

PRINCIPALS' INTERPERSONAL RELATION SKILLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This article examined the principals' interpersonal relations skill and administrative effectiveness in Educational District V of Lagos State and to delineate those facts that facilitate and contribute to administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. A self-structure research instrument titled "Principals' Interpersonal Relation Skills and Administrative Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools" (PIRSAEPSS). The instrument was validated through face and content validity and made reliable through a test-retest reliability method and the coefficient was 0.76. A total of 1000 respondents were employed in the study and the questionnaires administered while 979 respondents returned their questionnaire and on that premise the data was analysed through Pearson Product Moment correlation statistical tools using SPSS version 20 to test the hypothesis, the findings showed that, there is a significant relationship between principals' human relations skill and administrative effectiveness ($r = 0.452, p < 0.05$). Based on the findings, the study recommended that principals should be adequately trained and enlightened with more robust supervision strategies through seminars and conferences which may include classroom observation, analysis/strategy, post-observation conference and post conference analysis and adequate human relation skills for administrative effectiveness in in Public senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Keywords: Principals, Interpersonal relationship skills, Administrative effectiveness

Introduction

Education is an important instrument for the development of any nation. It is a process of developing sound moral character for the benefit of the society. It is one of the forces recognized by government as an instrument for effecting national development, relevant to the needs of individual and those of the society, which must also be in consonance with the realities of the environment and the modern world (Onifade, 2009). According to Adesina (2006), from the point of view of an educational planner, secondary education occupies a very strategic position of any nation's educational system. Post primary - education does not only determine the fate but also the pace of education at both the secondary and tertiary levels. It is a level where significant options have to be carefully made essentially for the accomplishment of long-range ambition. It is the link between primary education and higher education that absorbs the products of the primary education system. The likely number of graduates of the primary education system that benefit from secondary education system is dictated by the absorptive capacity of the secondary education system itself. At the same time, secondary education supplies entrants into the higher education. In other words, those to be admitted into different institutions of higher learning must have successfully completed secondary education.

Secondary school principals must have strong human relations and leadership skills. Good interpersonal relationship is one of the keys to the success of any organization. School principals could find it demanding to promote interpersonal relationships within and outside the organization. They must be seen to encourage sharing of ideas between individuals and organizations. It is the psychological aspect of administration in any organization. Peretomode (2006) opined that it is not just the production and distribution of manufactured articles but to give opportunity for individual development and self-actualization through better organization of human relationships. Human relations serve as a lubricator which fosters the smooth operation of the management process. In support of this, Bagobiri and Kassah (2006) stated that human relations helps managerial planning and it is to be performed effectively. Nowadays, more than ever before,

school principals are regarded as managers, administrators, motivators, planners, coordinators, supervisors and policy implementers. Therefore, such people who are expected to perform these stated functions should be knowledgeable, skillful, competent and healthy to discharge the numerous duties of managing school resources to achieve the organizational goals effectively. The effectiveness of any administration therefore depends largely on the proper planning, coordinating, organizing, supervising and evaluating the entire process with the school system. The administrative effectiveness of a school manager has become a major concern in the education industry in Nigeria today, especially when people are agitating from every nook and cranny that the performance in education is falling.

Nwagwo (2009) and Peretomode (2001) emphasized that a school administrator performance in achieving effectiveness is often regarded as the important modifier in the school system. As argued by Knapp (2009), certain aspects of the principals roles such as interpersonal relationships, record keeping, superior-subordinate relationship, school-community relationship, communication, decision-making, staff development, maintenance of school facilities, maintenance of discipline, internal supervision and several others are not being properly handled by principals due to jettisoning of merits experience and other qualities required for the appointment of the principals. Consequently, the effectiveness of the schools system in achieving educational goals needs attention. Also, the need to overcome the problems associated with the administration of public secondary school and effectiveness of public senior secondary school principals in Lagos State is important. However, there seems a paucity of research on human relations, discipline and principals' administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The few available studies hardly treated the identified variables together (effectiveness, discipline and human relations). It is therefore pertinent to note the efficiency with which any school system operates depend on the administrative performance of the principal. The issue of the influence of principals' human relations and administrative experience on his or her administrative performance is therefore the concern of this study. There is need for proper coordination of function and activities of the school system so as to perform the functions properly and achieve the school's objectives effectively.

