to engender improved staff productivity. This explains why many staff disciplinary measures have not translated to improved staff efficiency in Imo State secondary schools.

Conclusion
Effective school administration has been connected with the need to exert control over staff members, which consists of motivating and disciplining staff, through improved information management. Secondary school administrators and stakeholders have therefore been faced with the daunting task of putting in place adequate information and human resource infrastructure and procedures that will enhance the effort of principals in disciplining and motivating their staff. The study also suggests that low performance in principals’ information management is linked with poor performance in human resource management. In other words, where principals are not able to adequately identify, collect, analyse, store, retrieve and disseminate information about their staff, their performance of human resource management functions like motivation and discipline of staff will be low.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this research, a salient recommendation for schools is to upgrade their information resources and facilities like libraries, database, internet connectivity and the provision of good shelves and drawers for the storage of information. As findings from this study show, these have invaluable implications for improving the capacity of principals to motivate and discipline school staff.

Again, principals are encouraged to periodically carry out training sessions meant to update their teachers on the latest information and human resource managerial trends. The scope and complexity of contemporary information science has made it such that the traditional dominance of the principal in this area can no longer stand. Rather, a collaborative involvement of principal and school staff in the management of information can lead to greater results.
References


