
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ORIENTATION AND HEALTH PRACTICES ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

The researcher carried out a comparative study of orientation and health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 16,033 respondents made up of 254 principals and 10,939 SS 2 students of public secondary schools and 727 principals and 8,113 SS 2 students of private secondary schools in Abia State. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 853 respondents made up of 27 principals and 547 SS 2 students of public and 72 principals and 207 SS 2 students of private secondary schools for the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled “Principals’ Orientation and Health Practices for School Administration Questionnaire Rating Scale (POHPSAQRS)”. The instrument was subjected to face validation by five experts made up of three experts in Educational Management and Planning as well as the two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. Cronbach Alpha which was used for test of the internal consistency of the instrument yielded overall coefficient of 0.81. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that the orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State included: enlighten newly admitted students on the school rules and regulations so as to enhance their awareness of the dos and don’ts in the school, introducing the newly admitted students to members of staff, enlightening the newly admitted students on the procedures of using the available facilities in the school, describing the various sport activities of the school to new students, introducing the newly admitted students to the school prefects and the various school clubs to the students. It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should utilize Parent Teacher Association meetings as platform to discuss health issues and encourage the supports of parents to improve the health practices in secondary schools.

Keywords: Orientation, Health, Practices, Principals, School Administration

Introduction

Secondary education occupies a strategic position in the Nigerian education system. It is the post basic education which prepares individuals for vocational and higher education. Ogbo, Nwanga and Nnebedum (2021) noted that secondary education provides opportunity for students to acquire fundamental knowledge which prepare them for higher education. Secondary education which is the link between the primary and tertiary levels of education trains and supplies middle-level manpower to become self-reliant and meaningfully contribute to development of the society. Secondary education equips its recipients with critical thinking skills to make informed decisions on real-world problems. Operationally, secondary education is the intermediate between primary and higher education which prepares individuals for higher education as well as nurturing them to be useful members of the society. There are public and private secondary schools.

Public secondary school is any post primary institution of learning which is owned and operated by government to provide learning opportunities for her citizens, while the private secondary school is any post primary institution of learning which is owned and operated by individuals, religion bodies and non-governmental agencies to make profit. According to Nwankwo and Godwin (2021), public secondary school is any post primary learning institution established, funded and oversee by the government, while the private secondary school is any post primary learning institution established, funded and oversee by the individuals, groups, missions and non-governmental organization. Public secondary schools are funded through tax and grants by the government at various levels, while private secondary schools are funded through the fee proprietor charge the students. The government is responsible for provision of facilities, recruitment of personnel and overseeing their activities in public secondary schools, while the proprietors or proprietress is responsible for provision of facilities, recruitment of personnel and overseeing their activities in private secondary schools. According to Bibire and Abdur-Rahman (2021), public schools are schools owned, administered and funded by the local, state or national/ federal government or public authority or agency through the taxpayer's money, while private schools are post primary schools that are established, administered and funded wholly by the private body through students' tuition. Public secondary schools are post-primary school institution of learning that is established, funded and controlled by government through educational agencies to provide learning opportunities for the members of the public, private secondary schools are post-primary school institution of learning that is established, funded and controlled by individuals, group of people, religion bodies and non-governmental organization to expand learning opportunities and also make profit.

The principal is the executive head responsible for coordinating all school activities ranging from record keeping, supervising activities of staff, decision-making, managing facilities, disseminating information to personnel, budgeting as well as management of students and staff in a secondary school. According to Okigbo (2020), a principal is someone who is the leader of an entire community within a school. The author adds that the principal is responsible for managing the major administrative tasks and supervising all the students and teachers. The principal is responsible for careful planning, executing and controlling various programmes and activities of a secondary school. Audu and Ogunode (2021) conceptualized principal as the person appoint to head the school for the purpose of executing the functions of planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and supervising the human and materials resources in order to achieve the general objectives of the school. The principal is usually appointed based on qualification and seniority to coordinate and oversee daily

operations of a secondary school. Operationally, principal is the chief executive officer, administrator, manager and leader who oversee the day-to-day affairs of a secondary school.

