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## PRINCIPALS' APPLICATION OF INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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**Abstract:** *The main purpose of this study was to determine the level of principals' application of individualized consideration style in the administration of secondary schools. A research question and a hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 759 respondents comprising 258 principals of State public schools and 501 principals of private schools in Anambra State. The sample for the study was 381 respondents comprising 129 principals of State public schools and 252 principals of private schools from the six education zones in the State. The sample was drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling. A researcher developed structured questionnaire titled Individualized Consideration Questionnaire (ICQ) which was arranged in clusters in line with the research question that guided the study. Face and content validity were ascertained by three experts using Cronbach alpha reliability method to determine the internal consistency of the items. This yielded co-efficient of 0.82 and as such adequate for the study. Research question was answered using frequency and percentage scores, while the hypothesis was tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that principals of public school do not apply individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State while their counterpart in private school affirmed that they apply individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance. It also revealed that the difference in the responses of principals of state and private schools on the principals' application of individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state was significant. It was recommended that principals of public secondary schools should assign duties to teachers on the basis of individual specialisation.*

**Keywords:**

### **Introduction**

Leadership in school is a very important part of education system. Educational practitioners regard leadership as the engine for the survival of the educational institutions. This recognition has come at a time when the challenges of education development worldwide are more demanding than

ever before (Nkata, 2005). The immense importance of proper leadership in educational institutions is affirmed by Nsubuga (2003) when he stated that the educational institutions need a leadership that focuses on getting people to move in the right direction, gaining their commitment and motivating them to achieve their goals.

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In an education system, just like every other organization, where inadequate or poor leadership is the experience, the decline and eventual demise of such a system becomes a matter of time. Where decomposition begins from the head, the chances of the rest of the body functioning properly and not getting affected, is very remote if not out rightly impossible. Education system and the achievement of schools' goals would not be exempt from such natural order. Thus the effectiveness of a secondary school is dependent on the quality, skills, knowledge, commitment and leadership style being operated by the principal of that school.

It was observed that some principals seemed not to be listening to each follower's needs and showing concerns, expressing sympathy, giving support, keeping communication open, placing challenges before the followers and celebrating the individual contributions to the team. These principals take their time to do other private businesses rather than being in school on time to supervise the activities in school and attain to the needs of teachers. This avails some teachers great opportunity to engage in other private activities other than teaching. Owing to this, Bursalugo (2011) asserted that some school principals are sparingly present in school to attend to the social needs of teachers. A principal who is not aware of this and does not display effort to fulfill this social need will find it difficult in motivating teachers. This agrees with the view of Hochbein (2016) who observed that some principals lack courage to give sufficient, strong and visionary leadership. Such principals lack leadership and management skills to cope with changes and to confront the daily challenges that their school face.

Similarly, Umejih (2015) asserted that there is evidence of rising decline in morale and discipline amongst principals and teachers in Anambra State, manifest in poor teachers' job performance. This has led to a lower perception of

public secondary schools in Anambra State by most parents and guardians, where, according to experience, indiscipline, fallen educational standards are the case. The researcher sees the crux of the matter in the issues of leadership; for as earlier noted, inadequate leadership in education system negatively affects teachers' job performance, and by extension, the achievement of educational goals.

According to Ake (2007), leadership, particularly in the school system, is the ability to get things done with the assistance and co-operation of other people. In furtherance, Aghenta (2001) opined that leadership is the process by which an effective leader not only makes his subordinates do what they have to do, but also recognizes that they are to be motivated to ensure that they continue to work hard until the goals and objectives of the organization are met. The achievement of schools' goals depends so much on the principal and his style of leadership. Carter (2008) posited different styles of leadership namely: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. According to their varied circumstances and the exigencies of their applications, these leadership styles have their merits and benefits, and do serve their purposes. From the very nature and circumstances of the above mentioned leadership styles, especially from the viewpoint of their noted demerits, a leadership style that is more contemporary to the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational settings especially in secondary schools in Anambra State is needed. The changing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century calls for a more proactive leadership style. The proactiveness in question relates to improving the standard of the educational institutions, especially in pursuance of the achievement of schools' objectives through improvement of teachers' job performance. The leadership style in question is a component of



transformational leadership style called individualized consideration.

Individualized consideration is the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower, and listens to the follower's concerns. This behavior can include the following actions: Discussing and empathizing with the needs of individual employees, making interpersonal connections with employees, showing genuine compassion, encouraging ongoing professional development and personal growth of employees (Loon et al., 2012). A similar view was held by Karamat (2013) when he observed that principals who apply individualized consideration show a high level of concern for people and are supportive of them. In his view, such leaders seek and accept suggestions from subordinates, consult with employees in advance on important matters, and criticize the work rather than the people. Such actions by the leaders will demonstrate consensus. In such consensus individual differences between various followers in terms of needs and desires are taken into account. While some employees will be accorded extra motivation, others will receive extra autonomy while some others will require firmer standards. Some other aspects of individualized communication include an inspired two-way communication and a practice of management by working around workspaces. In most instances, communications alongside followers are personalized. For instance, the leader remembers preceding conversations, is cognizant of employees' personal concerns and sees them as people rather than just workers. The employees are also carefully listened to, by the leaders. It is a practice by the leaders to spend time coaching and teaching the staff.

