

# MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR TEACHER DILIGENCE IN HOME ECONOMICS INSTRUCTION

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the management support provided by principals to enhance teacher diligence in home economics instruction. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. The sample was made up of 220 Home Economics teachers drawn from secondary schools in Anambra State. The survey research design was used. Data was collected through a questionnaire developed by the researcher. Mean and Standard deviations, were used to provide answers for the research questions, while the t-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the perception of urban and rural teachers regarding the support they got from the principals was not on the high side; and that principals provided more recognition than welfare support to home economics teachers. The implication of the findings is that home economics teachers in urban and rural schools were not adequately motivated by principals to be diligent in their jobs. Improvements in the welfare of teachers generally and according the teachers more respect and recognition to improve the levels of teacher diligence to duty and the teaching profession at large, were among the recommendations.

## **Introduction**

Management support in education, are all those actions which educational administrators initiate to ensure that teacher performance is monitored, welfare provided, and that teachers are properly' motivated to be productive. Ademola (2000), highlighted forms of management support to include managing rewards, provide for teacher welfare, appreciation of staff, and recognition of staff contributions to school development. Although all these forms of management support are crucial to teacher performance, this study will focus on only the provision of teacher welfare, and recognition of teachers' contributions to the achievement of schools objectives.

Focus on these areas is justified on the grounds that teacher welfare needs to be considered by principals and that the extent to which the principals recognize teacher welfare is important, while appreciation of teachers contributions is based on the assumption that appreciation is a motivating factor that drives teachers to high levels of performances. Azih (2001) and Marriette (2004), stressed that providing these forms of management supports to home economics teachers is crucial for enhancing teacher diligence in Home economics instruction.

## **Teacher Diligence in Home Economics Instruction**

The need for making available highly diligent teachers for the Nigerian education system in general and the teaching of home economics in particular is not in doubt. This is because home economics is a vocational subject that is designed to provide knowledge and competencies on the art and science of home management including household budgets, purchase of food and clothing, childcare, cooking, nutrition and the like. Instruction in home economics like other science subjects is activity based, and involves training the learner to observe, experiment, create, invest and develop skills (Uko-Aviomoh, 2005). All these require diligent teachers.

Diligence, according to Akpa (1998), means industriousness and earnest commitment. Teacher diligence as described by Eze (2001) is the extent to which teachers are committed, hardworking and' industrious in performing their teaching roles. Jefferson (2004), described a diligent home economics teacher as one who is willingly, committed, productive, conscientious and efficient in sound application of information and skills to the teaching process, assessment strategies, disciplinary management and control of pupils. A teacher that is diligent will be motivated to put in more efforts in the teaching career while a teacher that is not diligent as Eze (2001), noted, performs very lowly, is not resourceful and committed. Thus, diligent teachers are generally indispensable to Nigeria's educational development and the provision of management support is essential in providing diligent teachers.

## **The Problem**

In Anambra State, home economics teachers' diligence to duties especially at the secondary school

level appears questionable as can be deduced from unacceptable behaviour as absenteeism from school, truancy among teachers, non-compliance with directives, laxity towards class work, loitering and absenteeism from classes and private practices during school hours (Ebinobi, 1998; Ezeobi, 2000). Consequently, the teaching and learning of home economics is greatly hindered.

The reasons for absenteeism and truancy are many and varied. In this era of economic crises in Nigeria, galloping inflation has significantly reduced teachers' income to peanuts. Azih (2001), observed that most teachers face a number of problems ranging from inadequate salaries and allowances to irregular payment of salaries and allowances. Education of their wards, feeding, shelter, clothing and other basic supplies appear too hard for teachers to achieve. Even to plan for retirement is difficult for most teachers (Okoye, 2005).

Many home economics teachers live miles away from their schools and come to school from there. Some have health, personal problems and needs requiring assistance. Others attend in-service training to obtain further degrees. On top of these problems, purchases for home economics practical are hard to come by (Uko-Aviomoh, 2005) and teachers are expected to be punctual, committed, and improvise instructional materials. The principals should offer management support for teachers to be able and motivated to do these. The problem of this study is therefore to find out the managerial support provided to home economics teachers to enhance their diligence to work.

### Research Questions

Two research questions were formulated for the study as follows:

1. How do the teachers perceive the recognition support they get from the schools management?
2. What is the perception of teachers regarding the welfare support they get from the school principal.

### Null Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant difference between mean ratings of the urban and rural teachers regarding- the recognition support they get from their principals.

H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school teachers regarding the welfare support they get from their principals.

### Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used in carrying out the study. A survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (Nworgu, 1991). Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population for this study comprised the entire 440 Home Economics teachers, in all the State government-owned secondary schools in Anambra State. From this population, a sample of 220 home economics teachers were chosen using stratified random sampling to ensure a fairly equal representation of the subjects for the study. To select the teachers' sample, the secondary schools were stratified on the basis of the local government areas where they are located. From each school in each Local Government Area, approximately 50 percent of the teachers were randomly selected. Thus, 220 teachers, were selected as sample for the study.

### Instrument for Data Collection

A questionnaire designed by the researcher titled "Principals' Management Support For Home Economics Teachers (PMSHET) was used in the study. The questionnaire had two sections: A, and B. Section "A" was on the personal data of the respondents. Section " B " had 10 items on teachers' perception of the principals' recognition and 10 other items on and welfare support, making it a total of 20 items. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale, ranging from strongly agree,' agree, disagree to strongly disagree.

### Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire designed for the study was subjected to a validation process for face validation by submitting copies of the questionnaire and copies of the research questions were given to two experts in educational administration, and an expert in measurement and evaluation. These experts went through the research questions and the questionnaire and made useful suggestions that led to some corrections in the final draft of the instrument.

### Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was personally administered by the researcher to 30 secondary school teachers in Ogidi education zone, of Anambra state. Then the whole items in the questionnaire were scored. The computed Cronbach co-efficient alpha of the whole items in the questionnaire was 0.87 and this was considered satisfactory for this study.

### Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered directly to the chosen sample for the study. A total of 220 copies of the questionnaires were given out but only 218 were successfully completed and returned, giving a percentage return of 99.09 percent.

### Method of Data Analysis

Statistical weighted mean and standard deviation was used in answering research questions. The t- test was used in testing the null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance.

### Data Analysis and Presentation of Results Research Question I

How do the teachers perceive the recognition support they get from the schools management?

**Table 1:**

**Mean scores of urban and rural teachers on the recognition support they get from the principal**

S/N	ITEMS	Urban teachers		Rural teachers	
		X	S.D	X	S.D
	The principal:				
1	Value your contribution towards school administration.	2.63	1.62	2.58	1.61
2	Recognise and show appreciation to you as well as other teaching staff for improvising materials.	2.15	1.28	2.14	1.46
3	Praises you and other teachers on students' high achievement	3.62	1.90	3.58	1.89
4	Pays attention to your personal problems and needs	2.12	1.42	1.77	1.33
5	Respects your positions and actions in disciplining students.	2.71	1.64	2.53	1.60
6	Considers your goals and values during staff meetings.	2.43	1.59	2.35	1.12
7	Appreciates your innovative efforts in teaching your subjects.	3.12	1.76	2.74	1.66
8	Shows confidence and trust in other staff and you.	2.73	1.65	2.52	1.58
9	Take full interest in the family pressures facing you.	1.77	1.33	1.80	1.34
10	Support you when parents assault you for punishing students.	2.62	1.62	2.52	1.23
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>1.57</b>

Table 1, above revealed that out of the 10 items listed, 6 got mean ratings above 2.50. These are items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10. This means that the urban and rural home economics teachers identified 6 of 10 items to be among the areas that they received recognition support from their principals. These include:

- Values staff contributions towards the school life
- Praises staff teachers on students' high achievement
- Respects staff positions and actions in disciplining students
- Appreciates staff innovative efforts in teaching subjects
- Shows confidence and trust in staff.
- Support staff when parents assault them for punishing students

The remaining 4 items namely items 2, 5, 7 and 9 got mean ratings below 2.50 for urban and rural teachers meaning that those items do not depict the management support that the teachers receive from their principals. In other words, principals did not recognise and show appreciation to staff for improvising materials, pay attention to staff personal problems and needs, consider staff goals and values during staff meetings, and take full interest in the family pressures facing staff.

Research Question 2:

What is the perception of teachers regarding teacher welfare support they get from the school principal.

Table 2:

Mean ratings of urban and rural teachers on the welfare support they received from their

S/N	ITEMS	Urban teachers		Rural teachers	
		X	S.D	X	S.D
The principal:					
11	Grants permission to staff to attend to their health problems	2.85	1.68	2.75	1.66
12.	Makes provision for workshops and conferences for staff.	2.83	1.68	2.71	1.65
13.	Encourage parents to buy home economics materials for students	1.38	1.18	1.47	1.21
14	Create avenues for loans to staff.	1.69	1.30	1.57	1.25
15.	Ensures that all the allowances due to staff are timely paid.	2.76	1.66	2.58	1.60
16	Ensure that staff salary are not delayed by making returns on time.	2.73	1.65	2.54	1.68
17	Help to find accommodation for staff	1.15	1.07	1.12	1.06
18	Encourage staff to engage in thrift practices and bulk-purchases.	2.76	1.66	2.58	1.61
19	Provides allowances for the purchase of Items for practical lessons	2.33	1.39	2.35	1.53
20.	Permits staff to attend in-service training to obtain further degrees	1.46	1.21	2.15	1.47
Grand mean		2.19	1.48	2.18	1.48