Literature Review

Leadership Role in Organizations Communication

The leader's challenges in complex organizations are to combine the work towards task and objectives (structures) with human relation work that engages and supports followers (Yukl, 2002). To realize demanding objectives and tasks, the followers' attitudes and knowledge towards the work become important. This implies that leadership, organizational culture, communication and organizational outcomes are strongly connected. Communication becomes a way to understand and conduct leadership and actions within the organization. A communicative leadership uses language and communication to motivate different actions (Eriksen, 2001). Talk can therefore be described as action (Weick, 1984) and as work (Gronn, 1983). To view leadership as a social process makes communication essential both for understanding how the work inside organizations contribute to results and how the individual leader use communication as a tool.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships are the foundation for learning and human development. As such, a great deal of the information in the "Teaching and Learning" This relates to how Principals' Interpersonal relationships shape goals and the methods or strategies used to actualize the goals. According to National School climatic center (2010), it was discovered that there are three critical aspects of Principal's interpersonal relationships:

Respect for Diversity: This aspect of relational life in school communities refers to what extent there is mutual respect for individual differences (e.g. gender, race, culture, etc.) at all levels of the school (student-student; adult-student; adult-adult) and overall norms for tolerance.

Social Support-Adults: This aspect of relational life in school communities refers to the pattern of supportive and caring adult relationships for students. This includes the nature of expectations for students' success, willingness to listen to students and to get to know them as individuals, and personal concern for students' problems.

Social Support-Students: This aspect of relational life in school communities refers to patterns of supportive peer relationships for students (e.g. friendships for socializing, for problems, for academic help, and for new students).

Principals' Administrative Performance

Principal's administrative performance could be described in terms of effects of student learning either directly or through mediating variables. This orientation towards performance is in line with much current thinking in educational administration Erickson (2005) observes that many researches talk performance by emphasizing output variables. Erickson (2005) in his studies further, evaluated administrative performance in terms of group performance on the groups' primary assigned task. Equally too, in discussing management styles, thinks in similar term about performance. He argues that the performance of any school principal should be measured by his personal characteristics.

Also, in discussing administrative performance, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) pointed out that people concentrated too much evaluating the result of individual leaders on administrator. These results are significant; they said perhaps the most important aspect of performance is its relationship to the entire school system. Here the concern is not only the outcome of a given leadership attempt but also with the effectiveness of the organisation unit over a period of time. Many researchers speak about performance by emphasizing output variables. The concept of administrative performance depends solely on leadership but Adesina (2006) said that there is no valid and reliable instrument devised for assessing the achievement of secondary school principals. As leaders, the principals are open to direct observation and can be assessed in terms of the perception of their behaviour by their teachers, pupils and the parents of the pupils. The standard in measuring teachers' effectiveness is students' performance in variants of attainment tests and examination.

Leatherwood and Montgomery (2002) asserts that the factors that influence school effectiveness rest on the degree of discipline and his basic orientation towards students, teachers and the entire school system. The performance of any school administrator can be measured by his ability to plan, organize, direct, coordinate, motivate, communicate, supervise and perform the roles expected of an administrator. Meanwhile, effective and competent principals are concerned about influencing several aspects of instructional strategies. Competent principals' use programmes proprieties as a criterion for making effective decisions. Knapp (2009) opined that competent principal involve themselves in classroom disciplinary problems. The capacity of a school principal to initiate structure and maintain set out standard is very important to the life and success of a school organization innovation is viewed as the number of programme initiated or maintained by the principal to achieve. Knapp (2009) said the principal's ability to initiate changes in the areas of organization functioning provides a theoretically important dimension of his administration performance.

Human relations are dynamic systems that change continuously during their existences like living organisms. Relationships have a beginning, a lifespan and an end. They tend to grow and improve gradually, as people get to know each other and become closer emotionally, or they gradually deteriorate as people drift apart, move on with their lives and form new relationships with others. Interpersonal relationship has the potential to influence classroom performance and learning outcomes in positive ways. In support of the above assertion, Adeniyi and Omoteso, (2014) posited that good interpersonal interaction of teachers with students has positive effect on academic achievement. Good interpersonal interaction with teachers and parents can lead to positive effect on academic achievement. For instance, a situation whereby

parents provided materials and financial support and were generally involved in school affairs, these students had better grades than students whose parents were not involved. They concluded that the quality of social relationship is associated with academic outcomes.

