



Principals Participation in Staff Development Programmes for Effective Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate principals participation in staff development programmes for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were postulated and tested to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Out of a population of 260 principal of secondary schools in Rivers State, 124 were chosen through stratified random sampling technique and used for the study. A self-designed questionnaire called Staff Development Questionnaire (SDQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The data was analysed using mean to answer research questions and z-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings were that in service training, workshops, seminar and conferences are programmes available to principals for staff development in public secondary school administration. It was concluded that a trained principal is equipped with skills and knowledge for effective performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should be encouraged to participate in staff development programmes to continually update their leadership abilities, skills and knowledge to improve management competence.

Keywords: Staff Development; Programmes; Effective Performance; Principals: Public Secondary Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Principals require staff development to address specific roles and responsibilities in their jobs. Smith (1999) recognises that principals are at the forefront of school leadership and as such strategic in school effectiveness. Principals must be developed as educators with much more knowledge about the core technology of education. Basically, principals of public secondary schools are employed and posted to schools by the State Ministry of Education. This makes them staff of State Ministry of Education. Presently, Senior Secondary Schools Management Board oversees the activities of principals in their roles as administrators of Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Norton (2008) defined staff development as the process of providing opportunities for employees to improve their knowledge, skills, performance in line with the goals and values of the organization and in relation to the interests and needs of the employees. There is need for principals to continuously improve their performance by acquiring skills through staff development. Staff development of principals is indispensable if the goals of education are to be realised.

Participation in staff development programmes ensures that principals perform well in their leadership roles to teachers and students. Section 9 sub-section 133 of the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2014) states that the leadership building for education managers is the strengthening of the leaders skills in effective resource mobilization and management (human, material, financial and time) as well as adequate work practices. There shall therefore, be mandatory continuous training before and during the period of service for all planners, managers and administrators in the educational system. Participation in staff development enables the principals to develop the knowledge and skills needed to address teachers work and students' learning challenges. Peretomode and Peretomode (2001) stated that staff development is intended to bring about certain relatively permanent changes in the employees behavior, skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to improve performance on his or her current job or future job. Staff development provides opportunities that provide the learning necessary to enable the employee to perform at the level of competency required in current and future position assignments. It fosters a climate that facilitates personal self-fulfillment, institutional effectiveness, human creativity, and system renewal. ^[1]_{SEP} Staff development serves the school system's primary goals by enhancing and achieving quality teaching and learning for students. Staff Development programmes in education are measures designed to increase the knowledge, skill, experience, attitude and probably release employees latent potentials, so that their potential could be increased to meet the present and future job requirements, thus to meet its objectives (Peretomode, 2009). It enables principals to be efficient and effective in performance of their work. Sackney and Walker (2006) emphasized that school principals need skills in group process facilitation, communication, conflict negotiation, inquiry and data management. Hence, they need staff development to ensure they acquire these traits of good leadership.

Statement of Problem

Many principals have been involved in the management of public secondary schools without participating in any training or development for managerial competence. Staff development programmes are designed to equip principals with knowledge, skills and attitude, which are essential for effective management. At this point in time there is need for analysis of staff development programmes for principals, to have a clearer picture of what it is and the specific features and attributes that can influence effective performance of principals and improve

students learning outcomes. Additionally, there is a dearth of knowledge on staff development for principals, which this study seeks to address. Principals have been known to have inadequate educational background mostly in managerial and administrative functions and therefore, require constant staff development programmes in order to meet up with the demands of their jobs in the dynamic educational trends. The acquired knowledge and management skills would enhance the performance of the principals thereby equipping them with current management techniques. This study was undertaken to assess the principals' participation in staff development programmes for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study discusses the various staff development programmes available to principals in Rivers State and impact of staff development programmes to principals.

