

INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated influence of politics on management of human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Three purposes, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Population for the study consisted of 298 principals in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for the study was 199 principals. A questionnaire titled “Influence of Politics on Human Resource Management Questionnaire (IPHRMQ)” was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. The researcher visited all the secondary schools and administered the questionnaire directly to the principals based on appointment. Data collected on research questions relating to the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 degree of significance. The analysis was done using manual calculation of descriptive statistics and Scientific Package of Social Science (SPSS) for hypotheses. The analysis revealed that: principals’ perceived that politics does not influence the management of teachers as human resources ($\bar{x} = 2.37$; while $P = 0.39 > 0.05$); principals’ perceived that politics does not influence the management of students as human resources ($\bar{x} = 2.14$; while $P = 0.39 > 0.05$); and principals’ perceived that politics does not influence the management of non-academic staffs as human resources ($\bar{x} = 2.40$; while $P = 0.09 > 0.05$). The study concluded that principals in Enugu State feel that political issues have little impact on human resource management in public secondary schools, whether it includes teachers, pupils, or non-academic personnel. Importantly, there was no noticeable variation in judgments based on the principals’ gender, indicating a general consensus on the problem. This discovery implies that leadership in educational institutions can stay immune to external political influences, allowing for more effective and equitable management methods. The study recommended that it is essential to implement comprehensive training programmes for principals and other stakeholders that enhance their understanding of human resource management, enabling them to further insulate their management practices from political influences among others.

Keywords: Politics, Human Resource, Management and Secondary Schools

Introduction

Political influence in education is not new in Nigeria. The reality is that, throughout the period of British Colonialism in 1891-1951, the planning, administration, and management of education were influenced by political arrangements made by the then-leaders. The same political influence and practices continue to exist in the education sector, particularly in public schools. However, it is well recognized that the impact of politics on secondary school management in Nigeria is influenced by government intervention. This is because politics and school administration cannot be separated. It should also be recognized that the purposes of education, control, production, finance, and accreditation are all linked to politics. Various authors have defined the term politics differently based on their perspectives. However, Ogbonnaya (2019) defines it as a topic concerned with attracting, securing, and preserving the well-being of a community, state, or country. According to Okeke (2017), it is a mechanism used to solve social, economic, political, and educational problems using political methods. Uchendu (2019), on the other hand, defines politics as the science and practice of protecting

and enhancing the temporal welfare of a society organized as a state. As a result, the practice of politics entails both the formulation of broad concepts and their application to specific issues. These definitions suggest that politics is concerned with recruiting, securing, and maintaining the well-being of a society. In this sense, Okeke (2017) sees politics as a game performed by all stakeholders in order to maintain educational progress.

Education has long been recognized as a premier tool for promoting family, community, and national development. Education is critical to the success of every nation. Education is an excellent tool for national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2013). Thus, it is a necessity for overall growth, including socioeconomic, technical, and environmental developments. This is because it is a dependable method of passing along people's cultures from one generation to the next. There are three stages of education in Nigeria: tertiary, secondary, and basic education. In this article, the researcher focused on secondary education, commonly known as secondary school. Secondary school is the level of education after primary school. It serves as a bridge between the primary and secondary educational levels. The purpose of secondary school is to prepare students for productive citizenship and higher education. It has two parts in Nigeria: junior and senior levels. The importance of secondary school in Nigeria prompted the Federal Government to include the broad goals of secondary school in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). However, Ekundayo (2020) regarded secondary schools as failing to meet their initial expectations due to a number of challenges that have plagued their management, including political meddling. The majority of secondary schools in Enugu State were established as a result of increased political consciousness among the state's residents. Okeke (2017) emphasized that politics plays an essential part in secondary school decision making, control, and governance. Furthermore, Okeke stated that politics in education may be defined as a process of control, decision making, implementation, administration, and governance, as well as a mechanism for allocating resources to various ethnic groups in order to achieve their goals. Politics plays an important part since an educational system has political goals that must be met in order to justify the system's existence if it is well managed.

