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The Extent of Implementation of Orientation Programme among Public and Private Secondary Schools in Cross River State of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of orientation programme among public and private secondary schools in Cross River State of Nigeria. The aspects of the study were on the regularity, content and problems of orientation programme. Using three (3) null hypotheses, the study using a descriptive survey, sampled 672 teachers drawn from fifty percent (50%) of public and private secondary schools in the State. From the independent t-test used for data analysis, the findings of the study show that there are significant differences between public and private secondary schools in the

regularity and content of their orientation programme. There is no significant difference in problems faced by the two groups of school in implementing orientation programme. Because of the strategic nature of orientation programme to the new entrants in the school system, it is recommended that heads of school should ensure regular and adequate orientation programme in their schools. Government can also facilitate the programme by making it compulsory through better funding of schools. Guidance counselors should be effectively used in conducting orientation programme.

Introduction

Education is concerned with the total development of an individual. It embraces the cognitive, the physical, social and emotional development of a person. In the school system, the total development of the individual is carried out through the curricular and co-curricular programmes. The curricular programme has to do with the curriculum content that involves classroom, laboratory and studio interaction between the teachers and the learners for the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for survival. The co-curricular services are those activities that do not involve classroom, laboratory or studio-interaction but are deemed necessary for wholesome development of the individual. These other non-classroom services are referred to as personnel services.

The two services are complementary to each other, while the curricular programme is concerned with intellectual and skill-development the co-curricular or student personnel services is concerned with the other areas of the human personality.

The co-curricular services include registration and orientation of student, enrolment management, guidance and counseling services and health care services. Others are social and recreational services, disciplinary services, special education services and municipal services, among others. Implementation of orientation programme in secondary schools forms the focus of this study.

Orientation Programme

Orientation is defined by Advanced Learners English Dictionary as “The training or information that you are given before starting a new job, course etc”. Bedeian (1987:352) defines orientation as “a process that introduces new employees to their jobs, expectations, superiors and peers”. In our

context, orientation could be said to be a programme of activities mounted by the school for new entrants to introduce them to their new environment with regards to the facilities available, academic and non-academic programmes, rules and regulations as well as their superiors and peers.

Orientation programme for new students is supposed to be conducted soon after the admission has been concluded. It is a programme where newly admitted students are formally introduced into the various programmes of the school. This includes the curricular and co-curricular programmes. At the secondary school level it requires informing the students of all the subjects they are expected to offer at their own level. It also requires introducing the various co-curricular programmes such as clubs, societies and fellowships that exist within the school.

Orientation programme also provides opportunity for new students to be introduced to facilities available for their use in school. The facilities may include classrooms, laboratories, studios and library. Others are dormitory accommodation, water supply, toilet facilities and health facilities available. It is during this period that the new entrants should be introduced to the dos and don'ts by being provided with the rules and regulation of the school as well as the code of conduct. It is also an opportunity to interact with the superior officers of the school like the principal, vice principal, heads of department, bursar, librarian, guidance counselor, and the prefect or student leaders.

During the orientation programme, students are expected to be taken round the school and introduced to some of the above-mentioned places of interest. Orientation lectures should cover key policies and programmes of the school, facilities available, staff-students relations, examination and the grading system, discipline on campus as well as safety and accident prevention, among others (Ezeocha, 1990, Ukeje, 1992 and Ogbiji, 2009).

Benefits of Orientation Programme

The school and the new students stand to derive immense benefits from orientation programme if properly performed. Orientation programme reduces to the barest minimum what Bedeian (1987) refers to as "start up costs". Start up cost refers to cost incurred by beginners in terms of time lost in locating right places at the right time, fumbling due to lack of guidance on the specifics of one's expectation, and roaming the organization in an attempt to locate the right person on different matters. It also reduces the amount of

anxiety and hazing on the part of new students. Hazing refers to fear and uncertainty on the part of the new students' ability to succeed in the new education programmes and as well cope with the rigors associated. Usually, students moving from one level of education to another have lots of fear about the demands of the new academic programme. Orientation allays such fears and puts the new comers on the right frame of mind.

