

Principals' Instructional Leadership Roles and Effect on Teachers' Job Performance: A Case Study of Secondary Schools in Asaba Metropolis, Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Leaders have often been said to impact, one way or the other on their subordinates. The teachers for encouragement look upon the principals as leaders, as they discharge their duties of training the young ones. How do they play their instructional leadership roles?, to what extent do these roles affect the work performance of the teachers?. This study is a survey carried out in all the government-owned secondary schools in Asaba metropolis of Delta state. 240 teachers randomly selected from these schools made up the sample. The instrument was a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Instructional Leadership Employed by Principals (QILEP). The two research questions were answered using mean statistic, while the lone hypothesis was tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results indicate that the principals play their instructional leadership roles to high extent and these roles affect the work performance of their teachers. Some recommendations were made.

INTRODUCTION

Often times, principals seem too busy with all the day-to-day responsibilities of running their schools that they do not seem to have enough time to practice instructional leadership as expected. "Instructional leadership is often conceived of as a blend of supervision, staff development and curriculum development facilitates school improvement" (Smith and Andrews, 1989). Sheppard (1996) and Murphy (1987) saw it as, interactions between leaders and followers wherein the followers' beliefs and perceptions are viewed as important. Reitzug (1994) listed some attributes of the principal, which constitute instructional leadership to include providing staff development, encouraging risk taking, requiring justification of practices etc.

The ultimate goal of schooling is learning on the part of the students. What they learn, however, depends on the teachers' performance, which is a product of many factors, such as their commitment, professional growth, school environment, prevailing culture, teachers' innovativeness etc. All these factors have connections directly or indirectly with the principal's actions or inactions. Promoting teachers' professional development, according to Sheppard (1996) is the most influential instructional leadership behavior at both the elementary and high school levels.

Supporting the above, Obi (2002) noted that to be a successful instructional leader, the principal must give primary attention to the programme of staff improvement, which comprises leadership techniques and procedures designed to change the teachers' role performance. He stated that the principals' roles in this include: classroom visitation, observations, conferences, seminar, and workshop, professional associations, in-service educational programmes etc, while Sach (1995) added that conducive environment enhances teachers' work performance.

The above measures seem to be necessary, because, though the teachers have been prepared through schooling, many seem to experience difficulty in relating with the students (youth of today) who, as a result of the current global technological breakthrough, many have become so exposed (sometimes more than the teachers), sophisticated, inquisitive, thus demanding more from the teachers. The principal is expected to provide the appropriate leadership which will assist each staff member make a maximum contribution to the schools' effort to providing quality and up-to-date education. He/she is expected to have experience in this area because, according to Sergiovanni (1996) "after all, knowledge about teaching and learning and ability to share these insights with teachers is a key factor in any good principal selection process,

he equally confirmed a positive and strong relationship between effective instructional leadership behaviours exhibited by principals' and teacher commitment.

Also, Ogbodo and Ekpo (2005), citing California Commission on Teachers' Credentialing noted that the primary role of the school administrator (principal) is to facilitate teaching and learning in schools. In their own study, they found a significant relationship between principals' instructional leadership and teachers' work performance in Akwa Ibom State.

Upon this background, this study sets out to investigate the instructional leadership roles of principals in Asaba metropolis and how these relate with the teachers' job performance.

The Problem

With the new wave of global technology which has exposed the young ones to a lot of information, the teachers seem to be constantly battling to meet up with the demands from their students, some of whom seem to be more exposed than them, especially in the developing countries like Nigeria. The fact that some students have even become bolder in their approaches (compared to the time past when teachers were revered) exposes and often times embarrasses some ill prepared teachers. The resultant effect is that some of these teachers seem to either become aggressive to the students with the hope of intimidating them to submission, or some seem to get discouraged but just tag along for lack of alternative means of livelihood. Sometimes some teachers seem not to be abreast with the latest instructional methods. Ultimately the students are at the losing end. The question therefore is, what are the principals doing to help or encourage teachers? Do they play their expected instructional leadership roles? If so, do these roles affect the teachers' performance?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the instructional leadership roles played by principals in Asaba Metropolis. Specifically, it seeks to find out;

1. the extent to which the principals assist/encourage teachers in their classroom instructions.
2. the extent to which the principals promote professional growth of their teachers

3. if the principals' instructional leadership role has any effect on the teachers' job performance

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the principals' assist/encourage their teachers' in their classroom instructions?
2. To what extent do the principals promote professional growth of their teachers?

Hypothesis

HO: 1

There is no significant relationship between the principals' classroom instructional leadership role and the job performance of the teachers

METHODOLOGY

The study is a survey, carried out in Asaba metropolis of Delta State. (Asaba is the capital city of the state, hence all the ethnic groups in Delta State are represented). The population of the study comprises all the teachers in all the secondary schools in Asaba. According to the Department of Research and statistics, Delta state ministry of Education, there are 650 teachers in the government – owned secondary schools in Asaba metropolis. The sample therefore comprises 240 teachers randomly selected from the twelve government owned secondary schools in Asaba (i.e. 20 each)

The instrument for the study is a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Instructional Leadership Employed by Principals (QILEP)", which was designed by the researchers and validated by experts in Educational Administration. With the scores from a pilot test done with 20 teachers, a Calculated Reliability Consistency Coefficient of 0.75 was obtained using Chronbach Alpha Coefficient.

The data was collected by the researchers who distributed the instrument to the teachers and collected each batch same day. 234 questionnaires were correctly filled and retrieved. The analysis of data was done using mean statistic for the research questions, while the hypothesis was tested using the deviation from the mean method of the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient.

For the research questions, the decision rule is as follows: any score that falls between 3.50 - 4.00 is termed, Very High Extent (VHE), 2.50 – 3.49 =High Extent (HE), 1.50 –2.49 =Low Extent (LE), and 0.00 –1.49 = Very Low Extent (VLE).