Every organization relies on effective management. Ogbonnaya (2019) described management as the coordination of an organization's resources via the processes of planning, organizing, directing, and managing all energies targeted at achieving organizational goals. Management is also a method of directing, leading, and regulating the work of a group of individuals in order to achieve their common goals. Hence, in this sense, management is the utilization of materials and non-material resources in an organization to achieve stated goals. In this research, secondary schools are organized places with rules and regulations governing the actions that occur in order to attain the intended educational goals. As a result, the importance of secondary school administration lies in the successful use of material, non-material, and human resources to fulfill defined goals. However, school management tasks include planning, organizing, managing, directing, staffing, leading, supervising, decision making, coordinating, reporting, assessing, programming, and budgeting in order to attain educational goals. Every action that contributes to good administration in the school is defined by the resources available and how they are managed. Private or government-owned schools can achieve this aim by properly managing their human resources. The human factors at work in schools are known as human resources or personnel. They are made up of students, instructors, administrators, and non-academic personnel. These types of human resources in the school are endowed with a variety of skills, talents, and attitudes that promote efficiency and maximize profit (Nzokurum & Iremeka, 2017). They must be carefully handled in order to achieve an equilibrium that maximizes the organization's production. Human resource management in schools is the process of dealing with numerous difficulties relating to the human element in schools in order to support the operations of the school organization and accomplish predefined goals. Nitisemito (2019) defines human resource management as field-specific management.

Human resource management (HRM) in schools is a form of recognizing the importance of school organizational members (personnel) as resources that can support the achievement of school organizational goals, as well as the implementation of school functions and activities to ensure that they are used effectively and fairly for the benefit of the school, individuals, and society. According to Kemal, Suryadi, and Rosyidi (2019), managing human resources is a factor that determines school organizational performance. Nitisemito (2019) asserts that in order for school organization to perform, human resources in the school need to be properly managed and ways to manage them included; assigning resources to specific tasks, establishment of budget and monitoring of expenses to ensure efficient use of financial resources, tracking and maintaining of inventory of school supplies and materials, optimizing schedules for classrooms, staff, and resources to minimize conflicts and maximize usage, regular maintenance of school facilities, sharing of resources among departments, teachers and students, utilization of digital tools, e-learning platforms and online resources to supplement traditional resources, and regular conduction of audits to identify areas for improvement and optimize resource allocation. The right use and development of human resources, as well as their integration into a coherent movement and direction, enable efficient school administration. Hasibuan (2019), opined that efficient administration in schools cannot be realized without adequate human resource management. Hasibuan (2019), adds that the three key human resources that must be controlled in school if it is to function effectively: teachers, students, and non-academic personnel.

A teacher is someone who helps others achieve the information, skills, and talents they need to make future societal changes. The instructor helps students acquire desirable information and abilities while also instilling societally acceptable attitudes in them for their current and future growth (Madumere-Obike, Nwabueze, & Ukala, 2018). Management of teachers entails making the best use of human resources in the educational institution by properly managing people-related activities. Emphasizing the importance of teacher management in improving secondary school effectiveness, teachers facilitate personal and professional development for individuals and groups, allowing them to reach their full potential and contribute to the provision of excellence in teaching and research development (Iloabuchi, Abraham, & Afangideh, 2016).

Dammas (2019) argued that there is a considerable link between teacher management and good school administration. Politics has a significant impact on teacher management in Nigerian secondary schools. Political appointments, favouritism in promotions, and the politicization of teacher unions all contribute to a complicated environment for educators. According to Bassey (2023), teachers frequently experience job instability and are susceptible to political influences that jeopardize their professional autonomy. Furthermore, the continual changes in educational policy are aligned with political goals, frequently rejecting the advice of experienced educators. Ibe (2022) emphasized this tension, stating that administrative decisions influenced by local politicians affect recruiting processes, resulting in a reduction in the quality of academic personnel as meritocracy is undermined. As a result, the management of academic personnel reflects the overall political atmosphere, influencing the quality of education provided. Furthermore, students as human resources may be impacted by politics since they engage and interact with instructors, other staff, and students, participate in classroom discussions, and exhibit responsive behaviour. Student people are important in schools because they improve educational quality (Nzokurum & Iremeka, 2017). One of the school administrator's primary responsibilities is to manage students as human resources. It is defined as any activities provided to pupils for the purpose of achieving educational objectives in addition to regular classroom instruction. Etebu, Mackenzie and Nyong (2016), revealed that managing students as human resources in school is an integrated part of education, and thus efforts must be made to ensure that activities and services geared towards student development are provided for effective school administration. Another study found a substantial association

