

PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLE AS A CATALYST TO EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between principal's leadership style and effectiveness of secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The co relational research design of the survey type was adopted. The population consisted of all the teachers and principals in the 300 public schools in Ondo State. The Multistage, Simple and Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Techniques were used to select the 60 schools, 1200 teachers and the 60 principals used for the study. A self made instrument called Principal Leadership Style and Effectiveness of Secondary School Education Questionnaire (PLSESSEQ) was used to collect the data for the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentage scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) statistics. The Hypothesis formulated was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the Principals' Leadership style in the area covered was very encouraging. The study also showed that secondary schools were effective in the effective and psychomotor domains, but need to improve on the cognitive domain of the students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school principals should evolve the transaction transformational leadership style and should be situational and Government should support schools with all necessary resources to support the effort of the principals in improving the performances of the students in both internal and external examinations.

Keywords: Principal, Leadership, Effectiveness, Secondary School and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Development and differentiation in all the different organizations is not only a result of natural endowment, but of the ability and type of leadership that has emerged in those organizations. Leadership is important in human organizations. It is an essential factor in effective school management, this is why from time to time and the production equation in industries and others and other human groups has gone beyond money, machine and market to include adequately trained personnel particularly the leadership of organization.

Without being too provocative, if two or three schools are provided with the same resources, one will emerge as a better school in terms of its overall performance. The distinguishing factor could be leadership.

Leadership therefore is probably the catalyst for change and effectiveness of the school system as an organization. Leadership ineffectiveness has been responsible for the major cog to goal achievement and the decay of most secondary schools in most states in Nigeria. How then can this be explained in the face of explosion of educational initiatives in Ondo State in the past few years? The poor state of Secondary Schools Education in Ondo State calls for concern. Ibukun (2008) had observed that secondary schools have derailed in the provision of qualitative education expected of them. He further explained that, a lot of problems seem to bedevil the system thereby making it ineffective; hence Schools need to be provided with good leadership in order to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people.

Leadership has been defined in several ways but for this purpose, the definition of Koontz *et al.* (1980) will be adopted; that "Leadership is the art or process of influencing people so that they work

willingly toward the achievement of group goals". In this definition, the important thing is that leadership is a collective action. Both the leaders and the subordinates are involved. The leader's action must be judged by the extent to which it contributes to the achievement of the goals of the organization. The leader in an organization persuades influences and co-ordinates the members in the group so that they can willingly strive with maximum energy to discharge their allotted duties and responsibilities for high level productivity in the organization. Leadership therefore involves the ability to inspire and induce others to work to achieved desired organizational goals.

Leadership entails the ability of the leaders himself, the followers or the led and the situation or environment. These influence the style or behavior of the leaders as to whether he is effective or ineffective. There are different styles of leadership according to Lewinian Socio-Political classification: they include Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez faire leadership style.

The extent to which the school system is able to accomplish its stated objectives determines its quality or level of effectiveness. Effectiveness in this context transcends beyond students passing an examination only (cognitive domain). It encompasses students' attainment in the affective and psychomotor domains. Bamidele (2002) posited that the combination of the three domains of learning make the recipient of the education lived a fulfilled life and contribute meaningfully to the society he lives. This study is based on principal's leadership styles and how these styles can be effectively managed to sustained students performance in all the three domains within the school environment. School environment in this study consist of human beings- (principals, teachers non teaching staff and students) the existing atmosphere such as peaceful or riots, friendly or hostile, accommodating or repelling, organized or rowdy and the beautification effect. Others are activities that could make the school fascinating, lively boring, monotonous and eventful.

The reality of our time now is that many students come to school reluctantly when they do not have a choice. Some who cannot help it out rightly run away from school at the slightest opportunity (Ekundayo, 2010). The result is that students exhibit evidence of ineffectiveness and lack of requisite skills to be able to function well in the society. All these scenario are pointers to the fact that secondary school system is in a state of despair. This then raises a fundamental question as to the extent to which secondary schools are producing quality, disciplined and morally upright school leavers into the larger society.

A lot of factors have been attributed by educational experts to the perceived ineffectiveness of the secondary schools among which are political /societal, parental, economic, teachers and principals' leadership style, but this study was limited to principals' leadership style as a potent factor for quality education delivery in the secondary schools in Ondo State.

From the researcher's experience, many principals of secondary schools do not provide or assist teachers, students and parents with necessary information. Teachers and Students were not provided with facilities that will motivate teaching and learning. These seem to be reasons why nonchalant attitude are common in most schools and this consequently leads to ineffectiveness and poor performance or low quality school achievement in most schools in the state. In the context of the above therefore, it is clear that the critical issue is the interplay of quality education and effective leadership. Effective leadership ensures good quality and good quality requires good leadership. One cannot exist without the other. The behaviour of leaders has been identified as one of the major factors influencing the productivity of subordinates in any organization in which the school system is not an exception. (Babayemi, 2006). Generally, factors like task being performed, the quality of relationship between members and roles clarity as well as acceptance of leaders decision are factors considered in determining good leader style and school effectiveness. In any meaningful organization, a leader needs to make the environment conducive for their subordinates and learning environments (Oyegoke, 2012).

