

Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Principal's Competencies in Nigeria

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나이지리아 교장 역량에 대한 교장과 교사의 인식

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<ABSTRACT>

This study investigated the perceptions of Nigerian school principals and teachers of the administrative and managerial competencies of secondary school principals in Nigeria needed to effectively lead their schools, focusing on eleven identified 21st century skills. A two-section questionnaire was designed by the researcher using google survey form, and validated by experts, to gather data from 93 principals and 237 teachers across secondary schools in Nigeria, using descriptive survey design. Mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test were used to answer the research questions. Major findings indicated that the principals' self-rating was higher than that of the teachers who consistently rated the principals lower, indicating that Nigerian school principals require upgrade in a variety of administrative competencies relating to policy and direction, managing change and innovation, resources and operation, human relationship and self-effectiveness. The researchers recommend that principals should consider the teachers' perceptions in areas of the identified administrative and managerial competencies in order to raise the quality of school leadership, and that the federal government through the ministry of education and secondary school education boards should use the identified competencies as a basis for organizing pre- and in-trainings, workshops, seminars and conferences for prospective and serving principals.

Key words : Administrative competencies, Managerial competencies, Perceptions, School leadership

I. Introduction

In this era of globalization, the role of school principals have undergone drastic and dramatic

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changes and have become more complex in order to meet the diverse changing needs of students and the expectations of teachers, parents and the community (Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). Principals are now tasked, as educational leaders, with a more demanding role of managing resources, administering and executing strategies and policies in order for schools to be more efficient and effective. They are required to acquire some basic competence skills to be able to face the new 21st century experience, initiate actions, avert crises, resolve difficulties, surmount obstacles and make significant positive contributions to national development (Salazar, 2007). While some countries have been making efforts to virtually train secondary school principals, Nigeria seems to have not; the country has constantly been using the years of experience in teaching as the key benchmark for appointing principals (Arikewuyo, 2009). Many Nigerian secondary school principals did not have any serious or professional training in educational management and administration, and are thus deprived of the changing trends in the administration of 21st century schools (Olaleye, 2013).

According to Olaleye (2013), the management of secondary schools has been bedeviled by internal and external factors. Some of these perennial problems have been associated with the youths in contemporary society. Nigerian secondary school students are involved in cult activities, drug abuse, hooliganism, examination malpractices, gross indiscipline, vandalism, truancy and low academic bad practices (Olaleye, 2001). Ekundayo (2010) stated that the quality of the outputs from secondary schools in Nigeria was very poor. It was noted that very few secondary school graduates were able to communicate effectively or show evidence of good and solid educational background. It seems that students have a poor

command of English language, lack the necessary technical skills, oral and written communications (Ekundayo, 2010). Most of these problems would have been arrested if the Nigerian school principals had embraced the 21st century leadership competency skills and instill the same skills to the school fraternity.

Nigerian school principals need to embrace the leadership skills of 21st century in order for them to be able to instill the same skills to the teachers who will serve to develop and enhance teacher instructions in the effort to improve the student achievement and help them thrive in this era of globalization by providing them with the needed surviving skills. It is as a result of this that this research seeks to find out the perceptions of Nigerian principals and teachers of principal's competence skills for the effective management and administration of secondary schools in Nigeria in order to meet the diverse changing needs of students and the expectations of teachers, parents, and the community. Perception affects their behavior (Cha & Ryu, 2018; Choi, Kim & Kim, 2019) in teaching and managing their class and schools. So the researchers try to study principals' and teachers' perceptions to implicate principals' school managements.

The specific research questions that will be guiding this study are:

- i. How do Nigerian principals perceive their leadership competency skills of school management and administration?
- ii. How do Nigerian teachers perceive their school principals' leadership competency skills of school management and administration?

What are the differences in perceptions between the Nigerian principals and teachers on leadership competency skills of school principals?