between student management and good school administration (Amalu, Abuo & David, 2019). According to the study's findings, in order to maintain effective administration in the school, both professionals and teacher counsellors should leave no stone unturned in the area of adequate provision of services such as educational, vocational, and personal social services, which will help in the proper management of the students (Amalu, Abuo & David, 2019). However, in Nigeria, the political landscape significantly impacts the management of students within secondary schools. Political decisions often dictate funding allocation, curriculum design, and admission policies, which can directly affect students' educational experiences. According to Ojo, Obasi and Chukwu (2022), the lack of consistent educational policy driven by political motives often leads to disparities in resource distribution, creating unequal access to quality education. This results in marginalized communities experiencing lower educational outcomes due to political favoritism or nepotism in school admissions (Adeyemo, 2023). In addition, political influence can lead to the imposition of partisan agendas in schools, impacting students' learning environments and overall development (Owen, 2023). Thus this study examines the influence of politics in management of students as human resources in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Furthermore, non-academic staff management in secondary schools is similarly affected by political considerations. Political affiliations can determine employment opportunities and job security for non-academic personnel, often leading to an environment characterized by instability. As highlighted by Eze (2022), non-academic staff may face challenges such as inconsistent pay and irregular employment due to political changes that affect funding and resource allocation. Furthermore, the recruitment processes for non-academic positions may lack transparency and fairness, favoring candidates based on political connections rather than competence (Ude, 2023). This political interference not only affects job satisfaction and morale among non-academic staff but also but also impacts the overall functioning of schools. The reliance on political affiliations for job stability can generate a culture of fear and obedience among non-academic staff instead of promoting a professional and productive work environment. Thus, the politicization of non-academic staff hiring processes contributes to an ineffective support system that is essential for the smooth operation of academic institutions.

Therefore, government interference in secondary school management to a large extent has influenced the management in different ways. It is observed that in areas of employment within the education sector, politics to a large extent determines who is to be taken and who is not to be employed. Eze (2012) observed that in the distribution of infrastructural facilities to schools, the issue of politics also is paramount. The issue of politics in transfers of teachers and principals is alarming to the extent that one is made to stay in an urban area if he/she has a God father. Also, because of politics on the control, management and governance of school management the issue of funding, provision of basic infrastructures has made various agencies to have interest in school management, therefore the stated rules and regulation guiding the school management is been influence by politics. Thus this study examined principals' perceived influence of politics on management of human resources in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Among all the difficult issues confronting secondary school education, none is more persistent than the one concerning human resource management. The inadequate management of human resources in many government-owned schools today has raised serious concerns among education stakeholders and many well-meaning members of the society. Personal observations made by the researcher during visits to several of these schools demonstrate that instructors and students who are school human resources in schools appear to be unhappy and ineffective in carrying out their duties due to various tough factors within the school environment. The

