

Comparative Analysis of students' personnel management practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State

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Abstract

The study comparatively analyzed students' personnel management practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 418 respondents (222 public and 196 private) secondary schools principals in Ebonyi State. The sample size for the study was 209 respondents (111 public and 198 private) drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. The data were collected through the use of face validated questionnaire titled Students' Personnel Management Practices of Principals in School Administration Questionnaire (SPMPPSAQ). The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach alpha and it yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.78, 0.81 and 0.82 for three sections BI, BII and BIII respectively with overall coefficient of 0.80 for the entire instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that admission practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that ministry of Education should develop standard admission manual to serve as guideline to create uniformity and improve admission processes in public and private secondary schools.

Keywords: Students, Personnel Management, Principals, School Administration, Admission, Health, Discipline

1.1 Introduction

Educational institutions such as the secondary schools facilitate the transmission of skills and knowledge to learners. Thompson and Akinfolarin (2018) asserted that secondary education equips the young or adolescents with practical knowledge, skills, values and understanding which enable them to cope with the academic and social demands of tertiary education. Secondary school is made up of personnel who need to be coordinated and controlled to achieve educational goals and objectives. In an attempt to perform the functions of controlling and coordinating staff, tools, equipment and other resources; the rudiments of school administration appear.

There are many definitions given by different scholars in regards to school administration. Okeke and Ikediugwu (2020) defined school administration as the managerial tasks that are concerned with the attainment of set objectives through the utilization of the available resources in secondary schools. This is an indication that school administration is the act of working with people to utilize available resources for achievement of educational objectives. Nnebedum, Abadi and Obasi (2019) defined administration as the systematic process of managing the available resources to attain pre-determined goals. School administration is the

process of planning, organizing, directing and coordinating the available resources to achieve educational goals and objectives. One essential areas of school administration is students' personnel management.

The term 'students' personnel management' has been defined in different ways by several authors. According to Nnebedum, Abadi and Obasi (2019), students personnel management is the activities and services rendered to students to assist them drive maximum benefits for school curricular and co-curricular activities. It is implicit in the above definition that students' personnel management are activities that enable students drive maximum benefits from curricular and co-curricular activities of the school. Students' personnel management is geared toward making learners to benefit from school programmes for their physical, emotional, intellectual and moral development. According to Uzoechina (2018), students' personnel management refers to all the activities that are carried out by school administrators to ensure that the students derive the best from the school curricular and co-curricular activities. Students' personnel management is targeted toward catering for the learning needs of students in school. Contextually, students' personnel management is the act of planning and controlling the activities and behaviour of students for healthy and stimulating learning environment that mental stability, physical fitness and academic excellent.

There are various components of students' personnel management practices. The components of students' personnel management practices identified by Akpan (2016) include guidance and counseling services, orientation programmes, discipline, sports, health and safety services. Similar to this, Abdulkareem and Gabadeen (2015) outlined the components of students' personnel management practices include issues such as; admission, enrolment, classification of students, guidance and counseling, health services, accommodation, transportation, information services and sporting activities. The interest of this study is on admission practices, health practices and disciplinary practices.

Admission is the process of planning requirement for access to education institution, attracting students to seek access, screening and selecting the best-qualified candidates. It also entail identifying the number of students needed in the school based on the available facilities, devising of requirement, advertising and sales of form, review of applications, conducting tests and selecting the eligible candidates. Akter and Giridharan (2016) noted admission practices include; the invitation of applicants, shortlisting of applicants, interview or written test and decision on admission Akter and Giridharan further stressed that is important to ensure that the admission practices are fair and transparent to avoid an allegation of favouritism and abuse. The essence of admission practices is to ensure that eligible students gain access to secondary education irrespective of their gender, religion and the financial status of their parents. Soon after the admission has been concluded, students' fitness to undertake educational programmes are determined through various health services.

Health services are activities and programmes designed to prevent and control diseases for promoting well-being of learners. According Okeke and Ikediugwu (2020), health services are medical programmes or activities designed to ascertain the students' well-being, provide medical care for illness or injuries in school in order to keep them fit throughout the period of their study. It is the duty of principals to provide health services to prevent and control diseases among staff

and learners in school environment. Kolawole (2015) asserted that the school health services and practices are made up of important components such as health appraisal, health examination, referral services, health counselling, emergency care for sicknesses and injuries, correction of remediable defects, ambulatory services, health screening, prevention and control of communicable diseases. Other health services include medical counseling, routine medical test, provision of first aid treatment, regular tidying of the school environment and sanitary facilities. Health practices promote the development and wellbeing of students to enable them attain academic excellence and achieve their full potentials in life.

