Administrators' Management Competencies and Inclusive Education Practice in Secondary Schools in North West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Rev. Sr. Joyce Celestine Ikott DC
Ukeme Okon Bill
&
Enang, Christiana Patrick
Department of Curriculum Studies, Educational
Management and Planning, University of Uyo, Uyo

Abstract

The study investigated Administrators' Management Competencies and Inclusive Education Practice in Secondary Schools in North West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, Correlational research design was used. Three research questions were raised and three research hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was all teachers in public secondary schools. There are 86 principals, 127 vice principals and 2838 teachers from the 86 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District (State Secondary Education Board, 2021). A sample size of 896 respondents which was made up of 26 principals, 38 vice principals and 832 teachers representing 30% of the total population using multi stage sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a researcher-developed instrument entitled "Administrators' Innovative Management Competency Questionnaire (AIMCQ) and "Inclusive Education Practice Questionnaire (IEPQ)". The instrument was duly validated and subjected to reliability coefficient of .078 before being used for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer all the research questions and test all the null hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level. The results of the study indicated that competency in information and communication technology (ICT), entrepreneurial competency and communication competency has significant relationship with Inclusive Education practice in Secondary Schools in North West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the ministry of Education should ensure capacity building for principals and vice principals by promoting and arranging career enhancing courses, workshop and seminars in information and Communication Technology (ICT) utilization in Secondary Schools to meet global management benchmark.

Keywords: Administrators, Competencies, Education, Inclusive, Management, Practice

Introduction

Education holds the key to individual and collective empowerment of peoples the world over as it is commonly utilized as a conduit for creation and transfer of all types of knowledge. Knowledge is often asserted as power. To be educated therefore it's to be impacted with knowledge and thus to be empowered. The case of people who, out of no fault of their own, have been incapacitated- naturally or accidentally is regrettably real. It, however, becomes

unfortunate when educational system is fashioned in such a way that it excludes these people and hinders them from free access to learning in their neighborhood. They are thus forced to look for specialised facilities where assistive technologies are present to satisfy their educational needs, often at very high cost compared to what normal students pay.

Inclusion is educational arrangement that deemphasizes exclusion and emphasizes the restructuring of instructions (schools), classrooms, and approached to instruction to address and meet diverse needs of all children (Okeke -Oti, 2010). The broad definition of inclusion was given by UNESCO (2005). It defined inclusion as:

> A process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibilities of the regular system to educate all children p:12).

This implies that inclusion accommodates all learners whether such learners are disabled or not. Inclusion is the process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners through increasing participation of all learners in neighbourhood schools with matching support (Okeke-Oti; 2010). Okuoyibo (2001) asserted that inclusion means bringing students with disabilities regardless of the nature and severity of their disabilities into all placement activities of general education such as schools, classrooms and the surrounding communities. Further, Okuoyibo explained that the thrust of the matter on inclusion is that children with disabilities should be unconditionally mainstreamed into the regular education system without regard to the nature and severity of their disabilities. Ojogwu (2005) observed that the nature of inclusiveness requires that all learners regardless of disability be educated in the same classroom. The emphasis of inclusion therefore, is to give everybody in the society an equal opportunity to benefit from formal education programme.

Inclusive education denotes three or more shades of meaning according to Ozoji (2005). First, it entails enabling all learners to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream setting. Second, it conveys a continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people. Third, it implies a right to belong to the mainstream or a joint undertaking to and discrimination and to work toward equal opportunities for all pupils and students. Hence, Ozoji (2005) defined inclusive education as an education option or programme carefully designed to educate learners with diverse needs within the re-

structured mainstream or school, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses in any area and become part of the school community.

An inclusive education practice is a programme in which all available resources are collaboratively utilized to meet the educational needs and challenges of all children who reside in its attendant area. Furthermore, inclusive education practice has strong site based management and teaching teams when jointly plan, implement and evaluate their educational programmes. As a working definition in this study therefore, an inclusive classroom is a place where everyone with or without special needs belong, is accepted, and is supported by their peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met. For inclusion to be successful in secondary school therefore there is the need for administrators to acquire innovative management competencies necessary to handle all categories of children with needs. Administrators need to know a variety of innovative management competencies and how to use them effectively. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that necessary values are inculcated in the students through proper guidance, appropriate supervision and monitoring of all the school activities. This brings into focus the unique responsibilities of principals in managing human and material resources in the schools to achieve the specific goals.

