

Principals' Application of Management by Objectives (MBO) in Managing Secondary Schools in South East States of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was aimed at investigating the application of management by objectives (MBO) by principals in managing secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample of the study comprised of 870 respondents made up of 406 male and 464 female principals selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique in government-owned secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria. A researcher-made instrument titled "Questionnaire on Principals' Application of Management by Objectives" (QPAMBO) was validated by experts. The researcher used the 39-item structured questionnaire to obtain data for the study. Internal consistency of the items was tested using Cronbach Alpha and the reliability alpha coefficient values cluster by cluster were: 0.86, 0.84, 0.84 and 0.87 respectively for the four sections, which were considered high enough for the reliability of the instrument. Aggregate scores and simple percentages were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that majority of the principals apply MBO to a high extent in the four basic tasks performance in school management except in students' management where greater number of South-East States principals apply MBO to a low extent. It was also found that there was significance difference in the mean scores of male and female principals in their application of MBO in the four basic tasks performance except in students' management in which there was no significance difference. Based on the findings of this research, one of the recommendations made was that principals and teachers are to update their knowledge continuously through seminars and workshop in the application of MBO in school tasks performance, so that they can utilize the benefits of MBO and apply it to students' management. Moreover, the application of MBO can be combined with other management techniques like PERT, PPBS and Delphi to avoid monotony so as to achieve educational goals and objectives. The educational implications, limitations of the study were highlighted, and suggestions were also made based on the findings.

Introduction

The broad goals of Nigerian secondary education as specified in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2004) are aimed at preparing students for useful living within the society and for higher education. Principals therefore perform vital roles in achieving these goals. Of course, they cannot achieve the goals without involving other people in the school. One way to involve people is through management.

Nwosu (2008) defined management as the act or process of working with and through people, utilizing available position to achieve a specified goal. Management has some

techniques. According to Tirozzi (2004), there are many management techniques in literature which school managers can use in managing their schools. Management technique is simply a method or strategy used to perfect performance and a way things should be done. One of such techniques is management by objectives (MBO).

MBO is very useful in managing staff and in task performance. MBO integrates individual needs with organizational goals effectively. Drucker (2006) highlighted the principles of MBO as consisting of setting organizational goals and objectives; outlining specific objective for each member, ensuring participative decision-making, specifying explicit time period and performance evaluation and feedback. MBO is thus a technique which enables organisations to set and achieve their objectives by planning, organising, and controlling their human and material resources meaningfully.

Principals of secondary schools can apply MBO to strategize and plan school goals and missions, raise and manage funds, coordinate staff/student activities, implement educational policies and enhance curriculum implementation in line with set objectives. According to Okunamiri (2002), the application of MBO in schools by some principals has resulted in the transformation of the resources of the schools and realisation of the school objectives. Thus, MBO can help the school principals to perform their management functions.

The management functions of school principals have been classified by Anukam and Anukam (2006) as management of instructional programmes, staff management, students' management, school financial management, school infrastructural management and management of school-community relationship. Management by Objectives could be applied in carrying out each of the above functions. The focus of this study is on the management of instructional programmes, staff management, students' management, and school financial management.

Research Problem, Objectives and Plan

Principals in secondary schools in the South East States of Nigeria are faced with multiple problems in the performance of their management functions. Personal observation by the researcher indicated that most secondary schools in South-East states of Nigeria are faced with problem of managing instructional programmes. Some principals hardly supervise the teachers' lesson notes or the lesson delivery. The teachers' who lack commitment to their jobs are left unsupervised and nobody cares about what they do in the class. The rate of truancy among students in the area is seemingly high. This indicates that students' management services are not effectively carried out (Nnabuife, 2010). Again, the high rate of male drop out in some secondary schools in South East states reveals poor students' management (Egboka, 2008).

In the light of the above, one thus wonders and questions whether principals in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in secondary school management. This state of affairs agitated the mind of the researcher and gave rise to this study which investigated the principals' application of MBO in managing secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria. Four research questions were answered and four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to ascertain principals' application of management by objectives (MBO) in secondary school management in South East States of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to ascertain:

1. extent principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in instructional programme management.
2. extent principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in staff management.
3. extent principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in students management.
4. extent principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in school financial management.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in instructional programmes management?
2. To what extent do principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in staff management?
3. To what extent do principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in students' management?
4. To what extent do principals in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria apply MBO in school financial management?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in instructional programmes management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in staff management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in students' management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in school financial management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

This section was organised as follows: concept of management by objectives (MBO), need for MBO in educational management and application of MBO in the basic operational tasks of principals.