Discipline is the regulation and control of behaviour to maintain orderliness in learning environment. According to Benewaa (2020), discipline is readiness or ability to respect authority and observe conventional or established laws of the society or any other organisation. School discipline is act of instructing students to obey a particular code of conduct to exhibit desirable behaviour. Nnorom, Okonkwo, Ezeanolue and Nwankwo (2020) stressed that the aim of school discipline is therefore to help the students to be well-adjusted, happy, achieve in academics and character and become useful to the society. Ofeimu, Abdulrahman and Kolawole (2018) stressed that discipline is when students are taught to respect the school authorities, observe the school rules and regulations, maintain an established standard of behaviour. Ekanem and Edet (2013) noted that discipline practices include sweeping, grass cutting, screaming, cleaning of toilet, stumping, repairing of damage property and the use of law enforcement agents. Others include; withdrawal of some privileges, reprimand, suspension, expulsion, drills, flogging offenders, reinforcement for good conduct and guidance and counseling among others. Rules and regulations are essential means of maintaining discipline. Ajibola and Ali (2014) posited that rules and regulations may define the expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethics. Principals could apply disciplinary practices to ensure that rules are obeyed and harmful behaviours are controlled to promote safety of staff and students in school.

Students' personnel management practices of public and private secondary school principals in Ebonyi State seem to be in serious doubt. There appears to be cases of money-for-admission in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Adenike (2020) observed that there are more average but rich candidates in schools at the expense of brilliant students who deserve admission but are robbed of it, due to their inability to pay the extremely large amount of fees charged by racketeers. Students who gained admission through the backdoor (money) seem to experience difficulty in their educational pursuit. However, there seems to be variance in the admission processes in public and private secondary school as each category of school appear to use methods considered most appropriate to them. There seems to be cases of lateness to school, absenteeism, fighting, dress code violation, noising making in class, stealing, drugs abuse, cheating during examinations and disrespect for teachers in some secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The health services in public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State may differ. Kolawole (2015) observed that some public secondary schools in Nigeria seem to have not been provided with funding for procurement of health infrastructures, equipment's, and personnel, as compared to private secondary school which provision is made by the owners of the schools in meeting the current health systems and promotion of healthy living among students attending private secondary schools. Given this background, this study comparatively analyzed the

students' personnel management practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to comparatively analyze students' personnel management practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study sought to comparatively analyze:

1. Admission practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
2. Health practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
3. Disciplinary practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

1.3 Research questions

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. What are the admission practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the health practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
3. What are disciplinary practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significant

1. There is no significant in the admission practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.
2. There is no significant in the health practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.
3. There is no significant in the disciplinary practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

2. Method

Descriptive survey research design was utilized for the study. The population for this study consisted of 418 respondents made 222 principals in public and 196 principals government approved private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The sample size for the study was 209 respondents made up of 111 principals in public and 98 private secondary schools drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. This sample comprised 50% of the entire population of principals of public and private secondary schools in the study area. The population was divided into strata based on categories of schools in each education zone, from each stratum, 50% of principals were drawn to represent their schools.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Students’ Personnel Management Practices of Principals in School Administration Questionnaire (SPMPPSAQ)”. The instrument is divided into two parts namely A and B. Part A elicit information on bio data of respondents such as categories of schools. Part B contained three sections namely B1, B2 and B3 with 9, 10 and 11 items respectively. The instrument was face-validated by three experts, two in Department of Education Foundations and a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation all in Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Their suggestions and comments were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument.

Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researchers together with three research assistants who are secondary teachers in Ebonyi State. A total of 209 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and 193 copies were properly completed and successfully retrieved, indicating 92% percent return. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, any mean score of 2.5 and above was taken to indicate agreed below 2.5 was taken to indicate disagreed. For decision on hypotheses, if t-calculated is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was rejected and the difference taken to be statistically significant, but if otherwise, the null hypotheses was not rejected and the difference taken to be statistically not significant.

3. Method

Research Question 1: What are the admission practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of the Admission Practices of Principals in Administration of Public and Private Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	Public Sch. Principals (N=101)			Private Sch. Principals (N=92)		
		Mean	Sd	Decision	Mean	Sd	Decision
1	Devising admission requirements into school	2.78	1.02	Agree	2.81	1.10	Agree
2	Advertise the sale of admission forms through mass media	2.70	0.98	Agree	2.91	1.13	Agree
3	Sales of application forms to members of the public	2.98	1.09	Agree	3.45	1.07	Agree
4	Review of applications from members of the public	2.96	1.04	Agree	3.20	1.10	Agree
5	Short eligible applicants for entrance examination	2.57	0.95	Agree	2.41	1.05	Disagree
6	Conduct entrance examinations for students	2.67	1.10	Agree	2.87	1.03	Agree
7	Conduct oral interview for students who successful pass the entrance examinations.	2.07	1.56	Disagree	2.61	1.02	Agree
8	Screen students’ credentials for possible admission	2.54	1.12	Agree	2.61	1.05	Agree
9	Offer admission to eligible candidates	2.63	0.93	Agree	2.57	1.00	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.66	1.09		2.83	1.06	Agree