Maintaining that attainment of employees' job satisfaction is crucial to retaining productivity and efficiency of employees, Long, Yusuf, Wan,

Kowang, Tan and Heng (2014) argued that one of the ways that may effectively help principals in increasing job satisfaction among their teachers is employing the right leadership style. As such, the study of, and being at home with the impact of individualized consideration on job satisfaction, becomes highly recommendable to principals. There is a commonly held view that a satisfied worker is a productive worker. Necessarily, a satisfied teacher becomes a productive teacher. It is also believed that teachers' job performance will increase to a greater height if their needs are catered for, and good interpersonal relation between principals and teachers established.

However, Kahler (2006) asserted that one of the fundamental concern of the school as an organization is the effectiveness and improvement of the teaching and learning process. Teachers are very important facet of any society and are also the bedrock of the educational system. This was further affirmed by Elmagri and Laton (2011) who stated that teachers are the turning point on which all schools activities revolve. In this light, Uko, Umosen and Caleb (2015) defined teachers' job performance as the extent to which teachers are committed to pedagogical delivery, academic excellence as well as moral probity. Teachers' job performance includes curriculum delivery, professional development, and participation in extra-curricular activities among others (Adepoju, 2010). These boil down to efficient lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective teaching and supervision, monitoring of students' work, and disciplinary ability. The concept of teachers' job performance could be seen as the duties performed by a teacher at any given time in school geared towards achieving educational goals.

The secondary level of education which is the focus of this study is offered in two categories of schools namely: public and private secondary schools. Public secondary schools are owned and



managed by the government, while private secondary schools are owned and managed by individuals or groups. In the view of Adeyemi (2015), public schools are owned, managed and financed by government, while private schools are owned and managed by individual proprietors though licensed by the government. The public secondary schools in Nigeria, Anambra state inclusive, are either owned or financed by the state or federal governments. Those that are owned and financed by federal government are called unity schools. Any school other than those established by public authority is known as private school.

This study covered only the public secondary schools owned by the state government and private secondary schools in Anambra state. The principals are the chief administrators of their various schools irrespective of the category of the school. The principal is charged with the responsibility of ensuring effective leadership of the school. The application of appropriate leadership style or not by the principal of whichever category of school is a determining factor to facilitating or hindering the attainment of school goals and objectives. It is against this background that this study sought to ascertain the level of principals' application of individualized consideration in the administration of secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Principals should exhibit strong and visionary leadership. But some principals either lack this leadership acumen or the temerity to its application. This agrees with the view of Hochbein (2016) who observed that some principals lack courage to give sufficient, strong and visionary leadership. Such principals lack leadership and management skills to cope with changes and to confront the daily challenges that their school face. Probably following the above situation, some teachers play truancy, absenteeism and lateness to school. They leave their

duty posts during work hours and engage in private activities like marketing wears, foot wears, food items in offices, doing their private shopping, attending social activities among others. One who is not on one's duty post would obviously not perform one's job. When teachers are not in the classrooms and the students are not meaningfully engaged, educational goals are unattained. The students become truant. Circumstance for misbehavior and miscreant activities are created during such schools hours. There is not only no learning activities, indiscipline is copied from the teachers. Wherein lies the crux of the matter? Noting the immense importance of leadership in education system, this study makes the case that these noted inefficiencies have invariably much to do with the leadership styles adopted by the principals of the schools in question. Would the proper application of the individualized consideration by the principals in the administration of secondary schools in Anambra State not be a panacea to the problems associated with the hitherto inadequate leadership styles of the principals?

### **Research Question**

This research question guided the study.

1. What percentage of principals apply individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

### **Hypothesis**

This formulated null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference on the responses of principals of public and private secondary schools on principals' application of individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted in this study was the descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The sample size for





this study comprised 381 respondents comprising 129 principals of public secondary schools and 252 principals of private secondary schools. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled “Individualized consideration Questionnaire (ICQ) was used for data collection. The instrument has two sections A and B. Section A of the instrument was designed to collect information on personal data of respondents such as category of school. Section B contained 7 items on principals’ application of individualized consideration. All the items were structured on a two-point rating scale of Yes and No respectively. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The responses of principals on the research questions were analyzed

using frequency and percentage scores. Chi-square was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value was used to determine the significance of the difference in the responses of principals of public and private secondary schools. For each of the components of individualized consideration that had 50% and above of “yes” indicates “apply” while 50% and above of “no” indicates “do not apply”.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** What percentage of principals apply individualized consideration for improving teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages on Principals application of individualized consideration for Improving Teachers’ Job Performance**