II. Methodology

1. Participants

For the purpose of this study, a quantitative approach was implemented using a google form survey questionnaire that was completed by Nigerian principals and teachers. A total number of 371 respondents participated in the online survey, 107 principals and 264 teachers. However, 330 participants completely responded to all the items accordingly and with no omissions, creating a final response rate of 89%, 93 from principals and 237 from teachers.

2. Procedure

Data was collected using a questionnaire designed using Google survey forms for principals and teachers, respectively, and convenience sampling method was used. Online questionnaires were distributed among the principals and teachers who are currently working in public secondary schools in Nigeria via email and social media. The links to the Google form survey for principals and teachers were sent to colleagues, friends and acquaintances who, in turn helped in getting more responses from their network of members who are teachers and principals, thereby giving it the added advantage of snow-ball type sampling also.

3. Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics (SPSS version 26) were used for the analysis of data. Section A of the questionnaire comprises demographic variables of respondents, and section B comprised eleven 21st century skills school principals need to effectively lead and manage

schools as listed by Wagner (2013), and each of these skills has four practices. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to the appendix. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the responses from the demographic items for principals and to analyze the participants' responses for research questions 1 and 2 using a Likert scale. Mean and standard deviation tables were generated for each of the skills. To answer Research Question 3, the principals' and teachers' responses were analyzed using independent sample t-test.

III. Results and Discussions

1. Demographic Information

The frequency and percentage data from the demographics indicated that 21.51% of principals who responded had PhD, 45.16% Masters' and 11.83% had Bachelors' degrees. 52.69% of principals who responded had pre-service training before assumption of office and 47.31% reported that they did not have any form of pre-service training, and 51.61% of the principals reported that they have had in-service training as a principal and 48.39% reported that they are yet to have any form of in-service training since assumption of duty. This finding agrees with Olaleye (2013) that many Nigerian secondary school principals did not have any serious or professional training in educational management and are thus deprived of the changing trends in the administration of 21st century schools. This finding also agrees Oduro & Macbeath (2003), and Lahul-Ako (2001) who rightly pointed out that teaching records or years of service and acquaintance are the basis of principal appointment in many countries rather than their leadership skills.

2. Results for Principal and Teacher Perceptions

The principals considered themselves as having high capacity in all the skill areas; the mean score for the identified competence skills ranged between 4.17 to 4.60 for the principals' self-rating.

The participating teachers considered their principals as having little, or moderate capacity in specific skill areas; the mean score for the identified competence skills ranged between 2.41 to 4.09 for the teachers' perception.

The study showed statistically significant difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the identified competency skills except for technological skills. There was no statistically significant difference for technological skills. The summary of the results are shown in the tables below:

<Table 1> Principal and teacher perceptions of emotional intelligence (EI) skills

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
EI	4.597	3.568	.400	.671	13.847	.000**

The analysis of the data from the respondents suggests that Nigerian principals perceived themselves as being emotionally intelligent. Also, the teachers considered their principals as having emotional intelligence skills. The t-test analysis showed that the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding emotional intelligence skills are statistically significant different ($t=13.847$, $**p<0.01$).

The finding for critical thinking and analytical skills shows principals perceived that they possess these skills; the teachers also perceived their principals to possess critical thinking and

<Table 2> Principal and teacher perceptions of critical thinking and analytical (CTA) skills

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
CTA	4.538	3.1701	.423	.735	16.854	.000**

analytical skills. There is statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding critical thinking and analytical skills ($t=16.854$, $**p<0.01$) according to the independent sample t-test analysis.

<Table 3> Principal and teacher perceptions of skills for creativity and innovation (CI)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
CI	4.457	2.470	.484	.744	23.848	.001*

The analysis and findings of this category suggested that the principals perceived themselves as creative and innovative. However, the teachers did not perceive the principals as having the necessary capacity to be creative and innovative. There was statistically significant difference between principals and teachers perception of creativity and innovation skills ($t=23.848$, $*p<0.05$).