As shown on Table 1, all the items except items 5 and 7 of both public and private secondary school principals mean scores are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as their admission practices. The overall standard deviation scores of 1.09 and 1.06 for public and private school principals respectively indicated that their responses are homogenous. The cluster mean of 2.66 and 2.83 for public and private school principals respectively which are above the cut of mean of 2.50 indicated that admission practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Question 2: What are the health practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of the Health Practices of Principals in Administration of Public and Private Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	Public Sch. Principals (N =101)			Private Sch. Principals (N =92)		
		Mean	Sd	Decision	Mean	Sd	Decision
10	Conduct pre-admission medical screening	2.82	1.04	Agree	2.78	1.04	Agree
11	Conduct routine medical examination of students	2.45	1.03	Disagree	2.41	0.95	Disagree
12	Ensure school environment is regularly swept	2.97	1.00	Agree	3.02	1.11	Agree
13	Render first aid services to students	2.76	1.15	Agree	2.80	1.07	Agree
14	Conduct periodic sample test of drinking water made available for students	2.41	0.91	Disagree	2.48	1.06	Disagree
15	Ensure school sanitary facilities are tidy	2.39	1.08	Disagree	2.52	1.12	Disagree
16	Render medical counselling services to students	2.60	1.13	Agree	2.65	1.09	Agree
17	Orient students on personnel hygiene practices	2.87	1.04	Agree	2.81	1.14	Agree
18	keeping updated health records of students	2.91	1.14	Agree	2.84	1.01	Agree
19	Refer students with critical health challenges to medical experts	2.62	1.10	Agree	2.71	1.13	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.68	1.06	Agree	2.70	1.07	Agree

Result presented on Table 2 revealed that all the items except items 11, 14 and 15 of both public and private secondary school principals mean scores are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as their health practices. The overall standard deviation scores of 1.06 and 1.07 for public and private school principals respectively indicated that their responses are homogenous. The cluster mean of 2.68 and 2.70 for public and private school principals respectively which are above the cut of mean of 2.50 indicated that health practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Question 3: What are the disciplinary practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of the Disciplinary Practices of Principals in Administration of Public and Private Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	Public Sch. Principals (N =101)			Private Sch. Principals (N =92)		
		Mean	Sd	Decision	Mean	Sd	Decision
20	Formulate rules to guide the conduct of students	2.95	1.00	Agree	2.81	1.09	Agree
21	Monitor of students' activities to curb misconduct	2.47	0.98	Disagree	2.90	1.04	Agree
22	Use school discipline committee to address misconduct among students	2.98	0.90	Agree	2.84	1.06	Agree
23	Provide guidance and counseling services to assist students behave well	2.81	1.11	Agree	2.76	1.05	Agree
24	Use oral reprimand to address less serious misbehaviour among students	2.84	1.03	Agree	3.01	0.92	Agree
25	Apply verbal warning to address in disciplinary act among students	2.64	1.10	Agree	2.60	0.91	Agree
26	Suspend students for harmful behaviour	2.60	1.17	Agree	2.47	1.13	Disagree
27	Expulsion of students for serious misconduct	2.63	1.09	Agree	2.48	1.09	Disagree
28	Invite parents/guardians of misbehaved students for discussion	2.69	1.07	Agree	2.77	0.87	Agree
29	Assign portion of land with grasses for students to cut as means of minimizing misconduct among other	2.78	1.02	Agree	2.58	0.91	Agree
30	Flop students for breaking school rules	2.78	1.05	Agree	2.54	1.01	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.74	1.05	Agree	2.71	1.01	Agree

The result of data presented on Table 3 revealed that all the items except items 21, 26 and 27 of both public and private secondary school principals mean scores are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as their disciplinary practices. The overall standard deviation scores of 1.05 and 1.01 for public and private school principals respectively indicated that their responses are homogenous. The cluster mean of 2.70 and 2.70 for public and private school principals respectively which are above the cut of mean of 2.50 indicated that disciplinary practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant in the admission practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

Respondents	N	X	SD	t.cal	t.crit.	Df	∞	Remark
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Public Sch. Principals	101	2.66	1.09	1.20	1.96	101	0.05	Not Significant
Private Sch. Principals	92	2.83	1.06					

Table 4: The Summary oft-test Analysis of Admission Practices applied byPublic and Private Secondary School Principals in School Administration

As shown on Table 4, the t-calculated value of 1.20 is less than t-critical value of at 0.05 level of significance and 101 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant in the admission practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant in the health practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

Table 5: The Summary oft-test Analysis of Health Practices applied byPublic and Private Secondary School Principals in School Administration

Respondents	N	X	SD	t.cal	t.crit.	Df	∞	Remark
Public Sch. Principals	101	2.68	1.06	0.57	1.96	101	0.05	Not Significant
Private Sch. Principals	92	2.70	1.07					

