

Leading Meetings and Building a Trust Climate: An Assessment of Secondary School Principals in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The study examines the contribution of teachers, students and parents in the assessment of principals leading of meetings and building a trust climate. A twenty-one (21) items questionnaire was administered to 3600 respondents used in this study. Two research questions were raised and answered using percentages; two hypotheses were formulated and tested using ANOVA at 0.05 level of significant. The study revealed that principals in Nigeria are effective in leading meetings by approach task in a systematic and orderly fashion creating a prevalence of the spirit of co-operation and encouragement of participants to listen objectively to other's ideas and comments. Principals also build trust climate through the encouragement of teachers, students and parents to express feelings, doubts, concerns and handled disagreement and criticism constructively. There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of teachers, student and parents in the assessment of principals leading of meetings and building of a trust climate in secondary schools in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Educational supervision is a major task of secondary school principals. The joint task of the principal and his teachers, with emphasis on positive utilization of available human and materials resources for the achievement of school objectives. One of the techniques of supervision in schools is staff meeting, where issues affecting staff and students are identified, discussed and solutions provided. This involves the process of directing and influencing the task-related activities of staff, and students (Stoner et al., 1999: 470). For leadership objective to be achieved in a meeting, the principals must create an atmosphere for effective discussions. According to D'Souza (1995: 262) effective discussion leaders have skill in; understanding the patterns of group thinking, suggest appropriate patterns to follows, recognize targets and bring the group back on track. They encourage open-minded consideration by participants, have a sufficient grasp of the subject to ask stimulating questions effective discussion leaders respect members and are sensitive to people.

Principals are faced with situations in which effective and efficient school management requires new and improved skills, knowledge and attitude to cope with a wide range of new demands and changes. Some of the wide-range of demands and challenges principals face are: establishing a culture of teaching and learning;

improving and maintaining high standards of education, working more closely with parents, coping with multicultural school populations; managing change and conflict; and ensuring more accountability to the community they serve. (Raj and Bennie, 2004: 3). These demands of the principals could be achieved through effective leading of meetings, which could result into actions or behaviour that cause a change in attitude of staff, students and parent; that is a trust climate. Attention will also be given to factors, which may help improve group structure and group cohesiveness, and help overcome inter-group conflict in the school (Laurie, 1996: 204; Oghuvbu, 2003).

Problems Statement

The continuous existence of indiscipline among students and teachers, increase in students' dropout from schools, youth restiveness in Nigeria call for great concern. The two major groups involved in the positive upbringing of the secondary school students, pass the blame on each other. Parents blame the teachers and principals, and the school staff in turn blame parents. Some principals blame teachers for students' poor academic performance, while teachers pass the causes of students' poor performance on principals' ineffective administration.

The commonly used means of direct oral

communication between Principals, teachers and parents is meetings. Ideally, issues affecting school management should be discussed during Parent Teachers Association meetings. Also, curriculum matters, teachers and students cases should be discussed during staff meetings. The rotation of who is responsible for poor moral and academic ability of students among principals, teachers and parent therefore is of concern to the researcher. Does it mean that principals do not effectively lead meetings to achieve the objectives of every sitting? Is there no trust climate in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria?

The Purpose and Significant of the Study

In view of the problems formulated above, the purpose of this study was to investigate; ways principals conduct meetings with staff, students and parent. How principals build a trust climate in schools through effective leading of meetings. The result of this study will revealed the level of competencies of principals to manage school through leading of meetings and devise strategies to train and develop principals in respect of the effective management of schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered.

1. What is the general assessment of secondary school principals' leading of meetings by teachers, students and parents in Nigeria?
2. In what ways do principals build a trust climate in secondary schools in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean Perception scores of teachers, students and parents Assessment of secondary school principals leading of Meetings in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of teachers, students and parents on ways principals build a trust climate in secondary schools in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 3600 respondents was drawn

using the stratified and cluster sampling techniques. Six States, one from each of the six geo-political zones that made-up the thirty-six States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Six hundred secondary schools were used in this study. The sample was made-up of 200 male, 200 female each for rural, semi-urban and urban students, teachers and parents. That is 1200 rural, 1200 semi-urban and 1200 urban respondents. 600 respondents from each State with equal number of male and female, (i.e. 3600 respondents, made up of 1200 parents, 1200 teachers, 1200 students). Only senior secondary school students, teachers and parent who have worked with particular principals for a minimum of four years were used for this study.

The instrument for data collection was a twenty-one (21) items questionnaire titled "Leading meetings and building a trust climate, patterned after four-likert scale. The design of the instrument was based on D'Souza (1995: 264-266) work on effective group meeting and building a trust climate". The instrument was first administered on 300 set of respondents made-up of 100 teachers, 100 students and 100 parents, within an interval of two weeks. The result of the test re-test reliability coefficient was 0.84. This was also a measure of internal consistency of the instrument. Hence the co-efficient of 0.84 is an indication of strong inter- items relationship and validity of the instrument. (Onocha and Okpala, 1995). Descriptive statistics grand percentage was used to identify students, teachers and parents perception on principals leading of meetings and building a trust climate in Nigeria secondary schools. The inferential statistics analysis of variance was used in the analysis of the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Collection of Data

Each subject was scored on the basis of his/her responses to the statement. Scoring was done in order of Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (DA) 2, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) 1.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the general assessment of secondary school principals' leading of meetings by teachers, students and parents in Nigeria?

