

Principal-Staff Relationship For Effective Secondary Schools Administration In South-South Geo-Political Zone Of Nigeria

Ekechukwu, Peter Chizoba¹ and Ifeanyichukwu Jovita Mmasinachi²

¹Department Of Educational Foundation
University Of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

²Department Of Educational Management
College Of Education
Michael Okpara University Of Agriculture
Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria



Abstract – The study investigated the principal-staff relationship for effective secondary schools administration in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was two thousand five hundred and eighty-nine (2,589) principals and forty-two thousand, nine hundred and sixty (42,960) secondary school teachers. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of fifty (50) principals and five hundred (500) secondary school teachers from each state in the zone. These summed to three thousand three hundred (3300) respondents. Principal-staff relationship and effective school administration questionnaire (PSRESAQ) was used to gather data. The instrument was validated and a reliability index of 0.86 was established through the test-retest method. Some major findings which emerged from the study were that:- there is effective school administration when principal-staff relationship is devoid of envy and strife, intimidation, pride and non-challant attitude over staff and students' welfare. Effective communication, collective decision-making, compliance to staff code of conduct, principle of fair-hearing and demonstration of sympathy and empathy were found to be useful qualities of principals-staff that enhance effective secondary school administration in the zone. Some recommendations were also proffered viz; principals-staff should communicate effectively to each other; members of staff should be allowed to participate in decisions affecting them and the school; there should be cordial relationship devoid of envy, strife, intimidation, self pride and non-challant attitude among principals and members of staff and above all people should develop positive attitude to their job.

Keywords – Relationship, Effective, Administration, Secondary school and Geo-political zone.

I. INTRODUCTION

The success or failure of any educational system, be it in developed or developing countries of the world rests squarely on the educational planners, the educational managers and the teachers involved in the educational system. Teachers occupy a very important position in our educational system and it is no exaggeration that “No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers” (FRN 2004: 2). The services of the teachers are therefore indispensable and critical in moulding the nation's future, by raising the caliber of men and women desirable to the society. The future development of the society, be it economic, social or political depends on the quality, competence, character and effectiveness of the teachers (Akpan, 1996). However, the performance of teachers in discharging their professional duties could be influenced by factors such as personal characteristics and organizational

factors. School organizational factors include the administrative style of the principal, personnel policies, staff motivation, communication, conditions of service and involvement of teachers in decision-making process. At the secondary school level of our educational system, it is important that principals have the right skills, competences and experience to manage the secondary school environment. Managerial capabilities of principals are not innate in most of them but are developed over time as a result of their passion for their job, commitment, on — the- job training and professional development programmes attended. Supporting this, Jago (1982) states that outstanding principals evolve through the process of self-education, training, retraining and experience.

If teachers are unhappy, frustrated, uninspired and ill-motivated, then the nation's educational system is doomed, for without them educational objectives cannot be realized. The extent to which teachers are willing to cooperate, relate well and work effectively with their principal, depends to a greater extent on the administrative behaviour of the principal. Some principals adopt autocratic style of leadership, this does not support creativity, effective communication, does not give room for trust, collective decision and boasting of morale of the members of staff. Democratic style often brings out the best from members of staff, encourages high level of initiative, participatory decision making, cordial interpersonal relationship between the principal and the staff.

This gives the teachers a sense of worth and dignity, self-respect, self esteem, commitment and dedication. According to Akpan (2002), teachers need proper motivation to enhance their effectiveness. Proper management by school principals can produce efficient and effective workforce among the staff for the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Principals need to relate closely with members of staff, involve them in decision making and in day-to-day running of the school. Staff involvement in decision-making in matters affecting them is highly encouraging.

