

## THE PLACE OF LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION: SECONDARY SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

MR T. OKE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF JOS

### ABSTRACT

*The significance of education in producing effective citizenry through the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence provided by competent educational administrators can not be over emphasized. To achieve the educational goals i.e. the social and economic development of the individual in the society, educational institutions must be well managed through appropriate leadership behaviour and decision making at all time. In the light of this, the paper discussed concept of leadership in Educational Administration, theories of leadership, principals leadership styles, principals Leadership qualities, principals leadership responsibilities/role and principals leadership problems with the aims of profound means to ensure secondary school administrative leadership effectiveness.*

### INTRODUCTION

The secondary school, which is one of the educational enterprises, requires proper and adequate administrative leadership to harness all the school activities which stem from school policies; programmes, adequate facilities and personnel resources for success of the school. The principal who is the school chief administrative officer is required to display a high sense of responsibility in the discharge of his duties since his effectiveness is measured by the achievement of the educational goals and objectives attained. He has the task of creating a productive individual whose output is more than the resources put into it through the efforts of the teachers.

Recent issues in some of educational institutions especially in secondary schools in respect of poor academic performances, indiscipline, disrespect to the constituted authorities, moral decadence and other social vices among staff and students call for concern and pose challenges to school administration. Thus, the need for competent and effective leadership in secondary schools.

### THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Leader, according to Awoyele in Olowoye and Alani (2000, P. 106), "is someone who motivates organizational vision and mobilizes action towards goal achievements". In the context of the above, leadership can be defined as the motivation of the organizational vision and mobilization of the subordinates actions towards goals achievement.

Aderounmu and Aina in Olowoye and Alani (2000, P. 106), defined leadership as "a force that can initiate action among people, guide activity in a given direction, maintain such activities and unify efforts towards common goals".

Leadership in school administration is the act of influencing staff (teachers) in a particular situation and willingly work toward the achievement of the school set goals. It must be noted that leadership effectiveness in secondary school is dependent upon the conducive environment where mutual relationship, cooperative work and understanding between the school leaders and the subordinates exist. Thus, central to leadership are the interaction between the leaders and the led, and the organization goal in focus.

### **THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP**

The school is a formal organization set up for the advancement of the society; it possesses formal established structures with network of relationship and role for the purpose of change and development. Therefore, it is possible to apply organizational leadership theories to the secondary school administration. Some of the leadership theories that are relevant and useful to achieve administrative leadership effectiveness in secondary schools are examined as follows.

#### **The Trait Theory**

This theory attempts to identify those characteristics that distinguish leaders from non-leaders. It is stated that, these traits are not acquired but are inherent personal qualities. The theory believes that leaders are born and not made, and that leadership is a function of these inborn traits.

Stogdill (in Tolu, 2006), found consistent evidence that leaders were higher than other members of their work group on such characteristics as intelligence, dependability, activity participating, and socio-economic status. He also found that leaders score higher in measure of sociability, initiative, self-confidence, adaptability, cooperativeness, verbal skill and task knowledge. That people do not become leader simply because they possess a certain combination of trait, but the appropriateness of the trait to the situation in which the leader operates.

Leadership effectiveness depends on the interaction between the leaders trait and the environmental factors. Therefore, leaders should be aware that the pattern of leadership trait is different from situation to situation, thus no single trait was enough for leadership.

#### **The Situational Theory**

This theory was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1966), as a result of the limited value of the trait theory. This study believed that different types of situation demands different types of leadership behaviour, the focus is on the situation in which the leadership is exercised and not upon the leaders, one successful leader in a circumstance may be a failure under another situation.

The implication of this theory on the school administration is that principal should understand that they must be flexible in their leadership behaviour, there should be time when the task must be emphasized and at other times the people's consideration and interpersonal-relationship must assume priority. Principals should be wise in his adoption of leadership styles in order to enhance Teachers productivity and efficiency in school.

### **Contingency Theory**

Fiedler (1967) approached leadership behaviour from a perspective that any leadership style can be effective depending on the three situational variables, namely:

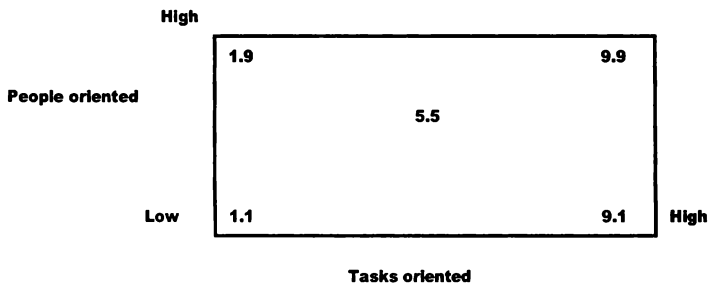
- The relationship between the leader and the led.
- The nature of the task to be accomplished.
- Position and power of the leader.