School administration is the act of getting things done through people for attainment of set education objectives. Nwanga, Amaikwu and Ugwo (2021) defined school administration as the process of planning, organizing, directing and coordinating the available resources to achieve educational goals and objectives. School administration entails undertaking activities or function such as planning, communication, budgeting, motivation, decision making, resolving conflict, supervision, record keeping and public relations among others. School administration is the routine activities of arranging structures and coordinating programme of learning institution to attain set educational goals. It entails monitoring and controlling of limited resources to pursue educational goals. Egboka (2021) defined school administration as the managerial duties that are concerned with planning, coordination and controlling the available resources in the school towards attainment of educational goals and objectives. School administration is the task-oriented that involves the control of human, material and financial resource to achieve set goals of the learning institution. Nnebedum, Abadi and Obasi (2019) defined school administration as the systematic process of managing the available resources to attain predetermined educational goals. It is the act of carrying out of executive duties of planning, organizing and executing programmes of the school. Operationally, administration is a set of activities directing at ensuring judicious use of the available resources to attain set objectives of an education institution.

Students' personnel management is the services to be rendered to learners to help them derive maximum benefits from the school curricular and co-curricular programmes. Student personnel management is administration actions concerned with the controlling, organizing and directing the affairs of learners in the school organization. Osegbue (2021) defined students' personnel management as activities that complement classroom instructions for the total development of students and attainment of educational goals. Students' personnel management is administrative tasks and the activities geared toward promoting the general welfare and discipline of learner in learning institution. Yusuf, Zahyah and Muhajir (2019) defined students' personnel management as the variety of services that are provided by the school administrators for students to assist them excel in their school activities. The variety of services provided for the students are library services, sporting activities, orientation and safety services. Student personnel management are activities carried out in the school to promote the safety and welfare of learners and also ensure that they drive the desirable benefits from the school programmes. Students' personnel management is geared toward making learners to physically or psychologically fit and ready to fully engage in the school activities.

There are different students' personnel management practices in the school system. Owan and Ekaette (2019) noted that students' personnel management practices include: health and safety, food and housing, variety of co-curricular activities, discipline, guidance and counselling. Similar to this, Yusuf, Zahyah and Muhajir (2019) identified students' personnel management practices to include: admission services, extracurricular services, guidance and counseling services, health services and library service. In the same, Abdullahi (2017) listed the components of students' personnel management practices include: guidance and counselling, orientation programme, discipline, welfare and health. This study focused on orientation and health services.

Orientation is any programme organized for the fresh students to enlighten them on school programmes, rules and regulations. It is designed to familiarize students with learning

environment, their programmes, available facilities and rules governing the school system and guidance for conduct. Chiboub, Tridane and Belaouad (2021) stressed that orientation allows the students to become aware of their personal characteristics and also develops their talents in order to excel in their studies. The orientation programme organized for the fresh students enlighten on the school, rules, policies and procedures which they require to realign their lifestyle with the culture of the school. Mbon and Okoi (2019) noted that orientation programmes are designed to suit the needs of the fresh student in the new environment such as introduction to student services, resources, peers, personal adjustment and preparation for an academic sojourn in the school. Continuing, Mbon and Okoi also added that orientation programmes enable new students to get involved in school opportunities, make new friends, and get to know school faculties and staff members, and feel a time connection with the school environment. Orientation is an enlightenment programme organized for newly admitted students to help adjust and cope with the school environment. It helps the students to gain the knowledge of available health services in the school.

Health practice is any programme and coordinated activity designed to keep the learners physically and mentally fit for the academic programme and also benefit maximally from the school activities. Abubakar, Oche, Awosan, Raji, Abdullahi and Kaoje (2021) noted that health practices offer students the opportunity of benefiting from health care services and acquiring knowledge to improve on personal or environmental hygiene. Health services renders to students make them to be physically, mentally, emotionally and psychologically fit to actively participate and excel in their academic activities in school. Ologele, Omikunle, Ibrahim and Abdulkadir (2021) noted that school health practices include health appraisals, control of communicable diseases, record keeping and supervision of the health of school children and personnel. Furthermore, Ologele et al (2021) stressed that it also includes pre-entry medical screening, routine health screening/examination, school health records, sick-bay and first aid and referral services. It is the duty of principals to educate their students on healthy and hygienic behaviour. Aniruddh and Majra (2021) asserted that it is the responsibilities of the principals to educate students on the health risks they face at school and how to protect themselves and others against diseases and other forms of ill-health by adopting health-promoting habits and practices.

