

## ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study ascertained the relationship between principals' management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. The study was guided by two research questions while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised 295 principals. There was no sampling approach because the population was manageable as at the time of this study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher structured questionnaire titled "Relationship between Principals' Management Practices and Effective Classroom Environment Questionnaire (RPMPECEQ)". The instrument was face validated by three experts; two from Department of Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation unit of Department of Mathematics and Computer Education all in Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistic which yielded 0.81 for cluster 1 and 0.80 for cluster 2 respectively. The instrument had an overall reliability index of 0.81 which indicated that the instrument was appropriate for use. The research questions were answered using Pearson's Product Moment Co-efficient, while the null hypotheses were tested using linear regression at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study indicated that high positive relationship exists between principals' time management and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Also, there was a high positive relationship between principals' communication style and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that principals should endeavour to regularly observe the aspect of their time management in order to continually provide effective classroom environment.*

**Keywords:** Relationship, Principals, Management Practices, Classroom Environment, Secondary Education, Enugu State.

### Introduction

Education has long been accepted as a veritable instrument per excellence for effective family, community and national development. Globally, education is fundamental for effective national development and economic growth, and a nation cannot develop beyond the level of its educational advancement (Bada, Ariffin & Nordin, 2020). Nnamdi (2016) defined education as the use of both formal and informal approaches to train any individual from

birth throughout life with the aim of making him/her contribute maximally to the growth and development of him/herself and the society at large. Education at the secondary school level is very important because this is where solid foundation for higher education and useful living is laid. Secondary school plays important roles in the actualization of making an individual self-reliant and developing the nation (FRN, 2013). It is a very important level of education in Nigeria where solid foundation for higher education and useful living is laid (Ogbu, 2014). Abdulrasheed & Bello (2015), defined secondary school education as the form of education, which children receive after primary education and before the tertiary level. The head teacher of every secondary school is referred to as a principal.

The principal is the Chief executive of the school. Principals are leadership heads of secondary schools in Nigeria. Oladeji (2016), was of the view that principals are the uncompromising leaders of their schools in whose hands lie the future of these institutions. Principals are the secondary school head teachers or the Chief Executive officers in their institutions and chief accounting officers managing all physical, human and financial resources in their schools (Nyongesa, 2012). However, Umeh (2018), observed that principals' role in the actualization of national and global goals in increasingly becoming significant with much emphasis on the educational activities in school. The principal is involved in managing the school activities by establishing a philosophy, laws, theories, principle, processes and practice that can be applied in various situations in order to have an effective education. Principals play a crucial role in the management of secondary schools because their main duty is the effective management of secondary schools they head.

Management is an important aspect of every organization. Ochai & Ebirim (2011) defined management as a process designed to ensure co-operation, participation, intervention and involvement in effective achievements of goals. Anaekwe in Osakwe (2016) defined management as the process of planning, organizing, leading, directing and controlling the efforts of members and the use of resources in order to achieve stated organizational goals. Akpakwu (2012) defined it as a process of getting the work done in order to get the objectives of the organization accomplished in a pre-planned way. However, for schools to be effective, the central role of principals is vital in the management of classroom environment (Jarvis, 2018).

The classroom is a critical part of school environment. It is where instruction is coordinated and facilitated to achieve school objectives and goals of education in general. Classroom represents the environment where teaching and learning takes place. Classroom is the powerhouse in which the success or failure of the teaching-learning process is sustained (Wigwe in Katharina, 2017). The classroom is a learning environment where all the factors conducive for learning are put in place such as physical-sensory elements, that is lighting, colour, sound, space, furniture, among others. It does not necessarily mean an empty room; it includes laboratories, workshops, among others (Kanu in Titus & Adu, 2017). Effective time management by the principal is crucial for creating an optimal learning environment within the classroom.

Time is a valuable and irreversible abstract resource available for human progression. Time management refers to the abilities to organize and complete specified tasks such as school

homework assignments, syllabus coverage, and examination review in a timely manner (Fermah, 2022). Time management, according to Nigussie (2019), is considered as an inclusive process that is done through administrative functions which is deeply dependent on high personal talents and skills so it can then produce positive effects to society and individual at the same time. A study conducted by Agbo (2019), showed that principals' time management practices have high positive relationship with effective classroom environment in secondary schools. Effective time management ensures that the principals, teachers and students have dedicated time for communication.

Communication is one of the major tools for effective and efficient implementation of school programmes and objectives. Communication is aimed for conveying information, instruction, advice, feelings, opinions and facts correctly and accurately from one person to another (Olaleye, 2016). Ijaduola (2013), opined that good communication style helps to stimulate enthusiasm, raise the interest and motivation of those to whom it is directed. Communication has a great impact in the management of an organization in the sense that, it strengthens the bond among students/staff in an organization. A study conducted by Agbo (2019), showed that principals' communication practices have high positive relationship with effective classroom environment in secondary schools. With regular and communication, suspicion, doubt, mistrust, conflicts are avoided among the students which will in turn promote an effective classroom environment by the principals notwithstanding their gender.