In table 2, it could be seen that out of the 10 items listed, 5 got mean ratings above 2.50 for both urban and rural teachers. These are items 11, 12, 15, 16 and 18. This means that urban and rural teachers identified only 5 items to be types of welfare support, which they received from their principals. Some of these items are:

12 Grants permission to staff to attend to their health problems.

13. Makes provision for workshops and conferences for staff.
14. Ensures that all the allowances due to staff are timely paid.
16. Ensure that staff salary is not delayed by making returns on time.
- 17 Help to find accommodation for staff
20. Encourage staff to engage in thrift practices and bulk-purchases.

On the other hand, the remaining 10 items namely items 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20, got mean rating below 2.50 indicating that for both urban and rural teachers, these types of management support listed in the items were not provided.

#### Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between mean ratings of the urban and rural teachers regarding the recognition support they get from their principals.

Table 3:

Summary of the t-Test Analysis between the Mean Ratings of Urban and Rural Home Economics Teachers on their Principals' Recognition Support

Variable	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Urban teachers	2.59	1.59	216	0.64	1.96	Reject hypothesis
Rural teachers	2.45	1.57				

In table 3, the calculated t was 0.64 This value was less than the table value of 1.96, thereby warranting the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural home economics teachers on the recognition support they received from principals.

#### Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural secondary school, teachers regarding the welfare support they get from their principals.

Table 4:

Summary of the t-Test Analysis between the Mean Ratings of Urban and Rural Home Economics Teachers on their Principals' Welfare Support

Variable	X	SD	DF	t-cai	t-crit	Remark
Urban teachers	2.19	1.48	216	0.05	1.96	Accept hypothesis
Rural teachers	2.18	1.48				

In table 4, the calculated t was 0.05. This value was less than the table value of 1.96, thereby warranting the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural home economics teachers on the welfare support they received from principals.

#### Discussion of Findings

From the findings made in this research work, it was observed that urban and rural home economics teachers received more recognition support from the principals than they received welfare support. Similarly, null hypotheses 1 and 2, showed that school location did not affect management support provided for home economics teachers. These findings support that of Ademola (2000), who stated that some principals are known to have gone extra miles to alleviate some of the problems of staff by finding accommodations around school premises for staff, some give teachers loans to solve their problems, and some others give listening ears to the problems of staff and offer useful advice and help.

It is encouraging to see that principals are doing something to support no matter how small to help their home economics teachers. The importance of providing support to teachers was highlighted by Drayer (2000), who observed that management support energize or activate and sensitise the organism toward certain stimuli, direct behaviour towards certain goals, and reinforce behaviour that is effective in the attainment of desired goal. The researcher however, observed that the teachers did not receive any

support from the school management on issues bothering on personal and family problems. This shows that most principals just as Ebinobi (1999), pointed out, are not considerate on such issues as personal or family problems of staff, which could affect home economics teachers' dedication to duty. This finding has to be addressed by principals. Even where the school management cannot assist home economics teachers financially, moral or spiritual caring is enough and can make some impact.

#### Implications of the Study for Educational Practice

The issues of low level of management support imply that home economics teachers are not given the best of managerial encouragement, which would ultimately lead to diligent instruction in home economics. The teachers perceived low levels of management support from their principals. The result of this feeling may be low levels of diligence among teachers. This finding implies that, teachers are not adequately motivated to perform their jobs. Improvement in the working conditions of teachers and according the teachers more respect and recognition would improve the levels of teacher diligence to duty and the teaching profession at large.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn from it, the following recommendations were made:-

1. Secondary school principals must pay special attention to the general welfare of home economics teachers under their leadership.
2. Provision of laboratories and items for home economics practical lessons should be given priority attention by principals.
3. The government must endeavour to tackle the issue of giving loans to teachers with all seriousness, to boost teachers' diligence.
4. Regular seminars and workshops should be organized for home economics teachers, aimed at explaining and inculcating in them, strategies for generating high levels of diligence in their professions.
5. Home economics teachers' emoluments and conditions of service should be made more attractive and should be promptly paid.
6. Principals should seek the cooperation of community members to assist home economics teachers by providing them with free or cheap accommodation. Such assistance will go a long way in reducing the times these teachers devote to extra activities, which affects their concentration on teaching.

#### Conclusions

From the discussion of the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that Home Economics teachers' perception of the support they get from the school management is not on the high side. This finding has to be addressed by principals. It is true that there are certain things the principals cannot do by themselves such as payment of teachers' salary, payment of benefits and allowances to retiring staff etc, but they can co-operate with teachers and give them those caring and supportive actions which perhaps would help home economics teacher be more dedicated.

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