The preliminary investigation of the study researcher revealed that some secondary school principals in Abia State rarely orientate or guide the students on the dos' and don'ts' of the school or discipline them for erring behaviour such as loitering during school hours, fighting, disrespect of teachers, absenteeism from classes without reason or permission and disobedience to rules and regulation. Personal observation of the researcher indicated inherent poor sanitary practices such as irregular cleaning of school compound, toilet and inappropriate disposal of waste that could cause specific diseases among students. This has become a serious threat to effective school administration. It seems to have led to breakdown of order or disruption of school programmes and thus adversely affect effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State. It is based on the problem that the study analyzed the students' personnel management practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to carry out a comparative study of the students' personnel management practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to compare:

1. orientation practice adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State.

2. health practice adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State?
2. What are the health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the orientation practices they adopt.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt.

Research Design

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 16,033 respondents made up of 254 principals and 10,939 SS 2 students of public secondary schools and 727 principals and 8,113 SS 2 students of private secondary schools in Abia State. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 853 respondents made up of 27 principals and 547 SS 2 students of public and 72 principals and 207 SS 2 students of private secondary schools for the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled “Principals’ Orientation and Health Practices for School Administration Questionnaire Rating Scale (POHPSAQRS)”. The instrument was developed based on literature review and consultation of experts in the field of education. The instrument has two sections namely, A and B. Section “A” deal with the demographic variable of the respondents such as school types, while section B contains Clusters I to II which elicit information concerning orientation and health practices for school administration. Cluster I contained 9 items on orientation practices for school administration and Cluster II contained 10 items on health practices for school administration. The instrument contains 19 items structured on a four-point likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The face validation of the instruments were determined by five specialists, three from the Department of Management and Planning, and two from Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Imo State University, Owerri. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha method which yielded coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.8 for Clusters I and II with overall reliability coefficient value of 0.81. The researcher with the help of four research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Abia State used direct approach for data collection. On-the-spot method of completion and retrieval was adapted but provision for follow up were made where the respondents could not submit on the spot. A total of 853 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 827 were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 97% return rate. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses. The decision rule for the research questions is that mean ratings of 2.50 and above was taken as agreement and any mean rating that falls below 2.50 was taken to indicate disagreement. In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, where p-value is equal to or greater than level of significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis

was accepted but where p-value is less than level of significant value of 0.05, the null hypotheses was rejected.

Results

Research Question One: What are the orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 1: Analysis of Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores on orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State.

S/N	ITEMS	Public schools (N =559)			Private Schools (N =268)		
		\bar{x}	SD	Decision	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
	The principal adopts the underlisted orientation practices for school administration						
1	Enlighten newly admitted students on the school rules and regulations so as to enhance their awareness of the dos and don'ts in the school.	3.11	0.68	Agree	2.66	1.05	Agree
2	Introduce the newly admitted students to members of staff	2.94	0.94	Agree	2.65	1.13	Agree
3	Enlighten the newly admitted students on the procedures of using the available facilities in the school	2.86	1.09	Agree	2.92	1.11	Agree
4	Describing the various school programmes to new students	2.82	0.99	Agree	2.96	0.95	Agree
5	Describe the various sport activities of the school to new students	2.87	1.00	Agree	2.92	1.13	Agree
6	Informing students about the necessary subjects offered at every class	2.51	0.99	Agree	2.41	1.11	Disagree
7	Introducing the newly admitted students to the school prefects	2.87	0.97	Agree	2.98	1.16	Agree
8	Provide information on various career opportunities to newly admitted students	2.46	1.11	Disagree	2.37	1.11	Disagree
9	Introducing the various school clubs to the students	2.85	1.00	Agree	2.71	1.08	Agree
	Mean of Means	2.81	0.97	Agree	2.74	1.09	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean ratings on the orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State. The mean scores for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 are above cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the item. On the other hand, the mean scores of the respondents for item 8 below are cut off mean of 2.50 which indicated their disagreement with the item as parts of admission practices of principals. The mean score of 2.51 was recorded by respondents in public schools for item 6 which is above 2.50 show agreement with the items as part of their orientation practice, while in the case of private schools, the mean score for the item is 2.41 which is below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicate agreement with the items as parts of principals' orientation practices.