Ibukun (2008) remarked that without leadership, an organization can best be described as a scene of confusion and chaos. When leadership in an organization is effective, there is progress, but when the leadership is defective, the organization declines and decays. In order to build strong commitment towards the realization of school goals and promote quality education, the principals must provide

strong leadership directive in setting, developing and achieving the goals of the schools, through creating unity of purpose, facilitating communication, and managing instruction.

It could be inferred from the foregoing that principal's leadership behaviour has a very positive relationship with quality education. It was against this background that this study determines to find out the relationship between principal's leadership style and quality educators and instructional delivery in Ondo State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between principal's leadership style and the delivery of quality education in Secondary Schools in Ondo State. The study investigated the degree of effectiveness of secondary schools education in Ondo State.

Research Questions

1. What types of leadership style are exhibited by principals of secondary schools in Ondo State?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of secondary schools in Ondo State?

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between principal's leadership style and effectiveness of Secondary schools education in Ondo State.

METHODOLOGY

The study was a descriptive research of the survey type. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers, principals and Secondary Schools in Ondo State. The sample was made up of 1200 teachers and 60 principals selected from 60 secondary schools. Multistage sampling techniques were used to select the sample. The first stage involves the use of simple random sampling to select three Local Governments each from the three Senatorial Districts of Ondo State. The Local Government randomly selected were Owo Local Government from the North Senatorial District, Akure South local Government from the Central Senatorial District and Ile Oluji-Okegbo from the South Senatorial Districts. The second stage involve the use of proportional stratified random sampling technique to determine the number of schools per Local Government and the third state was a simple random sampling technique used to select 20 teachers per school. In addition, all the principals of the selected schools were purposively included in the sample.

The instrument used for this research was a questionnaire titled Principals' Leadership Style and Effectiveness of Secondary School Questionnaire (PLSESSQ) and a profoma designed to collect students results in the Senior School Certificate Examination for 3 years (2008 – 2011) in the sampled schools. The PLSESSQ had two sections, Section A revealed the background information of the respondents, Section B contained 12 items designed to elicit information on principals leadership effectiveness and the Profoma was designed to collect information on quality of school in terms of overall achievement. The PLSESSQ were administered on the teachers and principals respectively.

The face and content validities of the instrument were ensured by experts in the area of Educational management and tests and measurement. The test-retest reliability method was adopted for the questionnaire, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the consistency of the instrument which stood at 0.84.

The data for the study were analyzed with the use of percentage scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) statistics and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What type of leadership styles exhibited by principals in secondary schools in Ondo state?

In other to answer this question frequency count and simple percentages were used to analyze the responses on items 1-12 of PLSESSQ. The result is as presented in Table 1

Table 1. Response by Teachers on Principals' leadership style

| SN | Items | Agree | % | Disagree | % |
|----|--|-------|----|----------|----|
| 1 | The Principal- Teacher- Student relationship is better achieved through regular consultations. | 1135 | 96 | 58 | 4 |
| 2 | Bureaucratic rules should not be strictly followed to enhance stated goals of the school | 1125 | 95 | 68 | 5 |
| 3 | The principal see to the welfare of the teachers and students | 1091 | 92 | 102 | 8 |
| 4 | The level of teacher's involvement in the decision-making process will motivate teachers and improve student's academic performance. | 1043 | 88 | 150 | 12 |
| 5 | The principal makes every members of staff to be relevant in the school system | 1104 | 93 | 89 | 7 |
| 6 | Enforcing discipline among students and teachers leads to achieving better academic goals | 1104 | 93 | 89 | 7 |
| 7 | The principal encourages teachers to use their initiatives on their job | 1113 | 94 | 80 | 6 |
| 8 | The individual needs of the teachers and students are considered by the principals thus better academic performance of the students | 1096 | 93 | 97 | 7 |
| 9 | The principal provides teaching materials on time. | 929 | 79 | 264 | 21 |
| 10 | Supervision of teachers and records of teaching through delegation enhances better students performance | 1086 | 92 | 107 | 8 |
| 11 | Community involvement in the school administration has positive effect on the academic achievement of the students | 1115 | 94 | 78 | 6 |
| 12 | Academic work balances with social activities in the school. | 1031 | 87 | 162 | 13 |
| | Mean | | 92 | | 8 |

N = 1200

Results in table 1 revealed that 1135 respondents (96) % of the respondents as against 58 respondents (4) % agreed that principal relates very well with the teachers and students thus provided an enabling environment for enhanced teaching and learning. Also 1125 respondents (95) % of the respondents agreed that the principals provided good leadership of the school system. Further more 1091 (92) % as against 102 respondents (8) % agreed that principals saw to the welfare of teachers and the students by providing necessary incentives that makes the school move forward. At the same time 1043 respondents (88) % as against 150 respondents (12) % of the respondents agreed that the principal allows teachers involvement in decision-making process thus motivate the teachers by making them feel important to put in their maximum productive capacity. The table also shows that 928 respondents (79) % agreed that the principal provides instructional materials to the school without delay. More so the table shows that 1096 respondents (93)% of the respondents agreed that the principal allows the teachers to grow on the job. 1115 respondents (94) % also indicated that the principal allows community participate in the school administration.