Friedman (1991) supported this assertion by stating that, insufficient participatory decision-making influences effectiveness of teachers. The administration of secondary school is said to be effective when the educational goals and objectives are realized through the collaborative efforts of the principal and members of staff. It is in consideration of the fact that the principal and the staff members have statutory responsibility of realizing the educational dreams of the society, that the researcher sought to find out the extent to which principal-staff relationship contributes to effective secondary school administration in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

To say that the standard of education has fallen especially at the secondary school level is no more news. The poor performance of secondary school students in external examinations like; Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), National Examination Council (NECO), The Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and Post Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (Post UTME) is no more embarrassing. The various stakeholders and institutions in education are busy pointing accusing fingers on one another. No matter the angle of our perception and approach to this issue, principals and teachers have a lot to do in changing the state of affairs in our school system, especially in our secondary schools. The principals need to provide conducive environment for the staff and students so that educational goals and objectives could be achieved. The principal is not an Island neither is any of the members of staff. The school as a social system is made up of members who inter-relate and inter-depend on one another for efficient and effective performance. Considering the important role the principals and members of staff play in ensuring effective administration of secondary schools, as well as imparting knowledge and skills, it is crucial to find out the effect of principal-staff relationship on effective administration of secondary schools and how principals and staff should relate in order to ensure effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political zone of Nigeria.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study therefore is to;

1. Identify the effect of principal-staff relationship on the effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria
2. Find out the qualities principals and staff should have to ensure effective administration of secondary schools in South-Geo-political zone of Nigeria.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study.

1. How does the relationship existing between principal and staff affect the effective administration of secondary schools?
2. What are the qualities of principal-staff that encourage effective administration of secondary schools?

V. HYPOTHESES

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the opinion of principals and teachers on the effects of principals-staff relationship in the administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the opinion of principals and teachers on the personal qualities of principal-staff that encourage effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

VI. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The principal is the administrative head of a secondary school. Ozigi (1982) defined the administrative head of a school as an individual who directs the affairs of an organization in such a way as to attain primary goals and objectives of the organization (school) and who gets things done quickly and efficiently. He listed the numerous responsibilities of the school manager (principal) as that of planning, organizing, supervising, controlling, directing and evaluating. According to Luwuo and Uche (2004) to direct effectively, the school administrator or principal must employ all the positive elements and skills needed to stimulate the workers to perform efficiently for enhanced productivity. These positive elements include employing everything necessary to motivate the staff to effectively discharge their various duties and responsibilities. The extent to which teachers are willing to cooperate and work effectively with their principals depend to a large extent on the administrative behaviour of the principal. In autocratic style of leadership, there is less creativity, absence of effective communication, lower morale, lack of trust, unilateral decision-making e.t.c while in democratic style of leadership, there is higher degree of initiative, morale, staff participation in decision making and cordial interpersonal relationship between the leader and the subordinates (Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem, & Nkama, 2013). Where the relationship between the principal and members of staff is cordial, there is uninterrupted free flow of communication. According to Ezeocha (1990) principals should learn how to communicate effectively with their staff. This is because effective communication enhances effective administration of an organization. Also to support this view. Fasai (2009) asserts that principals should communicate and allow free communication among members of staff in order to guide against rumour, misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Teachers and other members of staff have a sense of belonging when they relate cordially with their principal and they are involved in decision-making process. According to Ogbonna (1995) the more a teacher is actively involved in decision-making process especially in his subject area, the more committed he feels and so participates and cooperates in school activities and this increases his job performance.

VII. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It is considered as a suitable design for the purpose of describing principal-staff relationship variables as they affect the effective administration of secondary schools. South-South Geopolitical zone is made of the following states; Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Cross- River. The population of this study comprised two thousand five hundred and eighty-nine (2, 589) principals and forty- two thousand, nine hundred and sixty (42, 960) secondary school teachers in the zone. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 50 principals and 500 teachers from each state. This gives us a total of 300 principals and 3000 teachers used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the "Principal-Staff Relationship and Effective School Administration Questionnaire (PSRESAQ) structured by the researcher. The instrument was made up of two sections and 20 questionnaire items based on the modified likert scale format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by colleagues and some lecturers in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. The test-retest reliability method was adopted and a reliability value of 0.86 was established. The researcher with the assistance of six undergraduate students administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. The statistical tools used to analyse the data gathered were simple descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and the z-test to test the hypotheses.

VIII. RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does the relationship existing between the principal-staff affect the effective administration of the school?

Table 1: Weighted mean scores on the effects of the relationship between the principal and staff on effective administration of the school.