Good orientation programme also reduces drop out rate in school attendance through the firm foundation it establishes in the new students. The seed of school drop out is sown early in school life through weak attachment to school programmes. It also saves time and energy of the superiors and peers by minimizing distraction caused by undue inquiries, questioning, fumbling and straying into wrong places.

Problems of Orientation Programme

Ogbiji and Ada (2008) identified orientation programme as an opportunity where school heads can employ his creativity in injecting into the new staff and students the ideals of the school. It has however been discovered that due to logistics problems, the programme is not effectively carried out in schools. Prominent among the problems hindering its implementation is the lack of finance to fund the programme in terms of refreshment, production of school rules and regulation, invitation of resource persons, interference with school programmes and late arrival of new students.

Bedeian (1987) suggests that effective orientation should be carried out in the following order:

- Begin with the most relevant and immediate information
- Treat the human side i.e. relationship with peers and superiors before other aspects
- Provide mentors for new entrants when in need
- Give enough time for adaptation to the new environment

Studies by Okorie and Udie in Abia State shows that public schools are better staffed in the different areas of schools needs and provide better services to students than their private counterparts. They also found out that public schools provide regular and timely orientation and are better equipped with teaching and learning facilities. In another related study, Tabotndip (2005) found out that principals of public secondary schools in Imo State are more

effective than their private school counterparts in the areas of attendance to work, supervision of teachers, enforcement of rules and regulation and admission procedure.

Problem of the Study

From the literature reviewed the importance of orientation programme for new entrants into educational institutions, especially at the secondary school level cannot be over emphasized. It is because of the benefits derivable from it that it is listed among the key personnel services to be administered to students on admission.

There is however, no much empirical evidence on the implementation of this important co-curricular service among public and private secondary schools in Cross River State. It is the opinion of the researchers that regular and broad-based orientation to students provides a firm foundation for them to thrive in their academic pursuit. The problem of this study can therefore be posed as: What is the regularity, extent and problem of orientation programme carried out among secondary schools in Cross River State?

Purpose of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the state of implementation of orientation programme among secondary schools in Cross River State. In specific terms the study will:

- Determine the regularity (year by year) of orientation programme among public and private secondary schools in the state.
- Determine the contents of orientation programme for secondary schools in the State.
- Find out the constraints to the administration of orientation programme among secondary schools in the State.

Research Hypotheses

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools on the regularity of orientation programme for new students
2. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools on the contents of their orientation programme for new students.

3. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools on the constraints to the implementation of orientation programme.

Methodology

Cross River State is one of the thirty six (36) States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is located in the south-south geo-political zone of the country and shares boundary with Benue and Ebonyi States in the North, Akwa Ibom and Abia in the South and West and the Republic of Cameroun in the East. Based on the 2006 national demographic census, Cross River State has 2.8million people. Calabar is the State's capital and seat of government.

The State in the 2009 school year has a total of 240 public secondary schools and 96 private secondary schools. This gives a total of 336 secondary schools with a total of about 7260 serving teachers. The State is divided into four education zones of Calabar, Ugep, Ikom and Ogoja. A 12-item questionnaire on teachers opinion survey on secondary schools orientation programme (TOSSSOP) in Cross River State was the main instrument used to collect data for the study. To obtain the reliability of the instrument, twenty copies were produced and served on teachers in Obanliku Local Government Area that did not form part of this study. Using Conbach Alpha formula a reliability of co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained for the instrument.

Fifty percent of both public and private secondary schools were used as samples. This gives a total of 120 public secondary schools and 48 private secondary schools. From each school four respondents were drawn, thus, making 480 teachers from public secondary schools and 192 teachers from private secondary schools with a total of 672 respondents. Direct delivery technique was used in randomly sampling the opinion of teachers from the above stratification of schools. After the collection, data was collated, coded and analyzed using independent t-test for the hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Results

The data obtained were analyzed hypothesis by hypothesis using independent t-test technique. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference ($p < .05$) between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State on the regularity of orientation programme for new students.

From the table 1, it was observed that the calculated t-value of 10.17 is higher than the critical-t value of 1.65. This implies that the null hypothesis is

rejected at 0.05 alpha level within 670 degrees of freedom. Hence, there is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools on the regularity of orientation programmes.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference ($p < .05$) between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State on the contents of their orientation programme for new students.