He condemned the notion of "one best way" to lead in all situation and suggested that the best favourable situation for a leader is where there is a mutual trust and relationship between the leader and the followers, the task is highly structured and the leader has substantial authority to take decisive actions.

In the light of the above, secondary school leaders (principals) should create a favourable environment for cooperative work, free communication, and participative decision making process. He should learn to assign responsibilities and ensure subordinates freedom to perform. This would enhance productivity in school.

### **The Managerial Grid**

Managerial Grid approach was developed by Blake and Mouton (1964). According to this theory, two dimensions of leadership behaviour were identified namely, the "task oriented" and "people oriented" leadership. He illustrates it by the use of horizontal and vertical axis, each range from scale 1 to 9 such that 1 represent the lowest involvement and 9 represent the highest on the scale. This is shown as below.



The five leadership styles identified were represented by the coordinates 1.1, 1.9, 9.1, 9.9., 5.5.

- 1.1 The leader has a very low high concern for people and has low concern for production.
- 1.9 The leader here has high concern for people and low concern for production/task, this is people oriented leadership style.

- 9.1 The leader in this category has a high dedication to work and efficient production but very low concern for people. This is task oriented leaders.
- 9.9 Leaders here have high concern for both the task and people as well as conducive working environment enhance managerial efficiency, this is an optimum productive leader
- 5.5 This leader has a balanced consideration for both the people and production at the average level. This is a transactional leader. However, for the effectiveness and efficiency of the resources the leader is advised to operate at the optimum coordinates close to 9.9.

**Job-Centred (initiating structures).** This structured leadership style is task oriented, with rigid work standard, He assigns task and give instructions on how it should be done. This leader closely supervises workers to ensure the accomplishment of the goal.

**Employee-centred (consideration for employee).** This category of leader emphasized people oriented, it allows a reasonable level of leader-workers relationship, delegates responsibility, and allows participative decision making. The implication of this theory in school management is that, principal should learn to integrate the two dimensions (Job-centered and people centered) in his leadership style so that both staff needs and school goals would be achieved.

## PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leadership styles can be classified based on the philosophy, beliefs, behaviour and the techniques of leading.

Saddler in, Abama (2006), identified four types of leadership styles in an organization. In the tells styles the leader that is task oriented, gives instruction to subordinate what and how to do the job.

The sells styles leader makes decisions and forwards the decision to the subordinate with persuasion. The consults styles leader gets people together and seeks for their suggestions before taking decision. The joins styles leader delegates authority to group for implementation and jointly per take in decision making process.

Accordingly, the following prominent and common administrative styles generally adopted in most organization would be discussed in detail.

**Authoritarian/Autocratic Leadership Styles.** Autocratic leaders keep the decision making authority and control in their own hands and assume full responsibility for all actions. The leader structures the activities, assigns duties and gives instruction on how to do it, policies and methods as well as tasks are also imposed on the workers. Subordinate are not allowed to participate in the decision making process. This is a tells style.

**Democratic Leadership Style.** This occurs when a leader allows a representative and participative approach in the decision making and running of the organization. He encourage cooperative and team work, the style gives freedom for staff to exercise leadership ability and

recognizes the potentials of the staff, it allows for criticism and discussion. In this style, productivity is ensured as well as staff growth, maturity and job security.

**Pseudo-Democratic Leadership styles.** This leader pretends and presents himself to be democratic when actually he is an autocratic leader, he uses diplomacy to sell his ideas to his subordinates. He actually asks for suggestions and options from the subordinates but never utilize them. He delegates responsibilities quite alright, but grants the subordinates very limited powers, authority and resources to carry out the assignment effectively. It is a style based on pretence.

**Laissez- faire Leadership style.** In this category of leadership style, the leader is just a figurehead and does not give any direction. He acts principally as a liaison officer between the group and the outside elements and supplies necessary materials as well as information to group members. He does not attempt to regulate, intervene or control the decision making process, he is passive.

**Transactional Leadership style.** This is the leader that maintain average consideration for both people and production. He maintains a reasonable level of relationship with people and there is satisfactory performance. In some situation he is people- oriented leader and other circumstance a task- oriented leadership behaviour.

The implications of the leadership styles for school principals are summarized as follows.

- ❖ No single leadership style is ultimate to all situation.
- ❖ There are situational factors that determine the leadership effectiveness.
- ❖ The nature of leadership behaviour depends on the situation in which the leader operates.
- ❖ Principals should strive to encourage and create atmosphere for subordinates growth.
- ❖ School leader should always integrate the two dimensions, “concern for job” and “concern for people” into their style of leadership.
- ❖ Lastly, leaders should be flexible in their choice of leadership approach.

### **PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES/ FUNCTIONS**

Principalship is given to any teacher found to possess some administrative abilities, a teacher with academic qualification and the right type of personality could be appointed the administrative head in addition to full-time teaching duty. School head performs the management functions of planning, organization, staffing, directing, coordinating, controlling, reporting as well as budgeting just like other organizational managers.