<Table 4> Principal and teacher perceptions of personal and communication skills (PCS)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
PCS	4.521	4.094	.445	.655	5.789	.000**

As shown in <Table 4>, the mean score for "personal and communication skills" is 4.52 for principals and 4.09 for teachers. The principals

think that they possess personal and communication skills; and the teachers perceived their principals to possess sufficient communication skills to create effective interpersonal communication network in their schools. The t-test analysis showed that there is statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding personal and communication skills ($t=5.789$, $**p<0.01$).

<Table 5> Principal and teacher perceptions of technological skills (TS)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
TS	4.363	2.861	.542	.640	19.989	.370

The findings revealed that the school principals perceived themselves as technically skilled and adequately prepared for the role of technology leader. The teachers also perceived the school principals to possess technology skills, although with a lower mean as compared to how the principals perceived themselves. There was no statistically significant difference between the principals' and teachers' perception as regards the technological skills ($t=19.989$, $p>0.05$) of secondary school principals as shown in <Table 5>.

<Table 6> Principal and teacher perceptions of organization skills (OS)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
OS	4.567	3.735	.461	.799	9.435	.000**

The analysis and findings of this category suggested that the principals perceived themselves as possessing organization skill and make

effective use of the skill. The findings also showed that the teachers perceived their principals as having organization skill. There was statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding organization skills ($t=9.435$, $**p<0.01$) according to the independent sample t-test analysis.

<Table 7> Principal and teacher perceptions of personal management skills (PMS)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
PMS	4.505	3.715	.400	.750	9.629	.000**

According to the findings, the school principals think that they possess personal management skills; the teachers also think that their school principals possess personal management skills, such as organization, goal setting, and time management skills. There was statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding personal management skills ($t=9.629$, $**p<0.01$) as shown in <Table 7>.

<Table 8> Principal and teacher perceptions of skills for Teamwork and Collaboration (TC)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
TC	4.452	3.549	.440	.708	11.463	.000**

The findings of this category suggested that the principals perceived themselves as possessing the skills to foster teamwork and collaboration in their schools. The findings also showed that the teachers perceived their principals as possessing the skill for teamwork and collaboration in their schools. The t-test analysis showed that there

was statistically significant differences between the perception of principals and teachers regarding teamwork and collaboration skills ($t=11.463$, $**p<0.01$).

<Table 9> Principal and teacher perceptions of skills for Partnership development (PD)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
PD	4.339	2.436	.561	.828	20.406	.000**

The findings revealed that the school principals perceived themselves as possessing the skills for partnership development. The teachers do not perceive their school principals to possess the skills for partnership development. There was statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding partnership development skills ($t=20.406$, $**p<0.01$) as shown in <Table 9>.

<Table 10> Principal and teacher perceptions of skills for community outreach, development and engagement (CODE)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
CODE	4.175	2.407	.632	.725	20.639	.023*

According to the findings, the school principals think that they possess the skills for community outreach, development and engagement. However, the teachers did not perceive their school principals to possess the skills for community outreach, development and engagement. There was statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding community outreach, development and engagement skills ($t=20.639$, $*p<0.05$).

<Table 11> Principal and teacher perceptions of skills for global awareness and understanding (GAU)

	Mean		Standard deviation		t-value	p-value
	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237	Principal N=93	Teacher N=237		
GAU	4.196	3.437	.579	.793	8.393	.001*

According to the findings, the school principals perceived themselves to possess the skills for global awareness and understanding. The teachers also think that their school principals possess the skills for global awareness and understanding. The independent sample t-test analysis showed that there was statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers regarding global awareness and understanding skills ($t=8.393$, $*p<0.05$).

It was discovered in this study that Nigerian principals considered themselves as having an excellent capacity in the skill areas while the Nigerian teachers considered their principals as either having a little capacity, moderate or excellent capacity in the skill areas. Overall, the teachers' perceptions of the principals' use of the leadership skills were lower than that of the principals' perceptions. When comparing the perceived average use of the skills, teachers consistently rated the principals at a lower average than the principals did themselves. The use of the listed skills by the principal is evident. However, due to teacher perception of the skills not rated as high as that of the principals, a possible disconnect between the use by the principal and their perception of use may be occurring.