Management by Objectives and Educational Management

MBO was popularized by Peter Drucker. Drucker (2006) suggested that objectives should not be imposed on subordinates but should be decided collectively by those concerned with the management. MBO is a technique of management in which attempts are made to relate organizational objectives with individual performance and development through the involvement of all persons in the organization (Nwosu, 2008). In the school system therefore, MBO is a management technique that involves application of collective objectives, action, vision, insight and inspiration in schools in such a way that fundamental changes in direction, development, productivity, perceptions or beliefs occur in both followers and the organization (Ofojebe, 2010).

MBO and Basic Operational Tasks Performance of Principals

The major function of a principal is to provide effective leadership and improve the quality of life of each individual within the school. The school principal is therefore expected to set a stage of academic excellence in the management of his/her staff. If principals can apply MBO technique in the operational tasks areas as identified by Anukam and Anukam (2006), the objectives and goals of the school could be achieved. The basic operational tasks areas as stated in literature are: management of instructional programmes, Staff management, students' management, school financial management, School infrastructural management and school community relationship. The focus of this study is on the first four.

(a) **Management of Instructional Programmes:** The principals make input to curriculum decisions and are aware of proposals that are being made, plan the subjects to be studied jointly with teachers and make sure that adequate teachers are provided to teach the subjects. Nina (2014) commented that all these are in line with MBO participative decision-making approach.

(b) **Staff Management:** Social institutions such as the schools, achieve their purpose through the efforts of people that constitute the staff (both teaching and non teaching) of a school. Jaiyeoba (2004) stressed that the principal is effective when he is able to coordinate staff and develop "harmonious relationship with his staff, since achievement of goals of the school is a cooperative effort of the principal and staff.

(c) **Students' Management:** Students' management involves the guidance and welfare services rendered to students, to supplement regular classroom instructions (Nwosu, 2008). Students' management involve the organisation of students and available resources for the provision of full and most effective possible measure of guidance in order that the students may achieve desired educational objectives.

(d) **School Financial Management:** The achievement of educational objectives depends on adequate financial supports. Ezra (cited in Anukam and Anukam, 2006) defined finance as a body of facts, principles and theories dealing with the raising of funds by individuals, business firms, educational institutions and government. The school administrator is the chief accounting officer of his institution and he is solely responsible for proper financial management (Mgbodile, 2014).

Research Model/Theoretical Base

This study is based on the goal setting theory developed by Locke and Graham (1968). The basic idea is that a goal serves as a motivator because it allowed people to compare their current performance with that required to achieve the goal. This is cognitive process approach to work motivation. It is based on the assumptions that people believe rationally and consciously. Thus, the function of a goal is to provide guidelines for deciding the amount of efforts to put into work.

Research Method

Population and Sample Design

The population for this study was made up of all the one thousand two hundred and forty one (1, 241) public secondary school principals in the area of the study. Again, the sample of this study comprised 870 principals who are the respondents in the study; and represent seventy percent (70%) of the entire population.

Research Design and Data Collection

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a 39-item researcher-made questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on

Principals' Application of Management by Objectives" (QPAMBO). This instrument was duly validated by three experts. The reliability of QPAMBO was determined using Cronbach alpha. The reliability indices of the four sections of the instrument were as follows: 0.86; 0.86; 0.84; and 0.84. The researcher administered the instrument on the principals with the aid of fifteen research assistants who were instructed on how to administer the instrument .

Method of Data Analysis

The data generated through the structured questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages and aggregate scores of the subjects cluster by cluster.

Decision Guide

<p>Cluster A = 12 Items 1.0 – 1.49 => 12 – 17. 88 = VLE 1.50 – 2. 49 => 18 – 29. 88 = LE 2.50 – 3. 49 => 30 – 41. 88 = HE 3. 50 – 4.00 => 42 – 48. 00 = VHE Cluster C= 9 Items As in B</p>	<p>Cluster B = 9 items 9 – 13. 41 13. 50 – 22. 41 22. 50 – 31. 41 31. 50 – 36. 00 Cluster D 9 items As in B</p>
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The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics and tested at 0.05 level of significance. As a general rule, where the calculated t-value is equal or greater than the critical t-value at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was rejected and where the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis was accepted.

Data Analysis and Model Testing

The results are presented sequentially starting with the answers to the research questions and then the testing of hypotheses.