However, the specific responsibilities of the secondary school leader as grouped into five categories. According to Udoh and Akpa (2004) these categories are:

- a. Instructional Programmes. School head makes sure his teachers have current syllabus and break it down to scheme of work, and moves round to see that actual teaching took place. He continuously supervise and evaluate teachers.
- b. Staff Welfare Function. Principal is saddled with the task of staff welfare. He assigns duties, supervises them, improves and encourages growth of members. He recommends

- promotion, create a forum where teachers can relate freely, recreational centers and other welfare facilities.
- c. **Financial and Physical Resources Management.** Secondary school heads have the task of securing revenue for the school, apart from government grants. These may come from school farms, societies like drama, cultural, club, and donations, he also ensure prudent spending of the money.
  - d. **Student Personnel Welfare.** School leader provides adequate physical facilities in school and other services like, guidance and counseling services, medical and nursing services, special education for physically, emotionally and mentally handicapped and gifted. He also provides recreational facilities for the students in school.
  - e. **School-Community Relation.** Principal encourages school-community relationship. He performs the following public relation functions:
    - Inform the public about the school.
    - Establish confidence in the school.
    - Solicit for community support in a mutual relation.
    - Integrate the home, school and the community in improving educational opportunities for all children.

Summarily, principal leadership roles are: preparation of annual budgets, liaison between school and educational agencies, coordinating P.T.A. activities, initiating innovation, supervision of school functionaries, organizing school curriculum and contents, recommend text books, and other equipments, maintain disciplines and reports school deficiencies in terms of infrastructures and personnel to the appropriate authorities concern.

### **PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES**

In school, the degree of leadership effectiveness depends upon the personal qualities such leader possess. Some of these leadership qualities are listed as follows.

1. A good leader must be highly intelligent.
2. A good leader must be hard working and time conscious.
3. An effective leader must be responsible, kind and approachable.
4. Leader must be creative, focused and knowledgeable about the task to perform.
5. A leader must be imaginative and enthusiastic.
6. A leader must be physically, and mentally balance.
7. He must be innovative, dynamic, resourceful and courageous.
8. A good leader must be honest, straight forward and God fearing.
9. He must be well disciplined and diligent.
10. He must be decisive and ready to take blame for his action.
11. He must have good human relation and good communication skill.

Qualities of school leader are enormous, no single leader is expected to acquire all but the possession of reasonable number of them makes a leader effective.

## **PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS**

There are many factors hindering the effective leadership in schools, including,

- Inadequate statistics for proper planning in school.
- The complex nature of staff behaviour which is unpredictable.
- Workers resistance to change and innovation.
- High enrolment rate and inadequate facilities.
- Inability of the school leader to apply the behavioural theory into a real life situation.
- Economic and political instability which adversely affect the school plan.
- Socio-cultural and religious crisis.
- Natural disaster and poor school plant maintenance culture.
- Inadequate finance, human and material resources.
- Indiscipline in schools include cultism, exam malpractices, vandalism, drug abuse, raping etc.

These seriously call for immediate attentions of the stakeholders in education if the school leadership effectiveness and efficiency is to be the watch word of school administration and the aims and objective of secondary education is to be achieved.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is of paramount important that the working conditions be improved and adequate supply of needed material be made to all schools such that the work itself would not be boring.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is essential to conclude that, those school principals and other school administrators who recognize the changing leadership situation in Nigerian schools and colleges and adjust their leadership styles accordingly tend to be more effective in their administrative roles. This effectiveness will then have positive reflections on the staff productivity in the schools teaching and learning programs. This at large would benefit the Nation.

## **REFERENCES**

- Adesina, S. (1981). *Some Aspects of school management*. Ibadan: Board publications.
- Ajayi, I.A. and Ayodele, J.B. (2002), *Fundamentals of Educational Management*: Ado Ekiti Green line publisher.
- Akinlua, A.A. and Kolawole, E.B. (2002). *Topical Issues in Research and Education*. Ado Ekiti: Yemi print & publishing services.
- Chandan J.S. (2003). *Management Theory & Practice*. New delhi, Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD.
- Halphin, A.W. (1966). *Theory and Research in Education*. Collier Macmillan.
- Nwankwo, J.I. (1981). *Educational Administration, Theory and Practice*. India: Vikas publishing House PVT LTD.

Oke T.I. (2006). *Principals Leadership style and Teachers productivity* Unpublished, "Master Degree Thesis:" University of Jos.

Olowoye B. and Alani R.A. (2000). *Administration, Supervision and planning for Education Managers*. Ijebu Ode; Lucky Odoni. (Nig) Enterprise

Udoh, S.U. and Akpa, G.O (2004). *Educational Administration in Nigeria. Theory & practice*. Jos: Haga Concept Limited.