On the average, (92) % as against (8) % of the respondents agreed that the behaviour of the principals towards the teachers, students as well as the community was very much encouraging and participatory. This promotes learning environments that are learners friendly.

Research Question 2: What is the level of effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Ondo State?

In analyzing the level of secondary school effectiveness, in the three domains of learning (Cognitive, affective, and the Psychomotor domains). The SSCE results of the school sampled for three years (2008 – 2011) were used to analyze level effectiveness. To determine whether or not the schools were

effective, the results were scored and tabulated for the three learning domains. The result is as revealed in table 2.

Table 2. Level of effectiveness of Secondary School Student in Ondo State

| Variables | Effective | Not effective | Total |
|-------------|-----------|---------------|-------|
| Cognitive | 35 | 65 | 100 |
| Affective | 87 | 13 | 100 |
| Psychomotor | 73 | 27 | 100 |
| Mean | 65 | 35 | 100 |

Table 2 shows the level of effectiveness of secondary schools in Ondo State. The result is as presented in table 2 shows that the schools were effective in the affective domains (87) % and the Psychomotor domains (73) % but in the Cognitive domains schools were not effective (35) % based on the (50) % cut-off points used as standardization pass level.

The study reveals that students' academic performance in SSCE results between 2008/2009, 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 were 47.17, 49.23 and 51.42 respectively this is shown in table 3.

Table 3. SSCE Result NECO 2008-2011. In Ondo State

| Year | % Scores |
|-----------|----------|
| 2008/2009 | 47.18 |
| 2009/2010 | 49.23 |
| 2010/2011 | 51.42 |

Hypothesis Ho: There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership style and effectiveness of secondary school students in Ondo State.

Table 4. Test of Relationship between Principal's Leadership Style and Secondary Schools effectiveness in Ondo State

| Variables | N | r-cal | r-tab |
|----------------------------|----|-------|-------|
| Principal Leadership Style | 60 | 0.364 | 0.250 |
| School effectiveness | 60 | | |

$P < 0.05$

Table 4, presented the relationship between principal's leadership style and secondary schools effectiveness in Ondo State. The result obtained from the analysis indicates that the value of r-cal (0.364) is greater than the r-table value (0.250) at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that principals leadership style have significant influence on secondary school effectiveness. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The results from table 4 show that the principal's leadership style in Secondary Schools in Ondo State is to a great extent encouraging. The leadership style of the principals in the sampled schools depicts a transactionary transformational leader who gets employees excited about organizational goals and causes them to be truly committed to the goals of the organization while their needs disposition are well taken care of. This is in consonance with the submission of Babayemi (2006) and Ibukun (2008). In which case the principal negotiates with employees to obtain balanced or desired outcomes while he seeks to find ways to change, improve and transform the Secondary School System for quality education delivery in the state.

The findings also presents that Secondary Schools in Ondo State were to a large extent effective in the affective and Psychomotor domains depicts a better future for Ondo State and the students in particular. This assertion is in contrary to Oladele (2006) who submitted that the secondary schools are no longer effective as most secondary school students cannot express themselves in simple English and are full of moral decadence.

The result further showed that the students are not doing well in the Cognitive domain (which is the academic performance). Poor performance of the students in the SSCE as shown on tables 4 and 5 will definitely reduce the extent to which students will have access to University education. This does not augur well for a developing nation like Nigeria which believes in human capital development for economic growth. (Oyegoke, 2012) This submission however also confirms Ajayi (2002), WAEC (2007) and Adeyemi (2008). Views that, students' academic performance which members of the public used mainly to measure effectiveness of schools has witnessed unprecedented setback.

The study finally revealed that there was significant relationship between principal's leadership style and secondary school effectiveness. The reason for this might be due to the fact that principals are the men at the helms of the schools affairs and would always want the schools to achieve the goals for which they are established. A School where the principal provide a good working facilities in the school, sees to members of staff welfare, relates very well with both the teachers, students and the community will facilitate conducive environment for teaching and learning to take place. These factors will make for school effectiveness on which leadership competency needs are require.

CONCLUSION

Considering the findings of this study, it was concluded that the leadership style of the principals in Secondary schools in Ondo State is seems very encouraging and depicts transactionary transformational leader. It was also concluded that the schools were only effective in the affective and the Psychomotor domains but not effective in the Cognitive domains, because the factors which engender effectiveness of a leader are sometimes out of immediate control of the principals in Ondo State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the school principals should not relent on their oars in sustaining the leadership style in the school system. It was also recommended that the government and all the other stakeholders in the secondary schools education sub sector should also try to uphold the tempo of performance in the affective and Psychomotor domains while frantic efforts should be made to improve upon the level of cognitive achievement of the students, by making available adequate facilities. These would contribute to improvement of the quality of education at that level in Ondo State supervision of instructors should also not be taken with levity by school principals. Leaders should study the environment before using specific style of management, but should always be willing to share information with subordinates.

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