Result presented on Table 5 revealed that the t-calculated value of 0.57 is less than t-critical value of at 0.05 level of significance and 101 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant in the health practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant in the disciplinary practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

Table 6: The Summary oft-test Analysis of Disciplinary Practices applied byPublic and Private Secondary School Principals in School Administration

Respondents	N	X	SD	t.cal	t.crit.	Df	∞	Remark
Public Sch. Principals	101	2.74	1.05	0.90	1.96	101	0.05	Not Significant
Private Sch. Principals	92	2.71	1.01					

As shown on Table 6, the t-calculated value of 0.90 is less than t-critical value of at 0.05 level of significance and 101 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant in the disciplinary practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration.

4. Discussion of Findings

The result of the study indicated that admission practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. This is in conformity with the finding of Suleiman, Hanafi and Tanslikan (2019) who reported that admission services applied in schools are entrance examination and oral interview. This finding might be as a result of the ensuring that eligible students are admitted into public and private secondary schools. The admission practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State include devising admission requirements into school, advertise the sale of admission forms through mass media, sales of application forms to members of the public, review of applications from members of the public, conduct entrance examinations for students, screen students' credentials for possible admission and offer admission to eligible candidates. The admission practices applied by principals can lead to attraction and enrolment of best qualified candidates in secondary schools. Furthermore, finding of this study also showed that there was no significant in the admission practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration. This is in disagreement with the finding of Pemida (2015) who reported that there was significant difference in the implementation of admission policies in public and private educational institutions. The disagreement between the two findings could be due to the fact that the two studies were conducted in different geographical location.

The finding of this study indicated that health practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. This refuted the finding of Kolawole (2015) which reported that there is no satisfactory provision of health services in public and private secondary schools. The difference in geographical location could be attributed to the disagreement between the two studies. This result was a surprise giving the fact that ensuring well-being and safety of all learners is one of core duties of principals in public and private secondary school principals. The health practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State include conduct pre-admission medical screening, ensure school environment is regularly swept, render first aid services to students, render medical counselling services to students, orient students on personnel hygiene practices, keeping updated health records of students and refer students with critical health challenges to medical experts. The health practices are applied by principals is not surprising judging from the fact that every administrator desires to promote the well-being of students. It was also reported that there is no significant in the health practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration. This is in line with the finding of Kolawole (2015) who observed that there was no significant difference in the health practices in public and private secondary schools. This contradicted the finding of Ekanem and Edet (2013)

who observed that there was a significant difference in disciplinary practices between public-owned and private-owned secondary schools. The difference in the two findings could be attributed to different in geographical location.

It was reported that disciplinary practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The disciplinary practices are applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State include formulate rules to guide the conduct of students, use school discipline committee to address misconduct among students, provide guidance and counseling services to assist students behave well, apply verbal warning to address in disciplinary act among students, invite parents/guardians of misbehaved students for discussion, assign portion of land with grasses for students to cut as means of minimizing misconduct among other and flop students for breaking school rules. This agreed with the Egwunyenga (2009) who reported that the disciplinary practices in public and private school include sweeping, corporal punishment, repairing of damaged property, suspension, expulsion and grass cutting. The disciplinary practices might the explanation for the decreasing cases of misconduct among secondary schools students in Ebonyi State. The disciplinary practices applied by principals guide students to behave in a desirable manner. It also help to control students behaviour which promotes orderliness and safety in the school environment. It was also reported that there is no significant in the disciplinary practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration. Egwunyenga (2009) there was significant difference between public and private secondary school principals disciplinary methods. Ukpabio, Usen and Etor (2019) there was significant difference in disciplinary control mechanism in public or private secondary schools. The two studies were conducted in different parts of Nigeria and this could account for disagreement between the two studies. The explanation for the findings of no significant in the disciplinary practices applied by public and private secondary school principals in school administration could be attributed to self-rating situation since principals rated themselves.

5. Conclusion

Based on the outcome of this study, it becomes evident that principals apply students' personnel management practices in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ebonyi State. These students' personnel management practices applied by principals in school administration include admission practices, health practices and disciplinary practices. Students' personnel management practices creates safe and stimulating learning environment that assist students to attain maximum self-realization and actualization. The attainment of educational goals and objectives of preparing students for higher education and useful to themselves and the society at large can be achieved through students' personnel management practices.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that

1. Ministry of Education should develop standard admission manual to serve as guideline to create uniformity and improve admission processes in public and private secondary schools.
2. Secondary school principals should set aside a day or time as “Health Awareness day” for enlighten students on various health and hygienic practices.
3. Secondary Education Board should organize periodic workshops and seminars for principals to acquaint and up-date their knowledge of disciplinary practices to control the students’ misconduct.

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