Peretomode (2006) argued that human relation is not just the production and distribution of manufactured articles but it is to give an opportunity for individual development and self-actualization through better organization of human relationships. In her innovation, the process of production is as important for the welfare of society as the product of production. This balance, she maintains, is not achieved through an utter disregard for efficiency. With its emphasis lies on productivity, goal attainment, and discipline and authority relationships but through integrating them with other factors which take into account human feelings, needs and satisfactions. Peretomode (2006) further stated that any enduring society or organization must be based upon recognition of the motivating desire of the individuals of the group. She believes that all organizational problems are fundamentally human relation problems.

Secondary education is very fundamental in the provision of functional education to the citizens of the country. It is stated in the National Policy on Education that the secondary education within the overall objectives is to prepare students for useful living within the society and for further higher learning (FGN, 2004). Administration is not simply a managerial occupation; it demands new dimensions of knowledge, techniques and skills. However, observations have shown that there seems to be poor principals' administrative strategies in Lagos State public secondary schools due to lack of technical competence, low administrative acumen and understanding of the educational development; in terms of poor interpersonal relationship, which have led to poor quality assurance in secondary schools in Lagos State. There is growing assumption that lack of adequate managerial capacity of many school principals, jeopardizes their administrative effectiveness and also that demographic characteristics such as age, sex, experience, etc. may affect the effective performance of their duties.

Methodology

A descriptive and correlational research design was adopted for this study. The target population of this study consists of all principal, vice principal and students in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State. A multistage sampling technique (simple random, stratified and purposive random sample technique) was used to select 100 Public Secondary Schools in Lagos State. Thirty percent of the population was selected, after stratifying them into districts. Also, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select two vice principals and ten teachers, teaching and taking students through SS 1 to SS 111 from each school that was sampled. It was purposive in that, vice principals and teachers that have stayed or have been teaching in their various schools for five years above were selected as participants in the study. Therefore, a total of 100 vice principals and 900 teachers totaling 1000 respondents were used for the study. A self-structure research instrument titled "Principals' Interpersonal Relation Skills and Administrative Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools" (PIRSAEPSS). The instrument was validated through face and content validity and made reliable through a test-retest reliability method and the coefficient was 0.76. Data gathered to test the stated hypothesis was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20.0. However, out of the total respondents of 1000 only 979 respondents returned the administered instrument which was used to analyse the data gathered.

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between principal's human relation skills and administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Table 1: Pearson’s correlation analysis between Principal human relation skills and Administrative Effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

		Principals’ Human Relations Skills	Principals’ Administrative Effectiveness
Principals’ Human Relations Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.452
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	N	979	189
Principals’ Administrative Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.452	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	N	189	189

From table 1, the result of the bi-variate Pearson’s correlation analysis between principals’ human relations skill and administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State shows a positive and significant relationship between the variables ($r=.452, p <.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate which states that, there is a significant relationship between principals’ human relations skill and administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State was accepted.

Discussion

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis which states that, there is significant relationship between principals’ human relations skills and administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State was accepted. The finding was justified by Olembo (1986) who argued that leadership of a principal should be democratic combining self-confidence, friendliness and firmness. It should not merely consist of issuing orders. Linda (1998) in her study concluded that principals should not be too autocratic in their leadership. They should not use tense body language being rigid or clench hands, insulting, humiliating or embarrassing teachers, students, support staff and even parents among others which will lead to indiscipline of students. Mbogori (2012) conducted a study on influence of head teachers’ leadership styles on students discipline in public secondary schools in Nairobi Province, Kenya. Findings revealed that majority of the head teachers were considered democratic, followed by the autocratic while laissez -faire style of leadership received the least support. The study revealed that other factors such as home environment and mass media also has some influence on students’ discipline. Therefore, based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the leadership style of the head teacher has a considerable influence on students discipline in schools although other factors may come into play to impact on discipline.

Conclusion

The results also revealed that school principals’ humans relations skills is relatively significant to their administrative effectiveness as predictors of academic performance of senior secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should be adequately trained and enlightened with more robust supervision strategies through seminars and conferences which may include classroom observation, analysis/strategy, post-observation conference and post conference analysis.
2. The school principal should support achievement of excellent students’ academic performance by giving instructional leadership, providing resources and being visible in every part of the institution.

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