

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

Chukwuma, Ifeoma Salome; Omale, Grace Ajuma; Ede, Juliet Chidinma & Obaji,
Patricia Chinyere

Department of Educational Foundation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

The study determined strategies for improving women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 138 women vice principals in public secondary schools in Enugu state. The instrument for the study was a researcher constructed questionnaire titled 'Strategies for Improving Women Participation in the Management of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (SIWPMPSSQ). The overall reliability indices of 0.88 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Results obtained showed that human resources development and financial support would improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools. The result of the hypotheses showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of women vice principals on the strategies for improving women participation in the management of public secondary schools and women participation in the management of public secondary schools. The recommendations among others include that the Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) should organize human resources development programmes for women vice principals and give them financial support to encourage them to participate in school management.

Keywords: Management, women, participation, secondary education

Introduction

Management is the act of doing work to achieve results with the help of people working in the organization. According to Okorji & Unachukwu (2014), management is getting work done to achieve results using available resources and within the given limited time. Udey & Bassey (2018) observed that management is the coordination of all the human and material resources within the organization through the process of planning to achieve results. Planning is the first stage in management which is the process of preparing for future actions directed at achieving goals and objectives (Nwogbo, 2014). According to Chukwuma, Ezeaku & Eneh (2023), proper planning of management programmes by educational administrators can serve as a blueprint for improved women participation in the management of educational institutions. Operationally, management is the coordination of all the human resources in public secondary schools so as to achieve effective teaching and learning by women being at the helm of affairs of the administration.

Women are female adult human beings in the world. According to Adeni (2017), women is a name given to mature gender that possess unique characteristics that distinguishes them from their male counterparts. Generally, women have played a very important role in society, contributing to economic growth and development. These women acquire wealth of experiences in school management when trained. According to Okunazu, Ubadigha & Okunazu (2020), these experiences these women acquire have in one way or the other position most women in sensitive positions where economic decisions are being taken. Operationally, women are mature female human resources who are vice principals in public secondary schools that need to be trained on the job and supported financially for active participation in school management. According to Chukwuma (2022), these human resources are individuals working in an organization who carry out the tasks of harmonizing and seeking to match expectations,

needs and objectives of the employees with that of the institutions. Such individuals are endowed with abilities, talents and attitudes which are organized by organizing human resources development programmes so as to achieve desired results.

Human resources development programmes are in-service training programmes given to staff as they carry out their duties in the organization so as to effectively achieve the predetermined objectives of the establishment. These strategies include organization of seminars, workshops, conferences, orientations and exhibitions for women vice principals to sensitize them, provision of information to the women on the need to take up managerial posts to close the loopholes on the side of the men. UNESCO (2014) observed possible ways to improve women participation in school management which centred mainly on human resources development. Saridu (2017) also observed that in-service training for women vice principals can motivate them to be involved in management in education. The findings also corroborated with United Nations University (2018) that one of the tools to encourage women to participate in their own development is to build their capacity to participate actively in formal and informal education. The aim of developing women especially those at the vice principals' cadre is to enhance the opportunity of women in picking up the position of school heads and make great improvement in effective teaching and learning. Okpoko (2020) also asserted that human resources development is a substantive strategy to bring changes in women who will in turn contribute to the development of their communities where schools are located. This training enables women to live better quality lives and have the opportunity to manage schools for effective teaching and learning so as to have quality students' academic achievements.

Financial support strategies are financial help offered to schools to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools. According to Okogba (2019), these strategies include provisions of ; loans to acquire facilities needed in the schools, funds by individuals, charitable organization and the state government to build befitting classrooms, libraries and laboratories, elimination of barriers preventing women from raising money for school management and reduction of bank interest rate charges to enable women get loans and pay back when the fund is made available in the school and removal of discriminations against women to succeed financially in the management of schools. Crampton (2019) identified that women school heads are decreasing on a daily basis due to lack of finance to enhance their managerial duties so as to achieve quality educational objectives. Robin, Collen & Pamela (2023) opined that providing access to financial support will encourage more women vice principals to venture into management of public secondary schools. Okogba (2019) affirmed that women in public secondary schools are actually becoming more successful and ambitious in school management than their male counterparts. However, efforts need to be put in place to accelerate women especially in school management in developing nations like Nigeria. The researchers sought to determine if professional development opportunities in the form of seminars, workshops, conferences, orientations and exhibitions for women vice principals will essentially improve students' outcomes and keep morale high among tutorial and non-tutorial staff. This research sought if financial support strategies in form of loans, provision of funds to acquire facilities and remove barriers preventing women school managers to manage their schools.