This study will benefit principals, teachers, students, government and employers of labour. The principals will be encouraged to take staff development programmes in order to improve their job performance. Government will identify the importance of development programmes for principals and be willing to invest more on training and developing the principals under her employment in order to enhance their performance. The study will give teachers, students and parents, insight and knowledge on issues that relate to staff development practices for effective performance of principals in public secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

To effectively investigate the problem of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

- Identify the staff development programmes available to principals for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Examine the impact of principals' participation in staff development programmes for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

- What are the staff development programs available to principals for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the impact of principals' participation in staff development programmes for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference between male and female principals on staff development programmes available for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between male and female principals on impact of participation in staff development for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Staff Training and Development

Staff development is a systematic development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task (Uzonwun in Okorie, Igwe, Asodike, Onyeike & Anyaogu, 2014). Pemida (2017) opined that staff development refers to a variety of education and training activities which are designed purposely to give staff additional knowledge skills, attitude, experiences and understanding needed to perform up to required standard. The implication is that change in the behavior of a staff or employee is a function of training and development. Uzonwun in Okorie et al. (2014) viewed staff development as the planned, ongoing, comprehensive, sustained, educative and enriching programmes and activities engaged by those in educational sector to equip teachers, principals, headmasters and headmistress and indeed all staff, to be better equipped to meet the new challenges and technologies in the educational world which will in turn enhance student performance.

Amah and Nkuda (2014) pointed out that a major problem with training and development is identifying the training needs of an individual. They suggested that the basic steps in identifying training and development needs of employees are identifying the skills needed by task analysis, analyse the employees, selecting methods of developing the needed skills, carrying out the training and evaluate. It is through training that the principal is able to understand and acquire management skills, which he employs to situations that arise in the school.

Amah (2016) recounted that systematic approach to training involves planned identification of training needs, design of training needs and the evaluation of the results of training. This refers to an organised and logical approach in carrying out a training programme. The cycle is ignited by the establishment of a training policy, followed by provision of resources, identification of training programme, choice of training method, implementation and evaluation of training programme as shown in Figure 1.

