
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS: IMPERATIVE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the administrative effectiveness of headteachers leadership skills on primary school management and supervision in Anambra state, Nigerian. The study employed a descriptive survey research designed. The population of the study comprised 5,435 primary school headteachers and school managers in the six education zones in Anambra state. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 544 headteachers for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaire of 28 items validated by experts and subjected to reliability testing using cronbach Alpha in which 0.83 was obtained as the reliability index. Data collected were analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation and t-test at .05 significance. The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In view of the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that effective leadership skills can be enhanced by being proactive in discharge of duty and going for constant leadership training and retaining leadership programmes.

Keywords: Leadership, Supervisions, Management, Skills.

Introduction

Leadership is not just an essential part of the process of management, it is also an integral part of the social structure and culture of the organization. If a leader is to succeed in influencing peoples' behavior and action, he or she requires leadership skills which will help foster a supportive organization culture. Akpa and Udoh (2012) opined that leadership means organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal. It is a process in which a person aids

and supports others in accomplishment of common tasks. Leaders accomplishes this by applying their leadership skills and knowledge.

Ogunsaju (2012) defined leadership as a position of dominance and prestige accompanied by the ability to direct, motivate, and assist others in achieving a specific purpose. Educationist will agree that good school management hangs on the ability of the leader in exhibiting good leadership skills. Furthermore, the ability of school heads to identify and tackle most of the challenges in the school will lead to effective leadership in schools. Today, the concept of leadership is used when focusing on school governance, management and supervision.

Okojie (2009) asserted that good leadership is important in achieving development in Nigeria. He stressed that the steady decline in the education sector and the quality of education in Nigeria today is as a result of bad leadership, poor administration and management. He stressed that bad leaders when found in the school, kills the vision of the school. Consequently, in order to achieve a sustainable development and educational growth, leaders must cultivate in their followers that knowledge and skills necessary to reach more sustainable future. Leadership according to this study is the process of providing guided directions to others for the accomplishment of set goals.

An effective leader must possess good leadership skills such as commitment to a vision or mission, effective communication, accountability, being able to adapt to change and being adept to problem-solving. Leadership skills are tools, behavior and capabilities needed by a person in order to be successful at motivating and directing others. True leadership skills involve the ability to help people grow in their own abilities because most successful leaders are those that drive others to achieve their own success (Akpa& Udoh, 2012). You don't have to be born with leadership skills, they can be learned. Although some people believe leaders are born, it is a general opinion that strong leadership requires continuously learning, regularly accepting feedbacks and consistently practicing what you learn (Ekundayo, 2010). Whereas many leaders maybe so committed to a vision that they naturally find ways to pull others along with them, most of them cannot claim to have been born with those levels of leadership abilities rather they are learned over time.

The need for an effective educational supervision in today's Nigerian education system cannot be questioned. The steady decline in education is given more concern than satisfaction consequently, enlightened Nigerians have been asking series of intriguing questions as to the

effectiveness of education leaders in supervision and the type of leadership skills they possess (Ogunsaju, 2012). Supervision and critical oversight are indispensable tools in the hands of good educational leaders. Abama(2014) defined supervisions as the act of critically watching, directing and managing a programme. Similarly, Lomak (2013) opined that supervision involves, superintending, inspecting, checking, directing, managing, controlling, conducting and examining a programme. According to him supervision is an interaction and sharing of idea to get things accomplished to maintain instructional goals. In support of this opinion, Ekundayo (2010) perceives supervision as the nerve system of any organization and also an indispensable tool in the hands of an effective leader for effective school management. However, this study sees educational supervision as those stages of school administration aimed at achieving appropriate instructional expectations of an educational program.

School management consist of planning, organizing, coordinating, motivating and controlling school activities for the accomplishment of goals (Ogunsaju, 2012). Management involves the arrangement of available human and material resources for the achievement of goals. Management of school involves a broad outline of what the school intends to do and the method of achieving the intentions. It also involves developing a formal structure of carrying out duties within the organization in order to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the school. Furthermore, management involves the binding together, unifying and harmonizing all activities and efforts in order to encourage people to work for the success of a complex task within the organization (Nwune&Ezeugbor, 2015). School leaders should strive to manage their school effectively. They should monitor employee's performance and guide them towards the realization of set goals. It is the responsibilities of all school leaders to cooperatively strive for excellence in the performance of their administrative and supervising functions in order to achieve a good school management.

Statement of the Problem

Most often the primary school is seen as a dumping ground for all educational quacks and unqualified people especially in private schools. All caliber of people is employed to teach in this lower level of education, such as secondary school leavers, fresh graduates seeking for employment etc. The perception of many people is that the primary school deals with little children who do not know their left from their right and accept whatever they are told. But this

is not true because the primary school is the solid foundation upon which all other educational structures are laid.

Similarly, some headteachers, school managers and even teachers in the primary school do not possess managerial and administrative leadership skills needed. There have been reports from external school supervisors of the lapses observed from headteachers on their inability to fully control the school and staff members. This was evident in poor lesson preparation, poor teaching methods and absenteeism from school among others.