management of public secondary schools has been impacted by political factors. Political leaders are influencing choices that would normally be made by school administrators to benefit their own interests. Secondary schools have a strong connection to their host societies; hence, each section of society attempts to influence secondary school management to suit their positions in society. Politics also has an impact on funding and access to basic infrastructure. Political factors have an impact on school teaching and learning, both positively and negatively. In society, it appears that the management of secondary schools is a fertile arena for political maneuvering, with politicians influencing secondary education management while principals, teachers, school board members, and board of governors of each school blindly obey them. Principals and instructors have been unable to maintain their ground in demanding higher pay, allowances, promotions, vehicle loans, and a more suitable learning atmosphere. Teachers, school board governors, secondary school management boards, staff, and principals all observe that politics has an impact on secondary school management in areas such as teacher transfers, principal promotions, fund allocation, facility distribution, school upgrades, and exam administration. Hence, the problem of this study is what is principals' perceived influence of politics on management of human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine influence of politics on management of human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. find out influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State
2. determine influence of politics on management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State
3. ascertain influence of politics on management of non academic staffs as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the mean scores of male and female principals' in Enugu State regarding their perceived influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. What are the mean scores of male and female principals' in Enugu State regarding their perceived influence of politics on management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State?
3. What are the mean scores of male and female principals' in Enugu State regarding their perceived influence of politics on management of non academic staffs as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 degree of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State
3. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of non academic staff as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Population for the study consisted of 298 principals in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for the study was 199. According to Nwana (2010), if a population is in few hundred a 40% sample will do and if many hundreds, 20% sample will do and if several thousand a 5% sample or less will do. In view of the above principle the population of the study runs in few hundred thus a 40% sample was employed size thus 119 principals made up the sample for this study. Simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement was used to determine the respondents. Questionnaire titled “Influence of Politics on Human Resource Management Questionnaire (IPHRMQ)” was used as the instrument for data collection. The Questionnaire was validated by three experts; two from the Department of Educational Management and one from Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, with specialization in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology ESUT. The researcher visited all the secondary schools and administered the questionnaire directly to the principals based on appointment. However, some of the principals did not participate in the study. Therefore only 107 (89.9%) copies of the questionnaire were used for data analysis. Data collected on research questions relating to the study was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The analysis was done using manual calculation of descriptive statistics and Scientific Package of Social Science (SPSS) for hypotheses. The decision rule is that any item with mean 2.50 and above on responses was regarded as Agree (A), while below (2.50) was considered as Disagree (D).

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of respondents on the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources n = 107

S/N	Influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources includes;	Female $\bar{X}_1$	N =83 SD ₁	Male $\bar{X}_2$	N = 24 SD ₂	Overall $\bar{X}_G$	SD _G	Deci
1	Political appointments can affect teacher recruitment and placement.	3.06	0.70	2.04	0.79	2.55	0.75	GE
2	Funding allocations for teacher training may depend on political priorities.	1.89	1.01	1.42	0.70	1.66	0.86	LE
3	Teacher promotions can be influenced by political connections.	3.01	0.83	1.67	0.85	2.34	0.84	LE
4	Policies on teacher evaluation might change with political leadership.	3.28	0.92	1.29	0.54	2.29	0.73	LE
5	Teachers' salaries and benefits can be affected by political decisions.	1.94	0.63	1.92	0.57	1.93	0.60	LE
6	Political instability can lead to disruptions in the school system.	3.12	0.28	3.75	0.66	3.44	0.47	GE
Cluster Mean/ SD		2.72	0.73	2.02	0.69	2.37	0.71	LE

Table 1 revealed that the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender. The grand mean of 2.37 signifies that the perceived that politics does not influence management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on location. The high value of the standard deviation of 0.71 indicates that the respondents have shown dispersion in the opinions as

regards to influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Table 2: t-test of Difference between the Response of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	P-value	Sig	Decision
Female	83	2.72	0.73	105	0.39	0.05	Accept Ho
Male	24	2.02	0.69				

Key: N - Sample size; SD – Standard Deviation; Df – Degree of Freedom; t-cal – Table t value; Sig – Level of significance

Table 2 above shows that the mean response of female teachers was 2.72 with standard deviation at 0.73 while the mean response of male teachers was 2.02 with standard deviation of 0.69. Based on the result from the scientific package of social science (SPSS) analysis, the calculated p-value was 0.39. The p-value was measured at .05 level of significance and 105 degree of freedom. Since the calculated p-value (0.39) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted. It then indicates that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of teachers as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Research Question 2: What is the influence of politics on management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on the principals' influence of politics on management of students as human resources n = 107