S/N	Effects of the relationship between principal and staff on effective administration of secondary schools.	Principal		Teacher		Mean Set	Decision
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD		
1.	Lack of strife and envy among principal and staff promote effective administration of secondary schools.	3.29	0.89	3.61	0.87	3.45	Agree
2.	Autocratic principles adopted by principals promote effective administration of secondary schools.	1.69	1.18	1.73	1.09	1.71	Disagree
3.	Intimidation of staff by the principals hinder effective administration of secondary school.	3.61	0.89	3.45	0.99	3.53	Agree
4.	Self pride of principals and staffs affect effective administration of secondary school.	3.35	0.77	3.69	1.02	3.52	Agree
5.	Non-challant attitude over staff welfare by principals hinder effective administration of secondary school.	3.00	0.87	3.20	0.93	3.10	Agree
6.	Lack of principals' involvement of members of staff in decision-making promote effective administration of secondary school.	1.47	0.85	1.59	0.91	1.53	Disagree
7.	Lack of trust and delegation of authority to members of staff by principals promote effective administration of secondary schools.	1.96	0.69	1.64	0.72	1.80	Disagree
8.	Demonstration of love and concern by principals over personal issues affecting members of staff promote effective administration of secondary schools.	3.40	0.92	3.26	0.86	3.33	Agree
9.	Adequate motivation of members of staff by principals promote the effective administration of secondary schools.	3.25	0.88	2.75	0.76	3.00	Agree
10.	Working with cliques in the school by principals promote effective administration of secondary schools.	2.30	0.4	2.16	0.82	2.23	Disagree

Table one shows that items 1,3,4,5, 8 and 9 have weighted mean scores above the criterion mean score of 2.50 and were agreed on as principal- staff relationship that promote effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. While items 2,6,7 and 10 have their weighted mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on as principal-staff relationship that promote effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Therefore, the principal-staff relationship which promotes effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria include; principal-staff relationship that lacks strife and envy, intimidation, self-pride, non-challant attitude over staff welfare, and principal-staff relationship with demonstration of love, concern, and adequate motivation.

Research Question 2: What are the personal qualities of principals and members of staff that encourage effective administration of secondary school?

Table 2: Weighted mean scores on the personal qualities of principals and members of staff that promote effective administration of secondary schools in So9UTH-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

S/N	Effects of the relationship between principal and staff on effective administration of secondary schools.	Principal		Teacher		Mean Set	Decision
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD		
1.	Confrontational attitude by staff members to principals promote effective administration of secondary schools.	1.56	0.65	1.82	0.60	1.69	Disagree
2.	Effective communication skills of principals promote effective administration of secondary schools	3.60	0.88	3.85	0.92	3.73	Agree
3.	Participatory/collective decision-making style by principals promote effective secondary school administration	3.20	0.80	3.62	0.84	3.41	Agree
4.	Deceit and craftiness by principals and staff promote effective administration of secondary schools.	1.60	0.66	2.20	0.72	1.90	Disagree
5.	Empathy and sympathy where necessary promote effective secondary school administration.	2.80	0.75	3.12	0.80	2.96	Agree
6.	Honesty and sincerity by principals and staffs promote effective secondary school administration.	3.00	0.90	3.40	0.88	3.20	Agree
7.	The life-style of the principal has nothing to do with effectiveness of his administration	2.30	0.85	2.20	0.66	2.25	Disagree
8.	Compliance to staff code of conduct should start from the principal and followed by others	2.80	0.79	3.54	0.72	3.17	Agree
9.	Fair hearing opportunity should be given to erring staff before they are made to face disciplinary charges.	2.60	0.99	3.24	0.86	2.92	Agree
10.	Principals and staff members need to carry themselves very high in the school.	2.20	1.02	1.80	0.96	2.00	Disagree

Table 2 shows that items 2,3,5,6,8 & 9 have their various weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed as personal qualities that principals and staff should have in order to promote effective administration of their schools. Items number, 1,4,7 & 10 have their various weighted mean below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed upon.

Therefore, the personal qualities of principals and staff members which can promote effective secondary school administration include: effective communication skills, participatory decision making, empathy and sympathy, honesty and sincerity, compliance to staff code of conduct and principle of fair hearing.

Test of Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between the opinion of principals and teachers on the effects of principal-staff relationship in the administration of secondary schools in South- South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 3: z – test of difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the effects of principal-staff relationship in the administration of secondary school.