	PUBLIC (n= 129)				PRIVATE( n=252)							
	YES	%	NO	%	YES	%	NO	%				
1. Send teachers on professional training based on teachers’ individual ability.			48	37.2	81	62.8	Do not Apply	137	54.4	115	45.8	Apply
2. Pay attention to teachers’ individual needs.			57	44.2	72	55.8	Do not Apply	83	32.9	169	67.1	Do not Apply
3. Consider each teacher as having different aspiration from others.			56	43.3	73	56.6	Do not Apply	167	66.3	85	33.7	Apply
4. Enhance communication and improve information exchange with individual teacher.			51	39.5	78	60.5	Do not Apply	137	54.4	115	45.6	Apply
5. Assign duties to teachers on the basis of individual specialization.			104	80.6	25	19.4	Apply	122	48.4	130	51.6	Do not Apply
6. Consider teachers’ individual talent when assigning duties.			66	51.2	63	48.8	Apply	156	61.9	96	38.1	Apply
7. Integrate the personal needs of the teachers with the school needs to improve teachers’ job performance.			50	38.8	79	61.2	Do not Apply	147	58.3	105	41.7	Apply
8. Do respect teachers’ individual contributions in decision making			112	86.8	17	13.2	Apply	165	65.5	87	34.5	Apply

The result in table 1 shows that public secondary school principals do not apply individualized consideration for improving teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

This is indicated by the greater percentage of public school principals who affirmed they do not apply five (item 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7) out of the eight listed items on individualized consideration. Public school



principals however apply item 5, 6 and 8. On the other hand, their counterparts in private school affirm they apply individualized consideration for improving teachers’ job performance.

**Hypothesis:** There was a significant difference on the responses of principals of public and private

schools on principals’ application of individualized consideration for improving teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 2: Chi-square analysis of the difference in the responses of principals of public and private schools on the principals’ application of individualized consideration for improving teachers’ job performance**

	PUBLIC (n=129)				PRIVATE (n=252)				X <sup>2</sup>	P-value	
	YES	%	NO	%	YES	%	NO	%			
1. Send teachers on professional training based on teachers’ individual ability.	48	37.2	81	62.8	48	54.4	115	45.8	10.05	.00	Sig
2. Pay attention to teachers’ individual needs.	57	44.2	72	55.8	57	32.9	169	67.1	4.64	.03	Sig
3. Consider each teacher as having different aspiration from others.	56	43.3	73	56.6	56	66.3	85	33.7	18.38	.00	Sig
4. Enhance communication and improve information exchange with individual teacher.	51	39.5	78	60.5	51	54.4	115	45.6	7.50	.00	Sig
5. Assign duties to teachers on the basis of individual specialization.	104	80.6	25	19.4	104	48.4	130	51.6	36.67	.00	Sig
6. Consider teachers’ individual talent when assigning duties.	66	51.2	63	48.8	66	61.9	96	38.1	4.04	.04	Sig
7. Integrate the personal needs of the teachers with the school needs to improve teachers’ job performance.	50	38.8	79	61.2	50	58.3	105	41.7	13.09	.00	Sig
8. Do respect teachers’ individual contributions in decision making	112	86.8	17	13.2	112	65.5	87	34.5	19.58	.00	Sig

The analysis displayed in table 2 shows that the calculated p-values in all the eight listed items were less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). This is an indication that there was a significant

difference in the responses of principals of public and private schools on their application of individualized consideration for improving teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra



State. The null hypothesis of significant difference between the groups was therefore rejected.

### DISCUSSION

The finding of this study shows that principals of public school do not apply individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. On the other hand, their counterparts in private school affirmed that they apply individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance. This is evidenced in the fact that majority of the principals do not send teachers on professional training based on teachers' individual ability, they do not pay attention to teachers' individual needs, consider teachers as having different aspiration from others among others. For instance, when a teacher that has little interest in sports is made sports director, the result would naturally be poor. Again, when a teacher that is keen at discoveries is made in charge of excursion, the result would naturally be great. When teachers are not adequately sent on professional training based on teachers' individual ability and when their needs are not catered for, it would affect the rate of teachers' job performance. This finding is supported by Sii and Mohammed (2013) who indicated in the study that there was low level of the principals' application of the four components of transformational leadership. It was recommended that principals should apply the individualized consideration qualities to improve teachers' commitment towards learning.

The result of this study also indicated that the difference in the responses of principals of state and private schools on the principals' application of individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state was significant.

### Conclusion

This paper concludes that individualized consideration has a positive and significant impact

on teachers' job performance. Employees' decision to share knowledge among themselves is influenced mainly by the individualized consideration provided by the principal. Principals of public schools do not send teachers on professional training based on ability and do not pay attention to teachers' individual needs. These deficiencies play out in inadequate teacher job performance and in turn hinder the public schools from attaining their appropriate goals. It was concluded that there was a significant difference in the responses of principals of public and private schools on principals' application of individualized consideration for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals should assign duties to teachers based on talents. The study is not without limitations. One limitation of the study is the use of one respondent only (principals).

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