The cluster standard deviation scores of the principals in public and private schools which were 0.97 and 1.09 indicate homogeneity in their ratings. The mean of means of 2.81 and 2.74 for the respondents in public and private secondary school respectively which are above 2.50 indicated principals adopt orientation practices for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State. The orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State included: enlighten newly admitted students on the school rules and regulations so as to enhance their awareness of the dos and don'ts in the school, introducing the newly admitted students to members of staff, enlightening the newly admitted students on the procedures of using the available facilities in the school, describing the various sport activities of the school to new students, introducing the newly admitted students to the school prefects and the various school clubs to the students.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the orientation practices they adopt.

Table 2: Analysis of Independent t-test of no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the orientation practices they adopt

Respondents	N	X	SD	p-value	Df	α	Remark
Public Schools	559	2.81	0.97	0.06	825	0.05	Not Significant
Private Schools	268	2.74	1.09				

As shown in Table 2 revealed, the p-value of 0.06 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance at 825 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the orientation practices they adopt.

Research Question Two: What are the health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 3: Analysis of Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores on health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State

S/N	ITEMS The principal adopts the underlisted health practices for school administration	Public schools (N =559)			Private Schools (N =268)		
		\bar{x}	SD	Decision	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
10	Conducting pre-entry physical examination of students	2.63	1.10	Agree	2.59	.94	Agree
11	Keeping accurate record of students' medical history	2.86	1.02	Agree	2.82	1.01	Agree
12	Provision well-equipped first aid boxes in different sections of the school	2.59	1.10	Agree	2.52	1.10	Agree
13	Providing free medical test for the students	2.43	1.07	Disagree	2.49	1.02	Agree
14	Administering routine immunization on students	2.45	1.10	Disagree	2.20	1.11	Disagree
15	Orientation students on first-aid administration	2.94	0.96	Agree	2.82	1.10	Agree
16	Conducting periodic physical screening of students at the school health services centre at the beginning of every session	2.46	1.11	Disagree	2.50	1.10	Agree
17	Supplying portable drinking water to minimise students exposure to water borne diseases	2.49	1.08	Disagree	2.49	1.18	Disagree
18	Procuring necessary equipment to the school sick bay	2.70	1.11	Agree	2.63	1.10	Agree
19	Using posters to sensitize the students on health issues	2.63	1.10	Agree	2.57	1.06	Agree
Mean of Means		2.62	1.08	Agree	2.56	1.07	Agree

The results on Table 3 show that the mean scores for respondents in public and private secondary schools for items 10, 11, 12, 15, 18 and 19 are higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50 and this indicates agreement with these items as their health practices. The results further reveal that respondents in public and private secondary schools disagreed with items 14 and 17 as their health practices. On the other hand, the respondents in public secondary schools disagreed with item 13 as their health practices, while the respondents in private secondary schools agreed with the item.

The cluster standard deviation scores of respondents in public and private secondary schools are 1.08 and 1.07 respectively and this indicates that there is homogeneity amongst their responses indicating a similar consensus of opinion. The mean of means of 2.62 and 2.56 for respondents in public and private secondary schools respectively which are above 2.50 indicated agreement that the listed health practices are adopted by principals. This indicated that conducting pre-entry physical examination of students, keeping accurate record of students' medical history, provision well-equipped first aid boxes in different sections of the school, orientation students on first-aid administration, procuring necessary equipment to the school sick bay and using posters to sensitize the students on health issues are the health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt.