Presently, there is a general outcry by parents and other stakeholders in the society that males dominate the management of public secondary schools in the state and they are performing below the expectations. Nwabueze, Edikpa & Chukwuma (2018) observed that women participation in the management of public secondary schools is very low when compared to their female counterparts. This has created a lot of problems in the schools such as failures on the sides of the teachers due to lack of plans for human resources development by the principals, poor managerial skills, lack of freedom and autonomy in the schools, inefficient social connectivity, and lack of financial support (Okunazu, Ubadigha & Okunazu, 2020). All these metamorphosed into lack of knowledge on the new trends in education, which has resulted in low quality of instructions and invariably, poor students' academic performance

especially in external examinations. Therefore, due to these problems in the management of schools, the researchers sought to determine the strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Improvement is the act of making already existing actions better. According to Barrienturs & Kabeer (2016), improvement means an attempt to increase the benefits obtained by harnessing the efforts of human resources working in the organizations. Saridu (2017) opined that this improvement is greatly needed in the school system and can only be achieved by organization of in-service training for the staff so as to match the expectations and the results obtained. This can also help to check if the predetermined objectives of the institutions are being achieved at the end. Improvement here means an action or an attempt to make women participate in the management of public secondary schools better than that of their male counterparts.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. Specifically, the study determined;

- 1) Human resources development strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.
- 2) Financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- 1) What are the human resources development strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state?
- 2) What are the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state?

Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of women vice principals on the human resources development strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the women vice principals on the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Methods

The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. According to Owen (2017), descriptive survey is a design in which the same information is gathered from an unbiased representative group of interest using questionnaires. This design was suitable for this study because data were collected from the respondents using questionnaire on the strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. The researchers chose the area due to increased participation of males in the management of public secondary schools when compared with their female counterparts. The population of the study consisted of 138 women vice principals selected out of 13,800 vice principals. There was no sampling because the population was a manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a 15-items structured questionnaire titled 'Strategies for Improving Women Participation in the Management of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (SIWMPSSQ)'. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2 and Strongly disagree (SD) =1. The instrument was face validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Two from the Educational Management and Policy Unit and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Unit. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha method was used to giving an overall reliability of 0.88. The instrument was administered on the spot to distribute

and retrieve the questionnaire. The data were collected with the help of three briefed research assistants. In all, 137 copies of the instrument administered were retrieved giving 97% return rate. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The boundary limit of 3.50-4.00 (SA), 2.50-3.49 (A), 1.50-2.49 (D) and 1.00-1.49 (SD) while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the human resources development strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state?

Table 1: Mean ratings and t-test of the responses of women vice principals on the human resources strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. The data for answering research question 2 and testing the null hypothesis are presented in table 1

S/N	Item Statement: Human resources strategies for improving women participation in the management of public secondary schools	Mean X	SD	REM	P-Value	Remark
1	Conferences	3.51	0.71	SA	0.61	NS
2	Workshops	3.67	0.80	SA	0.58	NS
3	Seminars	3.87	0.77	SA	0.82	NS
4	Orientation	3.56	0.46	SA	0.91	NS
5	Exhibitions	3.67	0.81	SA	0.71	NS
	Grand Mean	3.66	0.71	SA	0.73	NS

Note: GX= Grand Mean, X= Mean, SD Standard Deviation, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), N= No of respondents, NS= Not Significant, Sig =0.05

Table 1 showed the mean ratings of the responses of the women vice principals on the entire 5 items in the table ranged from 3.51-3.87 which are within the boundary limit of 3.50-4.00 on 4-points rating scale. The respondents strongly agreed that the 5 items are human resources development strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools. Furthermore, the data presented in table 1 on hypothesis one showed that the p-value of the items ranged between 0.58-0.91 which are in each case greater than 0.05 level of significance. This showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of women vice principals on the human resources strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Research Question Two: What are the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state?