Administrators management competencies of school are essential for inclusive education practice to function effectively. To understand innovative management competencies properly there is the need to understand the concept of innovation and management. Innovation indicates a positive and intentional change. When considered as an organizational concept, innovation is the promotion of new ideas and developments by the people within the organizational structure (Edwards, 2021). By considering innovation as managing all the processes related to new ideas, technological development, and creating and marketing new or renovated products/services, Trott (2015) focuses on successfully applying new ideas within the organization. The purpose of innovation in school organizations is to enhance educational results. Educational innovations are evident in product, process, and service strategies of schools that aim at changing the present conditions and create unique features to improve organizational performance (Chou, Shen, Hsiao & Chen, 2010). Innovation, according to Business Dictionary online, involves deliberate application of information, imagination and initiative in deriving greater or different values from resources.

Management competencies are the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can also be acquired through experience and training by the managers (principals) who are professionals in their different fields of study. The acquired level of competency could inspire principals to function in an organization efficiently. This could be done by demonstrating their abilities through efficient supervision of instruction in the classroom, managing human and material

resources to achieve the mission and vision of the school. The operational definition of management competencies is the ability of the principals to effectively employ necessary skills in management of human and material resources to achieve the stated goals of the institution. This study specifically investigated the extent of the management competencies of principals in five areas of management namely: information and communication technology (ICT) competency (ability to use ICT, to get connected, seek information and locate resources), Entrepreneurial Competency (ability to take risk or use initiative to bring about educational inclusion in the school) and Communication Competency (ability to communicate with community on issues of inclusive educations).

Information and communication technology (ICT) is one of the management competency required by school administrators. Edafiogho (2022) defined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies as those skills and abilities which school principals require for using computers to store and retrieve information when needed. ICT is the emergence of tools of microelectronic and telecommunication that are used in the automatic acquisition, analysis, storage, retrieval, manipulation, management, control, movement, display, transmission, reception, and interchange of quantitative and qualitative data (Boritz, 2000).

Entrepreneurial competency is therefore, the ability to take risk or use initiative to bring about educational inclusion in the school. Principals' who have entrepreneurial spirit have a vision to develop new products, services, or organizations, solve problems, take risks and have strategic initiatives, (Fernald, Solomon and Tarabishy, 2005). Lepnurm and Bergh traits associated with entrepreneurial leadership skills include: looking for opportunities, achieving goals, thinking independently, taking risks, and innovating, (Lepnurm & Bergh, 2007). Entrepreneurship is important to support daily activities, both personally and socially, in order to be able to capture opportunities, (Saraiva, & Gabriel, 2016). Time to time, entrepreneurship provides a role for economic development. Entrepreneurship is a process of creating new businesses and organizations. The globalization and internal dynamics in educational organizations demand that principals adapt and innovate in providing education. Principals need to transform their leadership, adaptable to the demands of the globalization era.

Another innovative management competency required by school administrators for effective implementation of inclusive education practice is communication competency. Communication as an indispensable aspect of administration is simply the sharing of information between two or more individuals or groups to reach a common understanding for organizational success. Hence, Ekwue (2008) asserted that without effective communication in schools, teachers and students and community will not know what duties they are expected to perform.

Under such circumstances, they might be forced to act in certain ways which may be counter-productive. But with open communication, a unique school culture may then develop with the interplay of the various managerial practices.

Literature Review

In a related study Owa (2005) conducted a study on Information Communication and Technology skills required by lecturers and students in Business Education departments of the Colleges of Education in Delta State. The major purpose of the study was to determine Information Communication and Technology skills needed by them, necessary for effective instruction. The study employed survey research design. A questionnaire was used for the data collection from a sample size of 60 lectures and 220 final year Business Education students. Kuder-Richdson 21 formula (K – R 21) was used to estimate the reliability of the instrument. The co-efficient of Reliability was 0.94. The collected data was analyzed using simple arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The result obtained revealed that almost all the computer technology skills and telecommunications technology skills areas identified were perceived as required and important to both the lecturers and students.

The study is related to the present study in that it was to determine the ICT skills needed by the respondents. Another area where it relates to the present study is that on all ICT skills while Owa's study was on two. But the study differs in that it employed a survey design while the present study employed correlation design. Also, the study was carried out on lecturers in college of education and business education students while the present study is on administrators (principal) in secondary schools. The present study will then provide information on the omitted ICT skills.

In another study, Muhammed (2016) investigated the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Kaduna state. Survey research design was employed in the study which is cross sectional in nature. Primary data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire issued to the respondents using stratified and simple random sampling technique. The data was collected from a sample of 174 out of a population of 201 owner managers in Kaduna state. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected for the study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study.

The findings revealed that entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial characteristics have significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs in the state. It was also found that entrepreneurial motives have insignificant effect on the performance of SMEs. The study relates to the present study in that both studies determine the entrepreneurial competency required by educators and also adopted regression analysis to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. They differ in the sense that the former focus on performance of small and medium scale enterprises while later focus on school administrators.