Data Analysis for Research Question One

Table 1: Range of Scores on Principals' Application of MBO in Instructional Programme Management

Range of Scores	N	%	Remarks
12.00 – 17. 88	08	0.92	Very low extent
18.00 – 29.88	06	0.69	Low extent
30. 00 – 41.88	829	95.29	High extent
42. 00 - 48.00	27	3.10	Very high extent

The analysis of data in Table 1 shows that with scores ranging from 42.00 to 48.00, 27 out of 870 principals make use of MBO in instructional programmes management to very high extent, 829 (95.29%) of the principals who scored between 30.00 and 41.88 use it to high extent, where six of the principals who scored between 18.00 and 29.88 make use of MBO to low extent and the remaining eight principals who scored between 12.00 and 17.88 use it to very low extent. Therefore, one can say that principals in South East State of Nigeria apply MBO in instructional programmes management to a high extent.

Data Analysis for Research Question Two

Table 2: Range of Scores on Principals' Application of MBO in Staff Management

Range of Scores	N	%	Remarks
9.00 – 13.41	-	0	Very low extent
13.50 – 22.41	68	7.82	Low extent
22.50 – 31.41	775	89.10	High extent
31.50 – 36.00	47	5.34	Very high extent

Table 2 shows that with scores ranging from 31.50 to 36.00, 47 out of 870 principals make use of MBO in staff management to very high extent, 775 (89.10%) of the principals who scored between 22.50 and 31.41 use it to high extent, where 68 of the principals who scored between 13.50 and 22.41 make use of MBO to low extent and no principal scored between 9.00 and 13.41, and none make use of it to very low extent. This shows that principals of South East State of Nigeria apply MBO to high extent in staff management.

Data Analysis for Research Question Three

Table 3: Range of Scores on Principals' Application of MBO in Students' Management

Range of Scores	N	%	Remarks
9.00 – 13.41	-	0	Very low extent
13.50 – 22.41	441	50.69	Low extent
22.50 – 31.41	405	46.55	High extent
31.50 – 36.00	24	2.72	Very high extent

Table 3 indicates that with scores ranging from 31.50 to 36.00, 24 out of 870 principals make use of MBO in student's management to very high extent, 441 (50.69%) of the principals who scored between 22.50 and 31.41 use it to low extent, where 405 of the principals who scored between 13.50 and 22.41 make use of MBO to high extent and no principal scored between 9.00 and 13.41, and none make use of it to very low extent. Going by this analysis of the ratings of principals, majority make use of MBO to a low extent while lesser number apply it to high extent in students' management.

Data Analysis for Research Question Four

Table 4: Range of Scores on Principals' Application of MBO in School Financial Management

Range of Scores	N	%	Remarks
9.00 – 13.41	-	0	Very low extent
13.50 – 22.41	131	15.06	Low extent
22.50 – 31.41	681	78.28	High extent
31.50 – 36.00	58	6.67	Very high extent

Table 4 reveals that with scores ranging from 31.50 to 36.00, 58 out of 870 principals make use of MBO in school financial management to very high extent, 681 (78.28%) of the principals who scored between 22.50 and 31.41 use it to high extent, where 131 of the principals who scored between 13.50 and 22.41 make use of MBO to low extent and no principal scored between 9.00 and 13.41, and none make use of it to very low extent. Hence, in principals' assessment, they apply MBO in school financial management to a high extent.

Testing the Hypotheses

Table 5: t- test of Hypothesis One on the mean scores of male and female principals in their use of MBO in instructional programmes management

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P \geq 0.05
Male	406	37.76	3.90	868	3.25	1.96	S
Female	464	36.88	4.05				

Table 5 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 868df the calculated t 3.25 is greater than the critical t 1.96. The first null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 6: t-test of Hypothesis Two on the mean scores of male and female principals in their Application of MBO in staff management

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P \geq 0.05
Male	406	27.17	2.49	868	2.20	1.96	S
Female	464	26.73	3.29				

Table 6 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 868df the calculated t 2.20 is greater than the critical t 1.96. The second null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 7: t –test of Hypothesis Three on the mean scores of male and female principals in their Application of MBO in students’ Management

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P \geq 0.05
Male	406	23.10	2.98	868	1.11	1.96	NS
Female	464	22.83	4.21				

Table 7 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance and 868df the calculated t 1.11 is lesser than the critical t 1.96 indicating that the t-test is not significance. The third null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 8: t-test of Hypothesis Four on the mean scores of male and female principals in their Application of MBO in school financial management

Source of variation	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P \geq 0.05
Male	406	26.83	3.84	868	1.97	1.96	S
Female	464	27.31	3.44				

Table 8 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 868df the calculated t 1.97 is greater than the critical t 1.96. The fourth null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Summary of the Findings

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

1. Most of the secondary school principals apply MBO in instructional programmes management to high extent.
2. Most of the secondary school principals apply MBO in staff management to high extent.