S/N	Influence of politics on management of students as human resources includes;	Federal $\bar{X}_1$	N =83 SD ₁	State $\bar{X}_2$	N = 24 SD ₂	Overall $\bar{X}_G$	SD _G	Deci
7	Admission policies may be shaped by political affiliations.	3.12	0.42	1.67	0.85	2.40	0.64	LE
8	Scholarships and financial aid can be distributed based on political influence.	1.83	0.85	1.42	0.70	1.63	0.78	LE
9	Curriculum changes might reflect the political agenda of the ruling party.	2.11	0.85	1.96	0.96	2.04	0.91	LE
10	Student discipline and management can be influenced by local political factors.	3.19	0.63	1.29	0.54	2.24	0.59	LE
11	Extracurricular activities may receive support based on political interests.	1.57	0.87	3.04	0.54	2.31	0.71	LE
12	Measures against bullying or discrimination can vary with political pressure.	2.96	0.79	1.50	0.59	2.23	0.69	LE
Cluster Mean/ SD		2.46	0.74	1.81	0.70	2.14	0.72	LE

Table 3 revealed that the principals' perceived that politics does not influence the management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender. This was also signified by the grand mean of 2.14. The high value of the standard deviation of

0.86 indicates that the respondents have shown dispersion in the opinions as regards to the principals' perceived influence of politics on management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of students as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 4: t-test of Difference between the Response of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of students as human resources

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	P-value	Sig	Decision
Female	83	2.46	0.74	105	0.39	0.05	Accept Ho
Male	24	1.81	0.70				

Table 4 above shows that the mean response of female teachers was 2.46 with standard deviation at 0.74 while the mean response of male teachers was 1.81 with standard deviation of 0.70. Based on the result from the scientific package of social science (SPSS) analysis, the calculated p-value was 0.39. The p-value was measured at .05 level of significance and 105 degree of freedom. Since the calculated p-value (0.39) was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted. It then indicates that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the perceived influence of politics on management of non-academic staff as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Research Question 3: What is principals' perceived influence of politics on management of non academic staffs as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on the principals' perceived influence of politics on management of non academic staffs as human resources n= 107

S/N	Influence of politics on management of non academic staffs as human resources includes;	Federal $\bar{X}_1$	N =83 SD_1	State $\bar{X}_2$	N = 24 SD_2	Overall $\bar{X}_G$	SD_G	Deci
13	Recruitment and appointments for non-academic staff can be politically driven.	3.04	0.58	3.00	0.87	3.02	0.73	GE
14	Job security for non-academic staff might depend on political stability.	3.31	0.93	1.75	0.72	2.53	0.83	GE
15	Training opportunities for non-academic staff can be influenced by political choices.	2.43	1.02	1.96	0.73	2.20	0.88	LE
16	Salary scales for non-academic staff can reflect political priorities.	2.16	0.78	1.92	0.39	2.04	0.59	LE
17	Promotions can be granted based on political favoritism.	3.27	0.99	1.46	0.82	2.37	0.91	LE
18	Policies on job roles may change with different political administrations.	3.34	0.69	1.75	0.52	2.55	0.61	GE
19	Support for non-academic staff welfare programs can depend on political interests.	2.84	0.95	1.42	0.64	2.13	0.78	LE
Cluster Mean/ SD		2.91	0.85	1.89	0.67	2.40	0.76	LE

Table 5 revealed that the principals perceived that politics does not influence the management of non-academic staffs as human resources. This was further signified by the grand mean of

2.40. The high value of the standard deviation of 0.86 indicates that the respondents have shown dispersion in the opinions as regards to the influence of politics on management of non academic staffs as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on gender

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of non-academic staff as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 6: t-test of Difference between the Response of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of non-academic staff as human resources

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	P-value	t-cal	Sig	Decision
Female	83	2.91	0.85	25	0.09	2.06	0.05	Accept Ho
Male	24	1.89	0.67					

Table 6 above shows that the mean response of female teachers was 2.91 with standard deviation at 0.85 while the mean response of male teachers was 1.89 with standard deviation of 0.67. Based on the result from the scientific package of social science (SPSS) analysis, the calculated p-value was 0.09. The p-value was measured at .05 level of significance and 105 degree of freedom. Since the calculated p-value (0.09) was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted. It then indicates that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the influence of politics on management of non academic staff as human resources in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Summary of Findings

Based on the results of data analyzed, the following findings were made;

1. Principals' perceived that politics does not influence the management of teachers as human resources ($\bar{x} = 2.37$; while $P = 0.39 > 0.05$).
2. Principals' perceived that politics does not influence the management of students as human resources ($\bar{x} = 2.14$; while $P = 0.39 > 0.05$).
3. Principals' perceived that politics does not influence the management of non academic staffs as human resources ($\bar{x} = 2.40$; while $P = 0.09 > 0.05$).