Entries in table 2 shows that the calculated t-value to be 13.44, while the table t-value is 1.645 at 0.05 alpha level and within 670 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is significant difference between public and private secondary schools in the content of their orientation programme.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State on the constraints to orientation programme.

It can be observed from table 3 above that the calculated t-value of -11.94 is less than the critical t-value of 1.65. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State regarding constraints to orientation programme.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one shows that there is a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State on the regularity of orientation programmes. As can be seen from table one, the calculated t-value of 10.17 is significantly greater than the table value of 1.645 at 0.05 alpha level within 670 degrees of freedom. This shows that public secondary schools are more regular in their orientation programme than their private school counterparts. This is similar to the findings of Okorie and Uche (2005) that public schools are better staffed and provide better services to students. Orientation is among the first services that new entrants into the secondary school system should benefit from. The public schools being better staffed implies that the students will benefit more in public schools in their curricular and co-curricular services, one of which is orientation programme in a related study Tabotndip (2005) found out in Imo State that public school principals are better experienced and more effective in their administration than their private school counterparts in the area of effectiveness in administration such as attendance to work, supervision of teachers, enforcement of rules and

regulation and admission procedure. This result shows that public secondary schools in Cross River State carryout orientation programme for their new students on yearly basis and on time.

Table 2 has a calculated t-value of 13.44 against the critical t-value of 1.645 at 0.05 alpha level. It shows a significant difference between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State on the content of their orientation programme for fresh students.

The study measured contents of orientation programme on the lectures delivered, introduction of new entrants to important personalities in the school, the introduction of new students to the different facilities and services in the school and their being provided with school rules and regulation. This finding shows that public schools in Cross River State are better in the contents of their orientation programme than their private counterparts. Ezeocha (1990), Ukeje (1992), Ogbiji (2009) in their related studies point out that the content of a good orientation should cover lectures on different aspects of school life such as key policies and programmes of the school, facilities available, staff-student relations, discipline, examination, safety and accident prevention, among others. This shows that students in public secondary schools in the State enjoy the benefit of good orientation programme which Bedeian (1987) identified to include over coming “start-up costs”, reduction of anxiety and hazing, reduction of drop out rate and minimizing distraction caused by undue inquiries, questioning, fumbling and straying into wrong places.

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools in Cross River State on the constraints they face in conducting orientation programmes. As can be seen the calculated t-value of -11.94 is less than the table t-value of 1.65. This finding implies that both public and private secondary schools in the State face similar problems when conducting orientation programme. Among the problems identified in the study are lack of funds to organize the programme, lack of interest by teachers and school management and inability to provide students with copies of school rules and regulations. This finding is not strange because in an earlier study, Ogbiji (2009) found out that lack of funds, late arrival of some new students and interference with other school programmes are some of the problems associated with orientation programme in schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that there is significant difference between public and private secondary schools in conducting orientation programme for new students. Public schools are found to be more regular and thorough in the content of their orientation. The study also found out that both public and private secondary schools face similar problems with their orientation programmes. It is hereby suggested that Federal and State inspectorates should monitor and compel private schools to carry out regular orientation exercises. In the era of free secondary education, government should provide imprest to schools for use in providing personnel services to students. In view of the value of orientation programme, commissioners of education in their meeting with school heads should harp on the importance of orientation programme. At the school level guidance counselor should be effectively used in organizing orientation programme.

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Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the difference between public and private secondary schools on the regularity of orientation programme

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Critical-t
Regularity of orientation programme	1 (public schools)	480	9.74	1.60	10.17	1.645*
	2 (private schools)	192	8.26	1.97		

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of the difference between public and private secondary schools with respect to contents of orientation programme

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Critical-t
Content of orientation programme	1 (public schools)	480	12.39	2.72	13.44	1.645*
	2 (private schools)	192	9.30	2.67		

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of the difference between public and private secondary schools on the constraints to orientation programme

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Critical-t
Constraints to orientation programme	1 (public schools)	480	9.39	1.56	-11.94	1.65
	2 (private schools)	192	10.98	1.58		