Emotional intelligence skills, critical thinking and analytical skills, personal and communication skills, organization skills, partnership development skills sparked a notable difference in perception between the principals and the teachers ($**p<0.01$) than creativity and innovation skills, development

and engagement skills, and global awareness and understanding skills (* $p < 0.05$).

IV. Conclusions and Implications

The following conclusions emerged based on the results:

First, this study confirms majority of Nigerian school principals are appointed not based on administrative professionalism but on years of classroom experience and grade level. This method of appointment may not be the best for effective secondary school administration as the principals may lack the skills and competencies in school administration to manage the problems in schools in this 21st century.

Second, the principals' perception of their competence skills in this study is higher than that of the teachers. The principals think they are doing well while the teachers think the principals are not doing so well. Although the teachers work closely and directly with the principals and may have a very different perception from that of the principals because the teachers are not normally with the principal throughout the school day. Many behaviors could be practiced by the principal but not observed by the teacher. It is also possible that the teachers were not familiar with the skills they were asked to rate. Because the use of the skills was rated not as high as the principals by teachers, it can be concluded the principals are using the skills but just not to the degree which the teachers perceive. However, the discrepancies in perceptions have important implications for school improvement. Bryk & Schneider (2002) reported that it does not matter what the level of effectiveness and the direction of the discrepancy are, large gaps in perception may signal low organizational coherence, low trust, and poor teamwork.

Third, Nigerian school principals need to consider the teachers' perception of their competencies. According to Scotti and Williams (as cited in Luo & Najjar, 2007), "teachers' perceptions of their principal are one of the key variables that affect the productivity of a school as a social organization" and their leadership has an impact on "teacher morale, job satisfaction, and motivation" (Evans, 2001).

Lastly, Nigerian secondary school principals need to upgrade and improve on the competence skills identified by this study.

The implications that arise from the findings and conclusions of this study are highlighted in the paragraphs below.

Given that the principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school principals' competence skills differ indicated that the various administrative and managerial competencies principals required for leadership tasks in schools may not be enough. Therefore, the federal government through the ministry of education and secondary school education boards have the duty to ensure that the principals actually acquire these required competence skills. This could be done through relevant pre- and in-trainings, workshops seminars, as well as conferences.

Any general consideration for raising the quality of school leadership, especially at the secondary level, must also consider the competencies, as identified in this study. Many studies have linked these types of competencies to effective school administration (Wagner, 2013; Kochamba & Murray, 2008; Bouchamma, Basque & Marcotte, 2014).

Since this study revealed a number of competence skills required by the principals, the implication is that any secondary school principal, who ignores these competencies, is likely to run into leadership problems (Ha, 2016). For instance, such secondary school principal is likely to have

problems with administrative and managerial issues such as: policy and direction, managing change and innovation, resources and operation, human relationship and self-effectiveness.

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[Appendix] Principals' Competence Skills Questionnaire

Principals' Competence Skills Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Information

These questions are specifically designed to you as you are one of the responding principals, and deals with your education and the time you have spent in the profession. Please select the option that suits your response and fill in your appropriate response in the paragraph provided.

1. Highest Education Degree

PhD () Masters Degree () PGDE () Bachelors Degree () Others ()

2. Current Grade Level:

Level 12 () Level 13 () Level 14 () Level 15 () Level 16 ()

3. How long have you been a principal in your current school?

1-3years () 4-7years () 7-10years () 10years and above ()

4. Did you undergo any principalship training before you became a principal to prepare you for the leadership role in a secondary school?

Yes () No ()

5. Have you attended any professional development training since you became a principal, to update and upgrade your competence skills and to keep you abreast of the leadership role as a school principal?