Discussion

The first finding indicates that principals do not believe politics has any impact on teacher management. This is quite positive, since it suggests that educational leadership may choose instructional efficacy and teacher welfare before political manoeuvring. The lack of substantial variation between male and female replies suggests a common attitude among administrators, possibly anchored in a dedication to educational integrity. However, researchers have suggested that politics infiltrates all levels of administration in educational institutions (Abdullahi, 2019). While principals may try to reduce the impact of political issues in their administrative procedures, the reality of political patronage and favouritism frequently enters the hiring, promotion, and resource allocation processes. Thus, it might be essential to consider the potential of cognitive dissonance, where principals recognize the ideal of a politically neutral environment but subconsciously acknowledge the existing power dynamics. Similarly, principals feel that politics have little influence on student management. This study calls into question the nature of student government, discipline, and general student participation, all of which can be impacted by political objectives at the local or state level. Principals generally believe that they foster settings that prioritize academic excellence above political connections. However, the engagement of local government entities in educational policy can have a significant impact on student management tactics. The literature has demonstrated how political ties might influence what programs are sponsored and whose student needs are prioritized (Babalola, 2023). Thus, while principals may claim neutrality, systemic forces can alter their experiences and behaviours. This discrepancy warrants further exploration into how external political pressures might subtly shape internal school management.

Again, the survey finds that principals believe politics has little impact on non-academic staff management. This conclusion is rather surprising, especially given the frequently visible importance of non-academic personnel in the general operation of schools. Political choices about budget allocations and personnel changes can have an impact on roles in maintenance, administration, and support services. Non-academic personnel play critical roles in school operations, and their administration is almost certainly impacted by political reasons, even if administrators are unaware of it. Furthermore, the dynamics of political favouritism in staffing jobs are frequently more prominent in non-academic posts, where choices may involve community representatives or local political interests. The apparent detachment of principals from the political undercurrents affecting these positions invites a deeper inquiry into the potential disconnect between governance at the administrative level and the realities faced by non-academic staff on the ground.

Conclusion

The study concluded that principals in Enugu State feel that political issues have little impact on human resource management in public secondary schools, whether it includes teachers, pupils, or non-academic personnel. Importantly, there was no noticeable variation in judgments based on the principals' gender, indicating a general consensus on the problem. This discovery implies that leadership in educational institutions can stay immune to external political influences, allowing for more effective and equitable management methods.

Educational Implications

This study highlighted the necessity of keeping a politically neutral educational environment, which can result in more effective management practices and better educational outcomes. Recognizing that political impacts are thought to be modest allows administrators to focus on improving organizational efficiency rather than negotiating complicated political landscapes. Furthermore, these findings might help politicians develop policies that encourage responsibility and professionalism among school administrators and personnel. Implementing strong training programs can further equip principals with the skills required to prioritise educational objectives above political dynamics. Furthermore, establishing clear operational regulations helps strengthen a unified front against politicization, resulting in a stable atmosphere for teaching and learning. Engagement tactics may create more collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring that all parties are aligned to achieve similar educational goals.

Recommendations

The study recommended that:

1. It is essential to implement comprehensive training programs for principals and other stakeholders that enhance their understanding of human resource management, enabling them to further insulate their management practices from political influences.
2. Schools should develop clearer guidelines and policies that define the professional boundaries of politics within educational settings, ensuring that funding, hiring, and resource allocation are based on merit and not political affiliation.
3. Schools should create forums for open dialogue among principals, teachers, students, and non-academic staff, allowing for collaborative decision-making processes that reinforce a shared commitment to educational objectives, independent of political considerations.

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