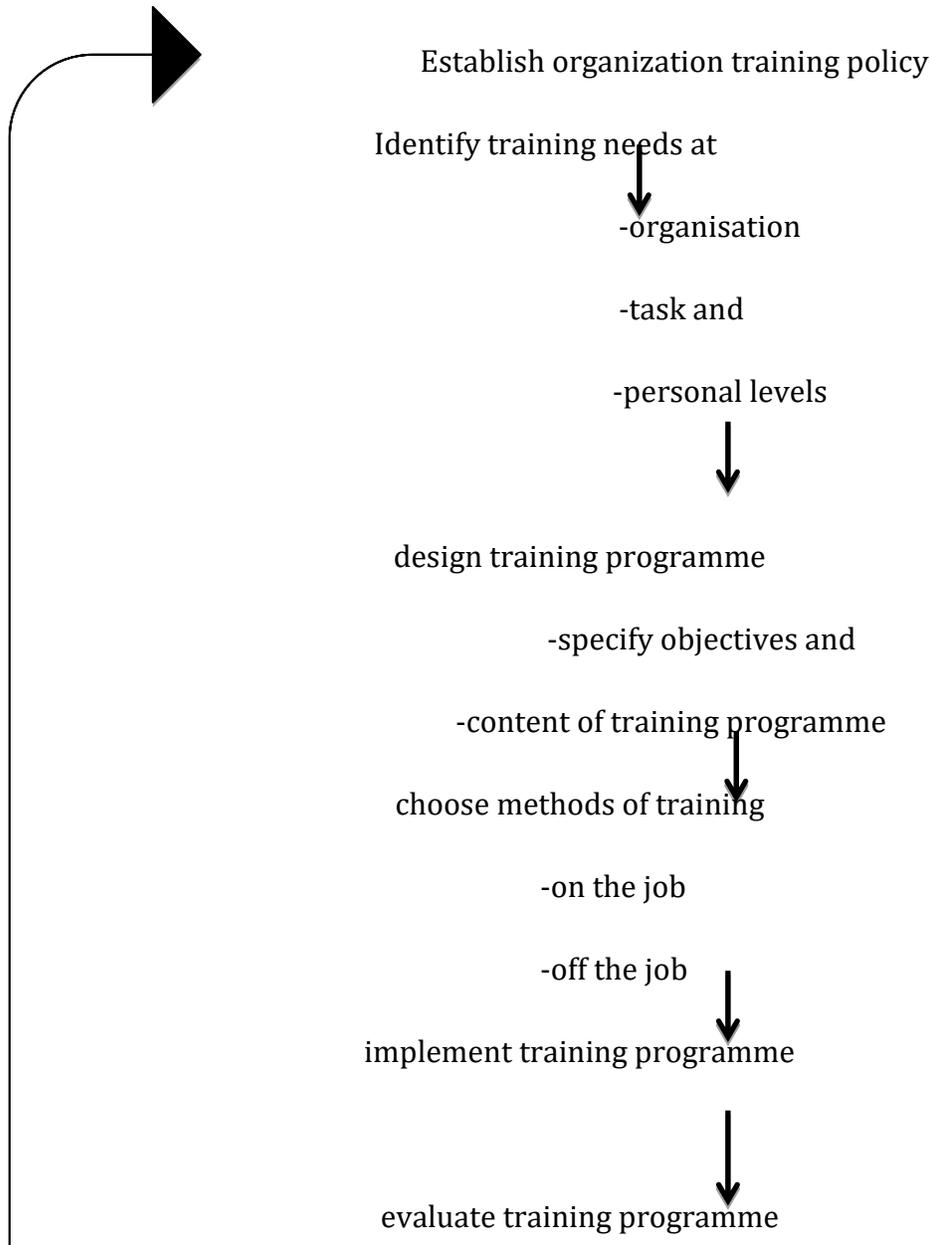


Figure 1: Systematic Training Cycle. Source: Adapted from Amah (2016)

A training policy is vital to carry out effective training and development in the education system. The policy provides direction and makes room for evaluation of the training programme. Next in the cycle is to ensure that resource provision is made in the budget for the training. Cost of training is determined by the choice of method. Identification of the training programme will involve analysis of symptoms indicating the need for training and development. The symptoms include lack of interest in one's job, low productivity, excuses, and negative attitude to work. Choice of training method will depend on the objectives and content of the training. The choice of method will to a large extent determine what trainees will gain from the training method. It gives consideration to the environment where the training programme will take place whether on- the -job or off - the -job and the nature of the training. On -the -job training refers training while actual work is going on. This offers the opportunity of learning in real situations and use of

actual equipment. On-the-job training includes job rotation, apprenticeship, understudy, secondment, mentoring, special projects, coaching and counseling. This method of training and development programme facilitates learning because of immediate feedback and corrections can be applied. However, on-the-job training has the tendency to disrupt the flow of work. Off-the-job training refers to the training, which takes place outside the work environment. It permits the training of large number of employees. Examples of off-the-job training include classroom instruction, lectures/talks, role plays, case studies, simulation exercises, group discussions, video tapes, television classes, self-study, internet, satellite beamed television classes and computer based e-learning (Amah, 2016). Implementation follows immediately after the choice of method. It involves working together with the trainers, that is, the actual carrying out of the training programme with the principals in attendance. Evaluation is the final stage of the systematic approach to training. This involves the holistic analysis of the training and development programme to determine whether the objectives of the programme were achieved. It is important that the participants of the training programme are given opportunity to practice the skills and knowledge acquired and sufficient feedback received to appropriately carry out an effective evaluation of the whole exercise. Evaluation is important to know if the resources put into the training are worthwhile and determine if modifications are necessary in the future. Evaluation also identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the training programme.

Training

Training is viewed as organizational effort aimed at helping an employee to acquire basic skills required for the efficient execution of functions for which he was hired (Nwachukwu, 2007). Training is an activity carried out to address the needs of the present job. He further stated that training reduces cost and employee turnover, increases productivity and improve coordination. In other words, training ensures that all employees work towards the achievement of organisational goals. Training can be viewed as short-term educational programmes that are made available to employees to enable them learn technical knowledge and skills relevant for a particular job. Training is intended to build employee vocationally for organizational work.

Robbins (2003) identified four categories of skills that are obtained through training, which include basic literacy, technical, interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Basic literacy skills include basic reading and mathematics skills, which is necessary for all employees if the educational organization intends to compete globally. The basic skill enables employees understand numerically controlled equipment, interpret process sheets and communicate orally within teams and the organization. Basic literacy skills facilitate communication and increase confidence. They are acquired through effective speaking courses and report writing courses. Technical are the knowledge and capabilities to perform specialized tasks in education in relation to principals.