Table 2: Mean ratings and t-test of the responses of women vice principals on the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

S/N	Item Statement: Financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools	Mean X	SD	REM	P- Value	Remark
1	Provision of loan to acquire adequate facilities needed in the schools	3.96	0.89	SA	0.69	NS
2	Provision of funds by the state government to acquire befitting classrooms	3.71	0.66	SA	0.54	NS
3	Provision of funds by the state government to build libraries and laboratories	3.67	0.80	SA	0.58	NS
4	Provision of soft loans to purchase facilities in the school	3.52	0.90	SA	0.81	NS

5	Elimination o all barriers hindering women from raising fund to school management	3.56	0.46	SA	0.91	NS
6	Encouraging banks to reduce interest rate charges to enable women get loan	3.67	0.81	SA	0.62	NS
7	Elimination of all discrimination against women which discourage them from participating in the management of schools due to lack of funds	3.51	0.73	SA	0.43	NS
8	Provision of environment that will enable women to succeed financially in the management of schools	3.66	0.87	SA	0.79	NS
9	Provision of funds from individuals to support women in the management of schools	3.66	0.88	SA	0.79	NS
10	Obtaining funds from charitable organization to support women in the management of schools	3.67	0,87	SA	0.67	NS
Grand mean		3.66	0.79	SA	0.68	NS

Note: GX= Grand Mean, X= Mean, SD Standard Deviation, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), N= No of respondents, NS= Not Significant, Sig =0.05

Table 2 revealed that mean ratings of the respondents on the 10 items ranged from 3.51- 3.96 which are within the limit of 3.50-4.00 on 4-ponts rating scale. This indicated that the respondents strongly agreed that all three items are financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools. In the same vein, data presented in table 2 revealed that the P-values of the items ranged between 0.43-0.87 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. This showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of women vice principals on the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted that there was no significant difference.

Discussions

The study determined the human resources development strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. These strategies include organization of seminars, workshops, conferences, orientations and exhibitions for women vice principals to sensitize them, provision of information to the women on the need to take up managerial posts to close the loopholes on the side of the men. This finding is in line with UNESCO (2014) on the possible ways to improve women participation in school management which centred mainly on human resources development. This also supported Saridu (2017) who observed that in-service training for women vice principals can motivate them to be involved in management in education. The findings also corroborated with United Nations University (2018) that one of the tools to encourage women to participate in their own development is to build their capacity to participate actively in formal and informal education. The aim of developing women especially those at the vice principals' cadre is to enhance the opportunity of women in picking up the position of school heads and make great improvement in effective teaching and learning. Okpoko (2020) also asserted that human resources development is a substantive strategy to bring changes in women who will in turn contribute to the development of their communities where schools are located. This training enables women to live better quality lives and have the opportunity to manage schools for effective teaching and learning so as to have quality students' academic achievements. There were no significant differences in the mean ratings of the women vice principals on the human resource strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Furthermore, the study identified the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools. These strategies include provisions of ; loans to acquire facilities needed in the schools, funds by individuals, charitable

organization and the state government to build befitting classrooms, libraries and laboratories, elimination of barriers preventing women from raising money for school management and reduction of bank interest rate charges to enable women get loans and pay back when the fund is made available in the school and removal of discriminations against women to succeed financially in the management of schools. The findings are in line with Crampton (2019) who observes that women school heads are decreasing on a daily basis due to lack of finance to enhance their managerial duties so as to achieve quality educational objectives. This also supported Robin, Collen & Pamela (2023) who opined that providing access to financial support will encourage more women vice principals to venture into management of public secondary schools. This is in line with Okogba (2019) who affirmed that women in public secondary schools are actually becoming more successful and ambitious in school management than their male counterparts. However, efforts need to be put in place to accelerate women especially in school management in developing nations like Nigeria.

There was also no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of women vice principals on the financial support strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Conclusion

The study focused on the strategies to improve women participation in the management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. A proper human resources development improves and encourages women participation in the management of public secondary schools for quality job productivity and students' academic performances. Finally, provisions of financial support to the women school heads enhance their managerial skills and results in quality teaching and learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

- 1) Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) should organize human resources development programmes for women vice principals.
- 2) Government should provide financial support to encourage women to participate in school management effectively and efficiently.
- 3) Public secondary school principals should properly motivate their vice principals to acquire good managerial skills for the job.

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