Yes () No ()

Section B: Principals' 21st Century Competency Skills

Instruction:

The following are 21st century skills school principals need to effectively lead and manage schools. Please, read each statement in the table below and then, tick (√) in the appropriate column, only one on each horizontal row, as an indication of the level of agreement or disagreement with the statement in relation to what exists or prevails in your principal's competency skills. The scale is rated from the lowest to the highest degree of agreement in the following order: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

SN	Questionnaire Item	Agreement				
		SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
A.	Emotional Intelligence Principals are able to:					
1	Be able to express written, verbal, or non-verbal recognition of feelings, needs, or concerns of others (teachers)?					
2	Tactfully respond to others in situations of emotional stress or conflict?					
3	Control emotions and interact appropriately and tactfully with others (teachers)?					
4	Be cautious when dealing with issues that are unfamiliar and individuals.					
B	Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills Principals are able to:					
1	Jointly with teachers, select learning experience method and procedures to employ in achieving the school's objective					
2	Involve staff in decision-making and issues that concern them.					
3	Possess the skills of conflict resolution and problem-solving.					
4	Consider the consequences of a decision before acting.					
C	Creativity and Innovation Principals are able to:					
1	Continuously develop their skills and those of their staff members.					
2	Encourage innovation to improve teaching and learning					
3	Develop alliances and resources outside the school to improve quality teaching and learning.					
4	Acknowledge and celebrate both staff and student achievement and accomplishments.					
D	Personal and Communication Skills Principals are able to:					
1	Establish strong lines of communication with teachers and students					
2	Demonstrate effective presentation skills and speaks articulately					
3	Express ideas clearly in writing and speaking forms.					
4	Be able to provide feedback on students' academic performance with teachers.					
E	Technological Skills Principals are able to:					
1	Be knowledgeable about the use of ICT and media.					
2	Participate in professional development activities that focus on technology and integration of technology in the learning activities of students.					
3	Have knowledge of the current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.					
4	Manage the financial resources of the school effectively and efficiently.					
F	Organization Skills Principals are able to:					
1	Delegate responsibilities to capable staff members.					
2	Head the development of a school initiative and the implementation of a result-oriented academic achievement plan.					
3	Monitor progress and modify plans as needed.					
4	Use available material and financial resources effectively and efficiently.					

G	Personal Management Skills Principals are able to:					
1	Have the capacity to manage time effectively, identify and act on priorities.					
2	Organize the school to focus on the students' academic needs.					
3	Share expertise gained through experience and motivate others.					
4	Set clear goals and objectives and maintain these goals and objectives in the forefront of the school's attention.					
H	Teamwork and Collaboration Principals are able to:					
1	Ensure that staff in various units and workstations work together in a cooperative and not antagonistic way to the common goal of school.					
2	Acts to maintain direction or focus to achieve the team's goals					
3	Promote a culture of collaboration, support, and trust.					
4	Involve staff in decision-making and matters concerning them, support the ideas of their staff members					
I	Partnership Development Principals are able to:					
1	Foster the development of collaborations and partnerships that reflect the school's vision and address its strategic goals.					
2	Work with district administration and other principals to spread partnerships district-wide, provide professional development, share ideas and resources, and solve challenges.					
3	Acknowledge and thank action team leaders, parents, and community partners, and others for their participation.					
4	Remind students, often, how important their families are to their progress and learning, and to the school.					
J	Community Outreach, Development and Engagement Principals are able to:					
1	Build and manage relationships with stakeholders and the community.					
2	Work with the staff and the community, to respond to diverse interests and needs of the community, and encourage community resources.					
3	Promote shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation					
4	Engage the voice of the school community through conversations, surveys, and meetings to formulate the vision and develop the strategic plan of the school.					
K	Global Awareness and Understanding Principals are able to:					
1	Make sure that faculty and staff are aware of the latest theories and practices and make this discussion a regular aspect of the school culture.					
2	Be knowledgeable about wider organizational and development issues beyond the education sector.					
3	Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing various cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue with staff, work and community contexts.					
4	Understand other countries and cultures, including the use of non-English languages.					

Thank you very much for investing your golden time in filling this questionnaire!