Table 4: Analysis of Independent t-test of no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt

Respondents	N	X	SD	p-value	Df	∞	Remark
Public Schools	559	2.62	1.08	0.05	825	0.05	Not Significant
Private Schools	268	2.56	1.07				

Results in Table 4, shows that the p-value of 0.05 is equal to 0.05 level of significance at 825 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study showed that the orientation practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State included: enlighten newly admitted students on the school rules and regulations so as to enhance their awareness of the dos and don'ts in the school, introducing the newly admitted students to members of staff, enlightening the newly admitted students on the procedures of using the available facilities in the school, describing the various sport activities of the school to new students, introducing the newly admitted students to the school prefects and the various school clubs to the students. This is in disagreement with the finding of Ogbiji, Eyo and Oko (2011) which indicated that the principals of public and private secondary schools differ on their orientation practices. The disagreement in findings could be attributed to the variation of time span in which the two studies were carried out. The possible explanation for the findings which indicated that principals adopted orientation practices for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State is to ensure get valuable information about school environment, programmes and personnel to enable adjust and feel comfortable in the learning environment. During orientation, students are enlightened on school rules and regulation that they must adhere to for successful academic activities and penalty for violating any of them.

It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the orientation practices they adopt. This is disagreement with the finding of Ogbiji, Eyo and Oko (2011) which indicated that there was significant difference between public and private secondary principals on their orientation practices. The disagreement in findings could be attributed to difference in geographical locations of the studies, and the period they were carried out. The finding of there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the orientation practices they adopt is probably due to fact that every student is likely to disposed to learn in new environment in which they are similar with it which be enhance through orientation. The orientation practices put students at ease and help them get acquainted with the new learning environment.

The result of the study revealed among others that conducting pre-entry physical examination of students, keeping accurate record of students' medical history, provision well-equipped first aid boxes in different sections of the school, orientation students on first-aid administration, procuring necessary equipment to the school sick bay and using posters to

sensitize the students on health issues are the health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State. This affirmed the finding of Ayodeji, Oluyinka and Temidayo (2021) which showed that the health practices applied by principals in the administration of public and private secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State include conduct pre-admission medical screening, provision of hand-washing facilities, first aid box and organising of medical counseling sessions for students. The similarity in findings could be attributed to the fact that the two studies were conducted in the same country where similar policy guide health practices in secondary schools. The finding is in disagreement with that of Olugbenga, Olorunfemi and Opeyemi (2016) which revealed that health practice in private primary schools is better than that of public schools. The difference in time span and geographical location in which the two studies were conducted could account for the disagreement in the findings. The principals of public and private secondary schools probably adopt the health practices to meet the medical needs of students and keep them physically and mentally fit to actively participate in school curricular and co-curricular activities in Abia State. The health practices adopted by principals of public and private secondary school contribute to diagnosing and treating of minor medical problems that can severely affect the ability of students to learner. Principals of public and private secondary schools in Abia detect early illness among learners and prevent transfer of communicable diseases to create safe environment for their physical and mental development in Abia State. The minds of healthy learners are likely to receptive to learning.

The possible for the health practices adopted by principals for administration of public and private secondary schools in Abia State is to promote the physical and mental well-being of students. The health practices adopted by principals create safe learning environment and awareness of hygienic practices to keep students fit to get maximum benefits from the school programmes. It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt. This is also in consonance with the finding of the finding of Kolawole (2015) which revealed that there is insignificant difference in the health practices in public and private secondary schools. This refuted the finding of Ekanem and Edet (2013) which indicated that there was a significant difference in disciplinary practices between public-owned and private-owned secondary schools. The dissimilarity in findings could be attributed to the fact that the two studies were conducted in different time span. The result of no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school principals and students on the health practices they adopt is due to fact that every school administrator desire to build healthy learning environment, prevent spread of disease and promote hygiene practices in their schools.

Conclusion

Based on the finding, it was concluded that orientation and health practices are adopted by principals for school administration to create favourable learning environment that enable learners derive maximum benefits from school programmes. Students receive orientation and health support services to excel in their studies. Students are well-informed about the school environment, programmes facilities and rules to minimize disciplinary problems such as lateness, absenteeism, examination malpractice, drugs abuse, cultism, indecent dressing and other forms of misconduct in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Abia State Secondary Education Management Board and directors of private schools should organize professional development programmes on orientation for principals on at least once every academic session for them to up-date their skills and also inculcate the singling out a day in every academic session for orientation of students in secondary schools.
2. Principals should utilize Parent Teacher Association meetings as platform to discuss health issues and encourage the supports of parents to improve the health practices in secondary schools.

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