Principals often need to have technical skills in order to communicate effectively with teachers, students and coordinate efforts towards improved performance. Principals need training to keep abreast of the ever changing technology through continual training programmes. They need to be trained and retrained to understand technological advancements in education and changes in structure of educational system and management techniques. Interpersonal skills refer to ability to communicate or interact well with other people. This skill is most essential for the principal because on his day-to-day job he meets with supervisors from Ministry of education teachers and students. Some principals require training on interpersonal skills to improve their

ability to relate and communicate with teachers and students. Problem solving skills helps a principal to develop the skill that has to do with the process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution. Problem solving skills training include activities that sharpens ones logic and reasoning ability to identify the causes of a problem, develop alternative solutions to the problems, analyse them and select solutions to them. Problem solving skills training is part of management training and development programme for principals.

Objectives of Training

Nwachukwu (2007) identified the following as objectives of training and development:

- **Increased productivity**
The overall goal of training is to increase productivity. A well-trained principal is capable of producing more than an untrained principal
- **Lower turnover rate**
A principal who is incapable of producing is frustrated by failure and is more likely to abandon his work than those who are capable of producing. An untrained principal will hate work and likes to absent himself
- **Higher morale**
Training boosts a principal's confidence in performing his duty. He believes he has control over his environment and equipped to meet work situations. A trained principal derives intrinsic satisfaction from his work, which promotes his morale.
- **Better coordination**
Training brings to the fore educational system expectations and objectives through which a principal can attain his own objectives. This brings about congruency of objectives resulting in coordination.

Management Training

Management training can be provided for potential managers or those that are already managers. Management training for potential principals would imply training provided to introduce them to the basic principles and practice of management and to give them an insight into their role as principals in the school system. Babalola and Ayeni (2009) stated that the purpose of training is to give education or retraining which equips an individual to plan, organise, control, direct, stimulate, evaluate and perform all other duties needed in an educational organisation for the purpose of achieving well-defined and articulated educational goals. Management training involves attending courses within and outside the organization. This may be off-the -job focusing on the acquisition of specific job skills.

Development

Development is the learning activity directed towards future needs. It is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills for the purpose of taking on new responsibilities or challenges. Amah & Gabriel (2017) defined development as teaching of managers and professional employees broad skills necessary for their current and future jobs.

Adesina (1988) identified four types of staff development programmes in educational system as follows:

- Correction of deficiencies known at the time of appointment
- Enabling teaching staff to face challenges arising from innovation in the school curriculum.
- Enables non-professionals to professionalise
- Enables professionals to acquire higher qualification for greater responsibilities and status

Participation of Principals in Staff Development Programmes

In my years of experience, I found out that staff development programmes are done at least twice a year. There are some staff development programmes available for principals. However, it is suggested that the contents be enriched for the principals to benefit in order to achieve set goals of secondary education.

In-service training

This is training given to principals in public secondary schools to enable them develop skills in specific areas in their jobs. In most cases, it is conducted during work schedule breaks, for example, long vacation. This sometimes takes the form of sandwich programmes where principals pursue higher degrees in education. In such programmes a principal through admission into the university is equipped with leadership competence and new administrative techniques. In-service training involves provisions made by the administration of an institution to improve the quality of their personnel (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 1999). He further asserted that in-service education is prompted by assumed deficiency. In service programmes involve staff development exercise, which enhances staff capacity in terms of competence, commitment and capacity to change, which are fundamental. In service training programme creates an avenue for individuals to work as a team in solving problems, which are of common concern to all staff as well as contributing to the development of the educational objectives of the school system. Therefore, to encourage growth in performance in service training and other forms of staff development must be practiced.

Iwundu (2008) stated that in service training is education received in structured setting which enables one to become more competent professionally, to further develop technical subject matter competencies in order to keep abreast of and if possible ahead of changes to explore educational and technological content and processes in varying depths and to increase personal competences. It is training activities engaged by principals and teachers to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to effectively increase their leadership performance in schools.