Category	No	Df	Mean	SD	Z-calculated	Z-critical	Decision
Principals	300	3298	2.73	0.87			
Teachers	300		2.71	0.90	1.94	1.96	Accepted

Table 3 shows the z-test of difference between the opinion of the principals and that of the teachers on the principal-staff relationship in the administration of secondary schools in South- South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The z-calculated is 1.94 and this value is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 at 3298 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha significant level. The null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the effects of principals-staff relationship in the administration of secondary schools.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the opinion of principals and teachers on the personal qualities of principals-staff that encourage effective administration of secondary schools in South-South Geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Table 4: z- test of difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on personal qualities of principals and members of staff and effective administration of secondary schools.

Category	No	Df	Mean	SD	Z-calculated	Z-critical	Decision
Principals	300	3298	2.57	0.83			
Teachers	300		2.88	0.80	1.88	1.96	Accepted

Table 4 shows the z-test difference between the opinion of the principals and that of the teachers on the personal qualities of principals and members of staff and effective administration of secondary schools. The z-calculated is 1.88 and this value is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 at 3298 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha significant level. The null hypothesis is no significant difference is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the personal qualities of principals-teachers for effective administration of secondary schools.

IX. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The principals and staffs of secondary schools in the Geo-political Zone are aware of the fact that their relationship can affect the administration of their schools. They agree that the principal-staff relationship which promotes effective school administration is one that lacks envy and strife, intimidation, self pride, non-challant attitude over staff welfare and the type of relationship where there is adequate motivation, demonstration of love and concern by principals over staff personal issues.
2. Qualities of principals and staff members that promote effective school administration include: effective communication skills, collective decision making, empathy and sympathy were necessary, honest/sincerity, compliance to staff code of conduct and fair- hearing principal.

X. DISCUSSION

Principals and teachers in secondary schools in South-South Geo-political Zone were in agreement that principals-staff relationship has great influence on effective secondary school administration. The result of hypothesis one confirmed this, hence the null hypothesis was retained. This implies that if the principals-staff relationship is good, there will be high level of cooperation among them and school goals will be achieved. This finding agreed with the view of Ogusanya (1997) who affirm that the level of people's performance depends largely on how well their needs and expectations are satisfied. Everybody needs love, adequate motivation and a sense of belonging. Envy, strife, intimidation, pride and non-challant attitude over other peoples welfare do not build a healthy relationship and they could serve as dissatisfies to those concerned.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference between the principals and the teachers on principals-staff qualities that promote effective administration of secondary school. They unanimously agreed that effective communication, collective decision making, honesty/sincerity, empathy/sympathy, compliance to staff code of conduct and principle of fair hearing were some of the qualities that promote effective school administration. This finding is in line with the view of Ezeocha (1990) who stated that principals should learn how to communicate effectively with their staff. People react best when they know what is going on. Collective decision making helps to secure the commitment of all those who form part of the decision making process. Ogbonnaya (1995) agreed with this assertion when he stated that the more a teacher is actively involved in the decision-making process... the more he feels committed and so participates and co-operates with the school. Decisions are better implemented when everybody is involved or majority of the staff are carried along. Honesty, sincerity and compliance to

staff code of conduct shows how morally inclined people are and the positive attitude they have for their job. These factors are very important in the effective administration of any organization.

XI. CONCLUSION

From the result of the study, it was concluded that principal-staff relationship has effects on the administration of secondary schools. There is effective administration of schools when the relationship existing between principals/members of staff is devoid of envy and strife, intimidation, pride and non-challant attitude over staff welfare, where there is adequate motivation and demonstration of love and concern. There would be effective administration where the principals and staff communicate to each other effectively, adopt collective decision-making principle, show empathy and sympathy where necessary, display honesty/sincerity at all times, comply to staff code of conduct and give opportunity of fair hearing to every member of staff.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals-staff members should communicate effectively to each other.
2. Principals should allow teachers and other members of staff to participate in decision-making for better implementation and achievement of educational goals.
3. Principals-staff should relate cordially without envy and strife, intimidation, pride and non-challant attitude to individuals and organizational welfare.
4. People should develop positive attitude to their job by being honest, sincere. complying to staff code of conduct and showing love and concern to both fellow staff and students.

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