The teachers themselves complained of not being carried along in decision making and unavailability of instructional materials used in teaching. This perhaps may probably be that the school heads do not possess needed leadership skills themselves. Hence this study is geared towards determining the administrative effectiveness of headteachers leadership skills on school management and supervision of primary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The Study Specifically sought to:

1. Ascertain how important headteachers consider leadership skills as effective tool for good school management and supervision in Anambra State.
2. Examine how important headteachers consider availability of human and non-human resources for good school management and supervision in Anambra State.
3. Examine the level of importance male and female headteachers' gender have on good school management and supervision in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How important do headteachers consider leadership skills as effective tool for school management and supervision in Anambra State?
2. How important do headteachers consider availability of human and non-human resources for good school management and supervision in Anambra State?
3. What is the level of importance male and female headteachers gender have on good school management and supervision in Anambra State?

Research hypothesis (Ho)

The following hypothesis was formulated to give bearing to the study.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean responses on male and female headteachers' gender and good school management and supervision in Anambra State.

Method

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigerian with a population of 5,435 headteachers and school managers who were drawn from the six education zones in Anambra State. A sample of 544 headteachers and school managers were selected from the population using purposive sampling technique. Data for the study were collected through the use of questionnaire. A 4-point rating scale was used to score the respondents and the mean scores were interpreted thus 3.50 and above was Considered Very Important (CVI); 2.50 -3.49 was Considered Important (CI); 1.5-2.49 was Considered Not Important (CNI) and less than 1.5 was Considered Not Very Important (CNVI). The choices were also weighted 4,3,2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts and subjected to reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha in which 0.83 was obtained as the reliability index.

Five research assistants helped the researcher in administering and collecting the questionnaires. All the questionnaires distributed were collected and used for the analysis. Mean score rating and standard deviation was used to analyze the three research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The hypothesis will be accepted if the table value is greater than or equal to the calculated value, otherwise it will be rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: How important do headteachers consider leadership skills as effective tool for good school management and supervision in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean rating on level of importance headteachers considered leadership skills as effective tool for good school management and supervision in Anambra State.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision
1.	Guiding teachers to effectively plan classroom activities	3.02	1.04	CI
2.	Monitoring teachers to see that tasks are effectively carried out	2.98	0.92	CI
3.	Correcting teachers lesson notes thoroughly	2.77	1.03	CI
4.	Involving teachers in taking decisions	2.88	1.05	CI

5.	Organizing workshops for newly employed teachers on how to effectively plan their lessons	3.04	1.00	CI
6.	Making impromptu visit to the classroom to ensure that teachers are using the correct teaching method	2.92	1.02	CI
7.	Willing to take risks	2.72	1.10	CI
8.	Willingness to disclose the record of all financial matters in an honest and transparent manner if need be	3.53	1.08	CVI
9.	Being able to adapt to change	2.93	0.96	CI
10.	Being a role model by understanding and showing good example	2.94	1.03	CI
Grand Mean Score		2.43		

The data presented on table 1 showed that headteacher considered all items as being important and necessary for achieving an effective school management and supervision since their mean scores of 3.02, to 2.94 are all above the criterion mean of 2.50. However, one item had a mean score of 3.53 and is considered as very important (CVI) tool in the hand of the headteachers because it helps to boost the trust and support of the staff as well as promotes the integrity and credibility of the headteachers.

Research Questions 2: How important do headteachers consider availability of human and non-human resources for good school management and supervision in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean ratings on level of importance headteachers considered availability of human and non-human resources for effective management and supervision of schools in Anambra State.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Decision
11.	Availability of well knowledgeable experienced and qualified teaching staff	3.01	1.07	CI
12.	Availability of staff who have passion for the teaching profession	3.20	0.79	CI
13.	Availability of expert teachers in various subject areas in the school	3.27	0.74	CI
14.	Providing materials and meeting spiritual needs of staff	2.94	1.03	CI
15.	Availability of instructional materials for the teacher	3.31	0.91	CI
16.	Adequacy of physical facilities for staff and students	3.42	1.12	CI
17.	Adequacy of existing facilities and provision for future expansion	2.80	0.99	CI

18.	Adequate fund to handle administrative expenses in the school	3.46	0.68	CI
19.	Adequate planning of time-table in the school	2.97	0.96	CI
20.	Community participation in school project	2.88	0.86	CI
Grand Mean Score		3.14		

The data presented on table 2 show that headteachers considered all the items ranging from 2.86 to 3.46 as being important for effective school management and supervision. This is because the mean scores obtained are all above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 3: What is the level of importance male and female headteachers gender has on good school management and supervision in Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean ratings of level of importance male and female headteachers have on good school management and supervision in Anambra State.