Conferences

In conferences, scholarly papers are presented by experts and discussions centered on them. New techniques and concepts are examined and participants are encouraged to ask questions and

express their views. Nigerian Universities organize many conferences for school administrators every year for enhancement of management techniques.

Seminars

Seminar involves a group of people coming together for discussion and learning of specific techniques with keynote speaker for each topic. Several topics in education are reviewed to enhance learning of ideas.

Workshop

Workshop involves series of working session designed to equip and update participants with skills that can aid them in discharging their duties effectively. Principals through continued participation in workshops are given opportunities to improve skills and competence.

Mentoring

A research carried out in South Africa revealed that mentoring is a powerful tool for improving leadership and management skills of principals, vice principals and heads of department (Bush, 2005). It was found to be effective in training beginning principals.

Role Playing

Role playing is used in management training of principals to make them understand and cope with other people's problems (Amah, 2006). It involves trainees assuming the attitude and behavior of others. The trainees act out the parts of people usually superiors and subordinates (principals and teachers) in personnel management problem in a realistic management situation. It is aimed at imparting interpersonal skills.

Case Study Method

This is useful in training managers like school principals to enable them acquire the problem solving skills in relevant context, which ultimately improve decision making skills. The cases may be real or fictional. Trainees are asked to suggest answers to a number of issues raised in the case so as to provide solutions.

Staff Development Programmes for Principals

Staff development for principals refers to continuing training and development of principals as school administrators in order to update the skills and knowledge. Principals as managers of administrators of secondary schools require management development, which aids his/her growth and self-development. Ministry of Education should make efforts to improve staff development programmes for principals in relation to the position they occupy as administrators at the school level. On that strength, staff development for principals should be management development. Management development is an attempt to improve managerial performance effectiveness. Nwachukwu (2007) stressed that one of the major purposes of management

development is to avoid obsolescence. Management development will expose the principal to new managerial techniques and skills needed for their jobs. Amah and Nkuda (2014) presented methods employed for management development as management education and experiential learning. Management education refers to the obtaining qualifications from universities. Examples of such qualifications are Masters in Education (M.Ed.) and certificates from professional bodies as Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). Experiential Learning is a method that involves learning by doing or on –the –job experience with guidance from supervisor or colleague. This includes coaching, mentoring and self-development.

Evaluating Staff Development Programmes

It is expedient to evaluate training to find out if it achieved the purpose for which it was designed. This is necessary because of the amount of money invested in it. Evaluating the training programme will enable the organisers to appraise the trainers, methods and content with the aim of improving in the future. Amah and Nkuda (2014) stated that training can be evaluated:

- by reaction outcome from questionnaire completed by trainees, that is, affective outcomes –to trainees reaction towards training programme.
- by the administration of tests(oral or written)that is cognitive outcomes to measure the knowledge trainees learnt in the programme.
- by determining the benefits obtained by the organisation after the training in terms of reduction of cost, morale, productivity, rate of absenteeism and staff turnover.
- by observation of trainees performance in work samples such as simulators.
- by results obtained after the training, for example, improvement in product quality or customer service.

Soba (2012) added that there are two techniques of evaluating staff namely committee and use of questionnaire. Committee comprises of representatives of participating management and training staff. Use of questionnaire is used to find out the opinion of the trainees. The purpose of evaluation is to determine whether the objectives and content of the development programmes are relevant to the current needs of school.

Impact of Staff Development Programmes

Cole (1996) enumerated the benefits of management development, which can be experienced in organisations. The benefits if applied in education would be:

- Individual principal performing at full satisfactory level individual.
- Improved performance for work team as a result of better leadership.
- Improved communication between principals and their staff
- Improved problem solving capacity throughout the school.

Mbanasor (2014) in a study identified skill development and attitude modification as impacts of managerial development programmes on principals of government craft centres in Rivers State. Skill development is a major advantage derives from training and development programmes. Every training and development programme is aimed at equipping the participant with a skill

relevant to his job responsibilities. Skilled principal is generally productive and will motivate the teachers and students towards high performance in their jobs and academics. The skilled principal will perform his job as a professional and act accordingly. Attitude Modification is one of the outcomes of training and development programme that impacts on an employee's productivity. A good training and development programme should be able to influence a principal towards his job. The principal is equipped with the ability to perform his duties successfully with a good sense of accomplishment. Training and development programmes enable a principal to update management techniques and improve competence in job performance. Consequently, such a principal will be confident in carrying out his job responsibilities.