RESULT

Research Question 1

To what extent do the principals' assist/encourage their teachers in their classroom instructions?

The data on table one indicate that the teacher rated their principals' instructional leadership quite highly, as all their mean ratings indicate that the principals perform their duties to a high extent. The highest rating was in item 3, (X = 3.35) indicating that the head teachers check the teachers lesson notes and offer corrections/ advice when necessary. Moreover, the over all mean rating (X= 3.12) confirms the teachers opinion.

Research Question 2

To what extent do the principals promote professional growth of teachers?

Table 2 indicates that, apart from item 4 (X = 2.35) which reveals low extent from the teachers' response, all the other items on the principals' promotion of professional development of their teachers, were rated highly. The overall mean score is 2.95

Hypothesis

HO: 2

There is no significant relationship between the principals' classroom instructional leadership role and the job performance of the teachers

From table 3, the observed r-value (0.33) is greater than the critical r-value (.1946) Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the principals' classroom instructional leadership roles and the teachers' job performance.

Table 1: Mean rating on the opinion of teachers on the extent to which their principals' assist/encourage them in their classroom instructions

| S. No. | Items | | Remarks |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|
| 1. | Has demonstrated knowledge of curricular issues in various subject areas | 3.18 | HE |
| 2. | Assists classroom teachers in the implementation of the curriculum | 2.99 | HE |
| 3. | Checks the teachers' lesson notes and offers corrections/ advise where necessary | 3.35 | HE |
| 4. | Maintains school climate that is conducive to teaching and learning | 3.23 | HE |
| 5. | Regularly evaluates the teachers' instructional methods and makes his/her contributions without obviously being judgmental | 2.99 | HE |
| 6. | Talks with teachers as colleagues and discusses classroom activities with them | 3.05 | HE |
| 7. | Is supportive of the classroom concerns of the teachers | 3.05 | HE |
| | Overall | 3.12 | HE |

Table 2: Mean ratings on the opinion of the teachers on the extent to which their principals promote their professional growth

| S. No. | Items | X | Remarks |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|
| 1. | Takes definite steps to aid teachers' professional growth | 2.99 | H.E |
| 2. | Encourages new ideas | 3.17 | H.E |
| 3. | Supports practice of new skills, innovation and creativity | 2.99 | H.E |
| 4. | Plans and executes in-service programmes for staff | 2.35 | L.E |
| 5. | Praise, support and facilitate teacher' work | 3.13 | H.E |
| 6. | Encourages/ facilitates workshop attendance for teachers | 3.00 | H.E |
| 7. | Overall | 2.95 | H.E |

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment correlation Coefficient analysis of Principals' instructional leadership and teachers Job performance

| Variable | Score | N | ΣXY | ΣY ² | Σy ² | df | Observed r | Critical r | Remark |
|--------------------------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|------------|------------|--------|
| Instructional leadership | 5111 | 234 | 2741.38 | 6242.87 | 10935.76 | 232 | 0.33 | .1946 | S |
| Jobperformance | 4932 | 234 | | | | | | | |

P= .05

DISCUSSION

The result from the analysis of the two research questions indicate that the teachers believe to a large extent that their principals assist/encourage them in their classroom instructions. For the research question one, all the items were rated to a high extent, the highest being items 3,4 and 1, which respectively indicated that the principals check the teachers' lesson notes and offer corrections/ advise when necessary; maintain school climate that is conducive to teaching and learning; and have demonstrated knowledge of curricular issues in various subject areas. These outcomes imply that principals in Asaba metropolis are good instructional leaders. They are abreast with the skills needed for teaching and learning. This is in line with Sergiovanni (1996) who noted that knowledge about teaching and learning and ability to share these insights with teachers is a key fact in good principalship. Also the item on conducive environments is in line with Sachs (1995) who listed conducive environment as a sine qua non for enhancing teachers' performance.

Furthermore, analysis of items for research question 2 reveals that except for item 4, with a lower mean score of 2.35, the teachers rated their principals high on the extent to which they promote their professional growth. This result agrees with Sheppard (1996) who laid much emphasis on the promotion of teachers' professional development, which he saw as "the most influential instructional leadership behaviour". However, the result indicates that principals assist their teachers more in their classroom instruction judging from the overall mean of 3.12 obtained in cluster one, than promoting their professional development (cluster 2) with an overall mean score of 2.95. In a mild way, this is contrary to an earlier study by Obi (2002) who recommended the need for principals to give "attention to the programme of staff improvement" to make them more successful instructional leaders. This could be attributed to the fact that the principals may not be having the necessary financial provision to organize/ sponsor these programmes on their own.

The result from the analysis of the null hypothesis shows a calculated r value of 0.33 which is greater than the tabular r value of .1946. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the principals' instructional

leadership and the teachers' job performance. This supports Sergiovanni (1996) and the study of Ogbodo and Ekpo (2005). It also support Leithwood (1994) who linked principals' instructional leadership to improvement in teachers' classroom behaviors, attitudes and effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

From the above results, the following conclusions are made;

1. The principals in Asaba metropolis show high level of instructional leadership responsibility, by assisting their teachers in their classroom instructions.
 2. The principals promote the professional development of their teachers.
 3. Teachers' job performance positively relates to the principals' Instructional leadership roles.
- It is therefore recommended that principals should get a firm grip of their school curriculum in order to be able to offer useful advise/ assistance to the teachers, since one can only give what he/she has.
 - In order to have teachers who can impart the right knowledge and also meet the challenges of being teachers at every point in time, they must be engaged in several staff development programmes to constantly update their knowledge.
 - Principals should be given funding to enable them organize and execute in-service programmes for their teachers.

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