In the same vein, Dogamo (2001) carried out a study on the relationship between communication behaviour of school principals and the organizational climate of schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. The researcher used survey, research design, five schools were sampled using disproportionate stratified random sampling procedure. A 15 – item questionnaire was developed by the research and administered to five hundred and forty (540) respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the null hypotheses formulated for the study. He found out that there was a significant relationship between the communication behaviour of principals and the organizational climate of their schools. Effective communication enhances the principals understanding of the teachers and school challenges such as discipline. Furthermore, Dogamo (2001) found that there was a significant relationship between the principal's perception of their own behaviour and that perceived by the teachers. The study found that open climate schools tend to rate male administrators more satisfactory communicators, than their female administrators.

Statement of the Problem

Current education systems in Nigeria need school administrators who have a high level of competence and exhibit strong habit of inclusive education practices so schools are effectively and intensively led. As a result, school administrators need to be prepared with regard to introducing innovative ideas and inclusive practices to ensure the success of their schools, especially in terms of meeting the demands of parents and students with disabilities. In other words, school administrators in secondary schools need to be creative in their thinking to successfully evolve an inclusive learning climate in the country. A preference for educational innovation and inclusive practices has been emphasized in place of the traditional schooling system, as the latter cannot respond to society's increasing needs.

Every country has struggled to introduce educational innovations and inclusive education that are deemed appropriate and compatible in terms of meeting the needs of the nation and Nigeria is no exception. Therefore, a new challenge for the Nigeria school system is to equip with adequate skills such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Entrepreneurial and Communication skills along inclusive education practices to cope with the rapidly changing global situation.

In spite of the general global yearning for high quality inclusive education, there is an apparent realization by stakeholders that the quality has declined considerably especially in the secondary school. The education system is not achieving this expected objective. Several factors may be responsible for the undesirable situation.

This study however is designed to investigate one of these possible causes. The problem of this study therefore, is what is the influence of the administrators' innovative management competencies on inclusive education practice in secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

Purpose of the Study

The study aims at determining the relationship between administrators' management competencies and inclusive education practice in secondary schools in North-West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom Ibom, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine the relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) administrators' competency and inclusive education practice in secondary
2. determine the relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools
3. determine the relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice in secondary

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

i. What is the relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) administrators' competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools?
ii. What is the relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools?
iii. What is the relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at .05 level of significance;

i. There is no significant relationship between administrators' competency in information and communication technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice
ii. There is no significant relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools
iii. There is no significant relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools

Methodology

Correlational Survey Research Design was adopted for this study. This design is considered because it involves investigating the magnitude and direction (positive or negative) of relationship that exist between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. The study was carried out in the North West Senatorial District of Akwa-Ibom State. The population of this study comprised all the 86 principals, 127 vice principals and 2838 teachers from the 86 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. A sample size for this study was consisted of 896 respondents which made up of 26 principals, 38 vice

principals and 832 teachers representing 30% of the total population of principals, vice principals and teachers respectively. For the purpose of this study, two researchers'-made instruments were used for data collection titled "Administrators' Innovative Management Competency Questionnaire (AIMCQ) and "Inclusive Education Practice Questionnaire (IEPQ). Face validity of the instrument was carried out by giving copies of the instrument developed to three experts: two in Educational Management and Planning, and one expert in Educational Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. To establish the reliability of the instrument for this study, Administrators Innovative Management Competency (AIMCQ) and Inclusive Education Practice Questionnaire (IEPQ) was subjected on thirty 10 principals, 10 vice principal and 20 teachers in North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, who were not part of the main study but has the same characteristics. Cronbach Alpha statistical analysis was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded an overall reliability coefficient index of 0.78. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for answering the research questions by comparing the values with the extent scale of correlation also used for testing the hypotheses by comparing it with the critical-r-value. The entire hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between administrators' competency in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice in secondary schools?

Table 1: summary of relationship between administrators' competency in information and communication technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice in secondary schools

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value	remarks
ICT Competency	64	182	33124			
				41678	.017	Very weak relationship
Inclusive Education	64	229	52441			

Data in Table 1 shows a calculated correlation value of .017, which is found to be a very weak positive relationship. This indicates that administrator's competency in Information and Communication Technology has a very weak relationship with inclusive education. The implies that administrator's Information and Communication Technology competency has relationship but very weak with inclusive education practice in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools?

Table 2: summary of relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value	Remarks
Entrepreneurship competency	64	171	29241			
				39159	.292	Very weak relationship
Inclusive Education	64	229	52441			

Data in Table 2 shows a calculated correlation value of .292, which is found to be a very weak positive relationship. This indicates that administrator's entrepreneurial competency has a very weak relationship with inclusive education. The implies that administrator's entrepreneurial competency has relationship but very weak with inclusive education practices in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools?