Effective Performance of Principal

Performance is viewed as the key element to the achievement of educational goals. It deals with what has been achieved. Performance increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation, which helps the achievement of the organization. Armstrong(2009) stressed that the most obvious way to measure what has been achieved is by referring to the key performance indicators, which has to do with the level of productivity. He pointed out that an individual's performance in a given task could be greatly influenced by the level of motivation they receive. In other words, better reward may be in the form of welfare packages incentives has a direct and significant or positive effect on job performance (Danwi et al., 2017).

Performance in education reflects in good leadership effective teaching and learning resulting in high academic achievement of students. Therefore, principal's performance is the extent to which a principal had achieved their short or long term educational goals. Katz and Kahn in Peretomode (2009) identified three basic skills upon which effective performance and successful administration rest. These skills are technical, human and conceptual.

Technical skill refers to ability to use tools, methods, procedures, and techniques in education to perform specific tasks. A principal needs technical skills to perform his responsibilities. The principal requires enough technical skills for leadership effectiveness and motivation of teachers and students. Human skill refers to the skills that a person uses in communicating and interacting with others both individually and in groups. It is the ability of the principal to work effectively with people and through people. Human skill requires understanding oneself as well as consideration for others in a group settings and the ability to motivate others as individuals or groups. Conceptual skill refers to mental ability to coordinate and integrate the entire interests and activities of the school. It also refers to the ability to apply information and concepts to practice. This is associated with knowledge because in order to conceptualise an individual must possess or have access to a wealth of cognitive and organized information (Peretomode, 2008). Conceptual skills involve the principal's ability to see the school as a system made up of the school, school community and the educational programme. An example of conceptual skill is the principal understanding how the various parts of the school depend on one another. It is essential to note that principals require conceptual skills more than technical skills for day- to- day successful administration of the school. He opined that the major mechanism that facilitates the acquisition of administrative competence and skills are education, experience and a mentor –mentee relationship.

Katz and Kahn in Peretomode (2009) presented the three major mechanisms that facilitate the acquisition of administrative competence and skills as education, experience and

mentor-mentee. Education involves undertaking undergraduate and graduate studies. Experience involves exposure to a variety of situations, problems and demands It involves time and entails and entails maturity on the job. Mentor-mentee relationship involves the process of acquiring administrative and other skills by working and association with a seasoned higher administrator.

Staff development has been identified to be a tool for improving principals' effectiveness in the performance of the responsibilities. However, staff development for principals has met with some constraints, which has not allowed for the full realization of full benefits of development of principals. Nduka (2008) stressed that one of the problems is that the objectives of the training programmes may not be clearly stated to the participants, which means there would not be mental preparedness for achievement. Unfortunately, some principals exhibit lusterattitude, as they perceive the programme as a few days off work meant for relaxation. Additional, there is problem of no positive reinforcement after training for example, promotion to enable the principal utilize acquires skills and knowledge. This means the trainee may not have the opportunity to put what he learns into practice.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to encourage staff development practices for principals in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Staff development means a variation or deviation in educational policy, practices, objectives or methodology from what it used it to be. Change may be quantitative and it may be an improvement or deterioration in the existing status quo. Various forms of staff development for principals are available in the educational system. The design for the study was a descriptive survey. The sample of this study was made up of 124 principals who were selected using the stratified random sampling technique from Rivers State. The instrument used was questionnaire titled Staff Development Questionnaire (SDQ). Staff Development Questionnaire (SDQ) was made up of two parts. Part A sought information on personal data. Part B was designed to elicit information on variables of staff development practices of principals in public secondary schools. It had a modified four point likert rating type scale with assigned weights of strongly agree (S/A) = 4points, agree (A) = 3points, disagree (D) =2 and strongly disagree (S/D) =1point. For answering the research questions, mean scores were used. The criterion mean of 2.50 was chosen for decision making. Therefore, item mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted, while those less than 2.50 were rejected. z -test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Results of the data analysis is as shown on the following tables:

Research Question 1: What are the staff development programs available to principals for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers Stat

Table 1: Mean scores of respondents on staff development programmes available to principals for effective performance in public secondary school

s/n	Items	S/A	A	D	SD	N	X	Remark
1	In-service training	50	43	20	11	124	3.06	Agree
2	Seminars	87	18	12	7	124	3.49	Agree
3	Conferences	25	72	16	11	124	2.89	Agree
4	Workshops	89	16	11	8	124	3.50	Agree
Grand mean							3.23	Agree

The result in table 1 indicates that respondents agree that in-service training, workshops, seminars and conferences are programmes available to principals of public secondary schools. This is because the grand mean of 3.23 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of staff development practices on principals for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean scores of respondents on impact of principals' participation in staff development programme for effective performance in public secondary schools.

S/N	Item	S/A	A	D	SD	N	X	Remark
1	Seminars helps principals to update management techniques	45	34	23	22	124	2.91	Agree
2	Workshop help to improve competence	50	36	21	17	124	2.89	Agree
3	Conferences equip principal's with new knowledge and innovations in education	38	32	30	24	124	2.67	Agree
4	Staff development improves teachers effectiveness and students learning outcome	60	21	26	17	124	3.00	Agree
Grand mean							2.86	Agree

The result in table 2 shows that mean scores of the four (4) items of 2.91, 2.89, 2.67, 3.00 and a grand mean of 2.86 are greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50. The result revealed that the respondents accepted that seminar, workshop and conference make impact on principals for effective performance in public secondary schools. Also the result revealed that staff development influence teachers' effectiveness and students learning outcomes.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1

Table 3: z-test analysis on difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on staff development programmes available for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Gender	N	X	SD	DF	z-cal	z-critical	Remark
Male	44	3.09	0.99	122	0.18	1.96	Accepted
Female	80	3.05	0.93				

The data in table 5 showed that z-calculated 0.18 is less than z-critical 1.96 with degree of freedom of 122 at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was therefore upheld. Hence, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on staff development programmes available for effective performance in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2

Table 4: z-test analysis on difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on impact of participation in staff development programmes for effective performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Gender	N	X	SD	DF	z-cal	z-critical	Remark
Male	44	3.50	0.83	122	0.12	1.96	Accepted
Female	80	3.48	0.93				

The data in table 6 showed that z-calculated 0.12 is less than z-critical 1.96 with degree of freedom of 122 at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was therefore upheld. Hence, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on impact of staff development for effective performance in public secondary schools.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study revealed that in service training, workshops, seminar and conferences are programmes available to principals for staff development. This is line with the findings of Mbanasor (2014) that these are managerial development programmes available for effective administration of Government Craft Centres in Rivers State. Furthermore, the study showed that staff development programmes update principal's management techniques, and improve competence in administration. Additionally, the study revealed that staff development equips principals with new knowledge and innovations in education as well as improve teachers' effectiveness and students learning outcomes. This agrees with the findings of the study by Mohammed et al. (2011) study on the impact of school management trainings and principals' attitude on students learning outcome found out that management trainings have effect on student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Principals in public secondary schools participate in staff development practices to continually update their leadership and management skills. This is aimed at improving the performance of the principals. The principal that has undergone the appropriate programme is equipped with the management skill, and knowledge to perform his job effectively. Primarily, the impact of staff development is skill development and attitude modification, which impacts positively on employees' productivity. A trained principal therefore is equipped with skill, knowledge and competence for effective performance thereby providing good leadership in school and increased student academic achievement.

Recommendations

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

- Seminars, conferences should be regularly organised for principals to enhance effective performance in the public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Ministry of Education should have a policy on staff development which should include but not limited conferences, seminars, workshop in addition to in-service training.
- Principals should be encouraged to participate in staff development programmes to continually update their leaderships abilities, skills and knowledge to improve managerial competence.
- Ministry of Education should provide opportunities to trained principals to use their newly acquired management skills and knowledge.
- Ministry of Education should make provisions for staff development programmes for principals and such funds appropriately channeled to procuring educational resources needed for adequate training.

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