S/N	Item Description	Male headteacher No = 244			Female headteacher No = 300		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
21.	Trying new ideas or introducing new plan of work	2.47	1.31	CNI	2.46	1.25	CNI
22.	Handling staff welfare and promotion	2.18	1.24	CNI	2.12	1.20	CNI
23.	Being friendly and approachable	2.51	1.02	CI	2.36	0.90	CNI
24.	Spending quality time in the office to attend to office work	2.95	0.81	CI	2.78	1.01	CI
25.	Adding aesthetic value to the surroundings of the school	3.15	0.85	CI	3.24	0.85	CI
26.	Professional qualification possessed by the headteachers	1.72	0.92	CNI	1.74	0.96	CNI
27.	Possession of leadership skills	2.49	0.91	CI	2.54	0.75	CNI
28.	In Supervising of teachers work	2.30	1.31	CNI	2.30	1.27	CNI
Grand Mean Score		2.47	1.05		2.44	1.02	

From the data presented on table 3, the grand mean score of the male and female respondents of 2.47 and 2.44 respectively are both less than the criterion mean of 2.50 showing that most of the items are not gender sensitive in school management and supervision.

Table 4: The t-test difference on the mean responses on effects of headteachers gender and good school management and supervision in Anambra State. N = 544

Source of Variation	N	X	SD	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male Headteachers	244	2.47	1.05	0.34	1.96	NS
Female Headteachers	300	2.44	1.02			

Since the calculated t-value of 0.34 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96, as shown by the result in table 4, the null hypothesis was retained. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses on male and female headteachers gender and good school management and supervision in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

From the foregoing, it is clear that headteachers in Anambra State primary schools considered leadership skills as being important for effective school management and supervision. Ekundayo (2010) opined that a leader must be responsible and answerable to the conduct of entire organization and must possess good leadership skills in order to achieve administrative effectiveness.

The findings of this study showed that when headteachers carry out their administrative and managerial responsibilities such as making sure that lessons are well planned, monitoring teachers, organizing workshops for newly employed staff and for other staff members, visiting the classrooms unexpectedly to make sure that teachers are doing their job and involving teachers in decision making especially as it relates to their class, then the process of management and supervision of instructions becomes much more easier for the headteachers. This finding is in line with Ogunsaju (2012) who posited that the success of any school leader is dependent on internal supervision of instruction and making sure that set goals are achievable and that the leaders are accountable and transparent as much as possible in all financial matters.

The findings also revealed that availability of human and non-human resources will go a long way in assisting the headteachers in Anambra state to carry out their administrative and

supervisory functions with ease. The headteachers in their response considered important the issue of making provision for future expansion. The dream of any organization is to grow and when this growth occurs and there is no provision for expansion, it makes management difficult. No matter how laudable education programs are, unavailability of qualified teaching staff, instructional materials, physical facilities and poor planning would lead to poor quality education which ineffect undermines capacity building and sustainable development in educational system.

This study further revealed that Headteachers do not consider gender as being significant to effective school management and supervision. The result however revealed that addition of aesthetic value in terms of beautification of internal and external surroundings of the school could be gender sensitive as female headteachers tend to give more attention to the aesthetic aspects of the school than their male counterparts. Also, in the area of spending more hours of uninterrupted work at the office, the male seems to have an edge over the female headteachers who tend to be crippled by domestic responsibilities. However, for the overall success of any management and supervisory functions, gender is not seen as a significant factor. The head teachers however observed that what is significant is the skills possessed by the headteachers in handling and managing their schools. This finding is an agreement with the view of Akpa and Udo (2012) who stated that most successful leaders are leaders who possess good leadership skills needed to drive others to achieve their own success.

Conclusion

As the wind of change blows through Nigeria, our educational leaders in this 21st century must wake up and begin to address this problem of educational ineffectiveness; low standards of quality output and poor school management and supervision. Nigerian education leaders must change their perspective about leadership, they need to be proactive and clarify their leadership vision and skills which is embedded in their leadership style. The thrust of this paper therefore is to show the relevance of leadership skills to effective school management and supervision in Anambra State, Nigeria. Effective leaders need to showcase leadership skills such as: commitment, integrity, role modeling, effective communication and accountability. They must respond speedily to this dynamic nature of school management and supervision of educational instruction for sustainable development of education.

Recommendations:

Based on all that have been discussed, the following recommendation have been proffered for building up effective leadership skills as way of enhancing good school management and supervision in Nigeria.

1. Find great mentors who might be people you know or work with, that are followed. They may or may not have a title but they always have people who are motivated to willingly follow them.
2. Take time to share your vision, your mission and your goals with your team this will help you determine a clear path to follow.
3. Build strong relationship with your team and appreciate their contributions.
4. Recognize individual differences treat each person accordingly.
5. Constant leadership training and retraining programs should be designed in order to boost efficiency in the management of school system.
6. Be proactive in discharge of duty and maintain a positive attitude by looking at the bright side of life, this will magically attract others to follow.
7. Set definitive goals and follow concrete action plan.
8. Best leaders walk the walk and talk the talk, so work on modeling the qualities that you would like to see in your followers.
9. Learn from your mistakes, the best leaders are the best learners.

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