Table 3: summary of relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value	Remarks
Communication Competency	64	191	36481			
				43739	.301	weak relationship
Inclusive Education	64	229	52441			

Data in Table 3 shows a calculated correlation value of .301, which is found to be a very weak positive relationship. This indicates that administrator's communication competency has a very weak relationship with inclusive education. The implies that administrator's communication competency has relationship but weak with inclusive education practices in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State

Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between administrators' competency in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Administrator's Competency and Inclusive Education Practice

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value	p-value
ICT Competency	64	182	33124			
				41678	.017	0.023
Inclusive Education	64	229	52441			

The result in Table 4 shows a calculated r-value of .017 and a p-value of 0.023 when compared at 62 degrees of freedom at .05 significant level. Since the calculated p-value is less than the acceptable level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between administrators' competency in information and communication technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice is rejected. This result implies that administrator's competency in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is significant with inclusive education in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State

.**Research Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Administrator's Entrepreneurial Competency and Inclusive Education Practice

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value	p-value
Entrepreneurship competency	64	171	29241			
				39159	.292	0.019
Inclusive Education	64	229	52441			

The result in Table 5 shows a calculated r-value of .292 and a p-value of 0.019 when compared at 62 degrees of freedom at .05 significant level. Since the calculated p-value is less than the acceptable level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between administrators' entrepreneurial competency and inclusive education practice is rejected. This result implies that administrator's competency in entrepreneurship is significant with inclusive education in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice   **Table 6:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Administrator's Communication Competency and Inclusive Education Practice

Variables	N	$\sum$X $\sum$Y	$\sum$X² $\sum$Y²	$\sum$XY	r-value	p-value
Communication Competency	64	191	36481			
				43739	.301	0.016
Inclusive Education	64	229	52441			

The result in Table 6 shows a calculated r-value of .301 and a p-value of 0.016 when compared at 62 degrees of freedom at .05 significant level. Since the calculated p-value is less than the acceptable level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between administrators' communication competency and inclusive education practice is rejected. This result implies that administrator's competency in communication is significant with inclusive education in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings
On research question one; administrator's competency in Information and Communication Technology has a very weak relationship with inclusive education. This implies that administrator's Information and Communication Technology competency has relationship but very weak with inclusive education practice in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The null hypothesis, which earlier predicted that there is no significant relationship between administrators' competency in information and communication technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice, was rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between administrators' competency in information and communication technology (ICT) and inclusive education practice.

This finding supports the findings of Owa (2005) who conducted a study on Information Communication and Technology skills required by lecturers and students in Business Education departments of the Colleges of Education in Delta State. The major purpose of the study was to determine Information Communication and Technology skills needed by them, necessary for effective instruction. The result obtained revealed that almost all the computer technology skills and telecommunications technology skills areas identified were perceived as required and important to both the lecturers and students.

On research question two; administrator's Entrepreneurial Competency has a very weak relationship with inclusive education. This implies that administrator's Entrepreneurial Competency has relationship but very weak with inclusive education practice in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The null hypothesis, which earlier predicted that there is no significant relationship between administrators' Entrepreneurial Competency and inclusive education practice, was rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between administrators' Entrepreneurial Competency and inclusive education practice.

This finding supports the findings of Kabir, Ibrahim, and Shah (2017) who investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial competency and firm performance of female Entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The findings revealed that strategy, opportunity and organizing competencies have positive direct relationship with firm performance.

On research question three; administrator's Communication Competency has a very weak relationship with inclusive education. This implies that Communication Competency has relationship but very weak with inclusive education practice in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The null hypothesis, which earlier predicted that there is no significant relationship between administrators' Communication Competency and inclusive education practice, was rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between administrators' Communication Competency and inclusive education practice.

This finding supports the findings of Ojobor (2010) who carried out a study on influences of communication on administrative climate of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. It was found that principals and teachers' medium of communication in schools includes face to face conferences, staff meetings, notice boards, circular letters and oral announcements.

Conclusion

The study has indeed revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between administrators' innovative management competency and inclusive education practice in secondary schools in North West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom Ibom, Nigeria. These are rooted in the administrators' competency in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), administrators' entrepreneurial competency, administrators' communication competency utilizes by the school administrators' to improve the school administration. The consequences of not using these innovative management competencies are too grave for any

principal to ignore especially in inclusive schools. Therefore, there is need for principals to make use of these management competencies for effective implementation of inclusive education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were provided;

I. Government through Ministry of Education should organise training for Principals' and vice principals on the use of ICT in order to access to basic education, to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills and improve management of school and education.

II. Government should provide education and training opportunities for principals and vice principals to develop entrepreneurial capacities and mindset that will benefit economies and fosters creativity in the school environment.

III. Apart screening them to test their general power of communication, the Ministry of Education should carry out psychometric test on aspiring and serving school managers to establish their competencies in encoding and decoding messages as well as getting feedback for effective management of inclusive education in schools.

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