3. Majority of the secondary school principals (441) apply MBO in students' management to low extent while 405 principals use it to high extent.
4. Most of the secondary school principals apply MBO in school financial management to high extent.
5. There is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in instructional programme management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.
6. There is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in staff management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.
7. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in students' management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.
8. There is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in school financial management in secondary schools in South East States of Nigeria.

Discussion and Conclusion

Results in table 1 indicated that most of the principals make use of MBO in instructional programmes management to a high extent. Again, the results in table 5 also indicated that there is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in instructional programme management in secondary schools. The above findings agree with Ugwu (2002) who found that MBO is a veritable management technique for implementing instructional programmes in schools. Again, Emenike (2004) found that most school principals apply MBO in their instructional programmes management.

The second finding under this section disagrees with Ogunsaju (2008) who found that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in their schools. The differences in the findings could be attributed to time lag. A research conducted in 2008 might not yield the same result with the one conducted in 2017. Thus, research conducted 28 years ago may differ significantly with current work.

Results in table 2 indicated that most of the principals apply MBO in staff management to high extent. Similarly, results in table 8 indicate that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in staff management in secondary schools. In support of the above findings, Nwagbo (2003) found that many school administrators use MBO in staff management. Jaiyeoba (2004) also found that school principals in South East States of Nigeria use MBO in staff management to a great extent. A similar finding by Udeozor (2004) indicates that male and female school heads differ significantly in their mean ratings on school heads' application of MBO in staff management.

Findings in table 3 indicated that some principals (441) apply MBO in students' management to a low extent while other (405) apply it to high extent. In the same vein, results in table 7 reveal that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in students' management. Eze (2016) found that only few school heads apply MBO in students' management. Again, Ajaniyi (2017) found that male and female principals do not differ significantly in their application of MBO in students' management in their schools.

Results revealed that most school principals apply MBO in school financial management to a high extent. Furthermore, results in table 8 revealed that there is significant

difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent they apply MBO in school financial management.

The findings are in agreement with Obiechina (2016) who found that MBO is a good technique in managing school finance. Again, Nwosu (2008) found that school financial management can be more effectively handled by the application of MBO. This finding disagreed with Onwubiko (2016) who found that school administrators do not make use of MBO in financial management.

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that most principals apply MBO to a high extent in instructional programmes management; staff management, and school financial management. It is also concluded that a greater number of principals in South East States of Nigeria, to low extent, apply MBO in students' management. It is also concluded that male and female principals differ significantly in their mean scores on the extent they apply MBO in instructional programmes management; staff management, and school financial management.

Recommendations

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

1. School principals are to update their knowledge continuously through seminars and workshops in the application of MBO in school task performance so that they can utilize the benefits of MBO and apply it to students' management.
2. Principals should attend remedial training programmes in the use of MBO in students' management so as to apply it to high extent.
3. The use of MBO in school task performance can be combined with other management techniques like PERT, PPBS and Delphi to avoid monotony or boredom.
4. Government should provide in-service training opportunities for principals on other management techniques in order to help them acquire balanced knowledge instead of focusing only on one management technique (MBO).
5. Teachers should go for in-service training programmes because principals alone cannot achieve the school goals, using MBO between principals and staff should be maintained in the schools so that both groups can work collaboratively in achieving the school goals through the use of MBO.

Limitations and Further Research

The findings of this study have the following limitations:

1. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in the area of study. Public primary schools and private secondary or primary schools were excluded. The application of the results of the findings of public secondary school may not be extended to private secondary school system. Again, secondary and primary schools are not the same and as a result, the findings may not be extended to primary schools.
2. The qualifications and areas of specialization of the principals were not studied or included. These variables also have the potential to influence principals' application of MBO.

The following suggestions are made for further research:

1. A replication of the present study in other geo-political zones of the federation to enable accurate generalization of the findings.
2. Assessment of principals' use of MBO in human resource management in secondary schools in South East States secondary schools of Nigeria.

3. Private school principals' use of MBO in task performance in South East States Geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

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