Research Question Two

In what ways do principals build a trust climate in secondary schools?

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of teachers, students and parents, assessment of secondary school principals leading of meetings in Nigeria.

From table 3, f-calculated value is less than f-table value i.e. $0.02960 < 3.00$, results is not

significant at 0.05 probability level, accept null hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the mean perception score of teachers, students and parents assessment of secondary school principals leading of meetings in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of teachers, students and parents, on ways secondary school principals built a trust climate through meetings in Nigeria.

From table 4, calculated f value of 0.4405 is

Table 1: Teacher, students and parents assessment of principals leading of meetings.

S. No.	Items	Teachers Score / %	Students Score / %	Parents Score/ %	Total Score/ %
1.	Objectives of every meeting is made known and understood by every participants	346972.3	412986	407084.8	1166881
2.	Tasks are approached in a systematic and orderly fashion.	377578.6	405984.6	410585.5	1193983
3.	Deliberation is always in a comfortable, information atmosphere	366576.4	360075	397982.9	1124478
4.	Always encourage participants to treat one another with mutual respect	362275.5	370677.2	433390.3	1166181
5.	Creates a prevalence's of the spirit of co-operation	355674.1	430689.7	460095.8	1246287
6.	Allows constructive discussions to involve all participants	365876.2	377678.7	391681.6	1135079
7.	Encourages participants to listen objectively to other's ideas and comments	386280.5	441291.9	416886.8	1244286
8.	Does not allow one or few individuals to dominate	373177.7	381279.4	372677.6	1136979
9.	Encourages participants to freely express themselves.	397182.7	409485.3	435890.8	1242086
Total		3330977	3589483	3725586	10645882

Source: Computed form fieldwork.

Table 2: Ways principals build a trust climate in secondary schools.

S. No.	Items	Teachers Score / %	Students Score / %	Parents Score/ %	Total Score/ %
1.	Handle disagreement conflict and criticism constructively	364475.9	377679	408085	1150080
2.	Frequently make decisions by consensus	325167.7	352974	366076	1044073
3.	He is open and trusting	331669.1	381279	372078	1084875
4.	Encourages staff, parent and students to express feelings, doubts, and concerns. Discuss concerns as part of the situation	360075	405985	426089	1191983
5.	When something goes wrong, he looks for what happened, not who did it	364475.9	374178	426189	1164681
6.	He expresses his self doubts, concerns and feelings naturally	346972	331869	288060	966767
7.	He talks candidly about himself but not others	301163	313065	372078	986168
8.	He takes the brunt of criticisms of the school on himself	301163	352974	378179	1032172
9.	He lets subordinates know exactly asks for their opinion	340471	395382	378079	1113775
Total		3035070	3284776	3414279	9733975

Source: Computed form fieldwork.

Table 3: ANOVA – Summary of teachers, students and parents assessment of principals leading of meetings.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Square (SS)	Df.	Variance (MS)	F-Cal.	Fcri.	Decision
Among	6694	2	3347			
within	406738897.9	3597	113077.26	0.02960	3.00	Result not significant.
Total	406745591.9	3599	113016.28			accept Ho.

Source: Computed from fieldwork.

Table 4: ANOVA – summary of teachers, students and parents perception on ways principals build a trust climate.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Square (SS)	Df.	Variance (MS)	F-Cal.	Fcri.	Decision
Among	78484.33	2	39242.2	0.4405	3.00	Result not significant. accept Ho.
within	20430110.33	3597	89082.6			
Total	20508594.6	3599	89054.9			

Source: Computed from fieldwork.

less than f –table value of 3.00, results is not significant at 0.05 probability level. There is no significant difference between the mean perception score of teachers, students and parents on ways principals build a trust climate in secondary schools in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

Secondary school principals in Nigeria are effective in the leading of meetings by; approaching tasks in a systematic and orderly fashion, creating a prevalence of the spirit of co-operation, and encourages participants to listen objectively to other's ideas and comments as revealed in table 1. These findings are consistent with D'Souza (1995) Oghuvbu (2003). This could be responsible for effective communication between principals, teachers, students and parents and a high reduction of student's demonstration in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Encouragement of teachers, students and parents to express feelings, doubts, concerns. Discuss concerns as part of the situation, identify causes of a problems and not who caused the problem, handle disagreement, conflict and criticism constructively open and trusting as possible about the reasons behind his directions are identified ways of building a trust climate by principals of secondary school in Nigeria, as revealed in table 2 of this study. Teachers, students and parent are not significantly difference from each other in the assessment of secondary school principals leading of meetings and ways to build a trust climate in Nigeria. These findings are consistent with Raj and Bennie (2004).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Secondary school principals are effective in leading of meetings and in the building of a trust climate, for efficient management of schools in Nigeria.

For more effective administrative performance of secondary school principals regular seminars and workshops should be organized for principals, teachers and Parents Teacher Association executives at local government level in Nigeria such seminar should aimed at finding solutions to student dropout and how to create an effective communication between school personnel and parent in Nigeria.

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