Gender is an important variable in this study. Gender is referred to as a socially constructed roles and learned behaviours and expectations associated with males and females. World Health Organization (WHO) (2016), noted that the word gender is used to describe the characteristics, roles and responsibilities of women and men, boys and girls which are socially constructed. The principals in the secondary schools in Enugu State are either male or female, hence, the need for gender in this study in order to ascertain the relationship between principals' management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

However, public secondary school principals in Enugu state seem to spend more of their official hours on the administrative functions to the detriment of promoting an effective classroom environment (Onuma, 2016). Continuing, Onuma pointed out that there are public outcries, reports and comments in print and electronic media alleging falling standards of education. Ade (2010) stated that principals take actions to create an effective classroom environment that support and facilitate both academic and non-academic activities. In the light of the above, this pertinent question that readily comes to mind is, is there any relationship between principals managerial practices and effective classroom environment? It is against this backdrop that the researcher determined the relationship between principals' management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State with particular reference to time management and communication practices.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The poor state of classroom environment leading to falling standard of education in public secondary schools in Enugu State seems to indicate that managerial practices are not regularly performed by the principals in order to promote an effective classroom environment. The

public secondary school principals in Enugu State seem to spend more of their official hours on other administrative duties to the detriment of an effective classroom environment. It is in the light of this unpleasant situation that this study investigated the relationship between principals' management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State with particular reference to time management and communication practices. The problem of this study when put in a question form is, therefore, "what is the relationship between principals' management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State?"

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the relationship between principals' management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to examine the relationship between:

1. principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State,
2. principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses that guided the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the opinions of male and female principals on the relationship between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the opinions of male and female principals on the relationship between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **Research Method**

Correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out among the 295 secondary schools in Enugu State. The population for the study comprised 295 principals (194 male and 101 female principals). There was no sampling approach because the population was manageable as at the time of this study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher structured questionnaire titled "Relationship between Principals' Management Practices and Effective Classroom Environment Questionnaire (RPMPECEQ)". The instrument was face validated by three experts; two from Department of Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation unit of Department of Mathematics and Computer Education all in Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.

The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistic which yielded 0.81 for cluster 1 and 0.80 for cluster 2 respectively. The instrument had an overall reliability index of 0.81 which indicated that the instrument was appropriate for use. However, out of the 295 copies of the questionnaire administered, the researcher and his two research assistants retrieved 286 copies (190 male principals and 96 female principals) making it 96.95% retrieval rate. The research questions were answered using Pearson's Product Moment Co-efficient, while the null hypotheses were tested using linear regression at 0.05 level of significant. In answering the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship were interpreted using the interpretation of correlation coefficient by Downie & Heath cited in Nworgu (2015) as shown: 0.80 and above for high, above 0.30 below 0.80 for moderate and 0.30 and below for low respectively. For the hypotheses, if significant value was equal to or greater than critical value at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was significant, but if otherwise, it was not significant.

### Data Analysis and Results Presentation

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State?

**Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State**

			Time Management Practices	Effective Classroom Management	Dec.
Time Management Practices	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2- tailed) N	286	1.00	.811	Positive
Effective Classroom Environment	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2- tailed) N	286	.811	1.00	

On Table 1, a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was run to determine the relationship between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Table 1 shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient,  $r. (286) = .811$ . This is an indication that there is a high positive correlation between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the opinions of male and female principals on the relationship between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

**Table 2: Regression analysis of the correlate between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	256.24	1	256.24	9.11	0.00	S
Residual	3878.16	286	13.56			
Total	4134.40	286				

$$R^2 = 0.05$$

From Table 2 above, a simple linear regression was calculated to find out the relationship between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in Enugu State. A significant regression equation was found  $F(1, 286) = 9.11, p < 0.05$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.05. The large residual sum of squares (3878.16) as compared to the regression sum of squares of 256.24 suggests that there are other factors that are more important than the one investigated in this study. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that principals' time management practices significantly relates with effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu state.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State?

**Table 3: Pearson's Correlation between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State**

			Communication Practices	Effective Classroom Management	Dec.
Communication Practices	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	286	1.00	.804	
	N				Positive
Effective Classroom Environment	Correlation Coefficient	286	.804	1.00	
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N				

On Table 3, a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was run to determine the relationship between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Table 1 shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient,  $r. (286) = .804$ . This is an indication that there is a high positive correlation between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the opinions of male and female principals on the relationship between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State.

**Table 4: Regression analysis of the correlate between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	239.07	1	239.07	11.32	0.00	S
Residual	4696.12	286	16.42			
Total	4935.19	286				

$$R^2 = 0.05$$

From Table 4, a simple linear regression was calculated to find out the relationship between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in Enugu State. A significant regression equation was found  $F(1, 286) = 11.32, p < 0.05$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.05. The large residual sum of squares (4696.12) as compared to the regression sum of squares of 239.07 suggests that there are other factors that are more important than the one investigated in this study. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that principals' communication practices significantly relates with effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu state.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that there was a high positive correlation between principals' time management practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Further finding showed that principals' time management practices significantly relates with effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu state. The finding is in line with Agbo (2019) who posited that principals' time management practices have high positive relationship with effective classroom environment in secondary schools.

The findings of the study showed that there was a high positive correlation between principals' communication practices and effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu State. Further finding showed that principals' communication practices significantly relates with effective classroom environment in secondary schools in Enugu state. The finding is in line with Agbo (2019) who posited that principals' communication practices have high positive relationship with effective classroom environment in secondary schools.

### Conclusion

In view of the findings, the study concluded that there was significant relationship among principals' time management, communication practices and effective classroom environment. Thus, time management and communication practices by the principals have high positive correlation on effective classroom management in secondary schools in Enugu state.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should endeavour to regularly observe the aspect of their time management in order to continually provide effective classroom environment.
2. Induction courses for newly appointed principals should be organized by the Enugu State Ministry of Education; such short term practice oriented courses would enrich practicing school administrators to improve on their communication skills.

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