EMPOWERING SCHOOL HEADS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

EIMUHI JUSTINA ONOJERENA Ph.D,

AMBROSE ALLI UNIVESITY, NIGERIA.

Abstract:

The focus of this paper is on the place of school heads in effective management of school climate in Edo state, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and ten (110) respondents (school Heads) randomly drawn participated in the study. Two (2) research question and two (2) null hypotheses were investigated to examine some of the factors that dreamtime effective management of school climate. This study employed a survey technique. The Chi-Square (X^2) values of the variable were 68.7 and 46.4 respectively compared to the critical value of 7.84. Thus, the results were found to be statistically significant. Some of the findings were that a high proportion of school heads were not so much empowered for the challenges of school climate in the environment especially in the issue of finance. Therefore, on implication of this study is that financial provisions should be made to school heads to attend workshops and conference where there will be interactions with others.

Key words: Empowering, School Heads, Effective Management and School Climate.

Introduction

The organizations are complex system comprising of many sub-systems which must work together in harmony and synchronization and the fact that there are numbers of variables that affect sub-systems and the sub-systems themselves interacting with each other to make it more complicated. In addition to the complication of the dynamic nature of the environment in which the organization exists and the rapidly changing values of the variables affecting the system. Accordingly, management must be prepared to achieve a degree of organizational environment to accommodate this change in the conditions (Tysvold and sun, 2006).

It is important for us to first paraphrase the meaning of the major key words that make up the question. Peretomode (1996) asserted that organizational climate is a set of properties of the work environment perceived by individuals, who work there and

which serve as a major force in influencing their job behavior. The organizational environment, operational climate or school climate is the entire internal environment of the organization; it includes any physical characteristics and primarily the way, its members perceive the needs, desire and operation of the people who form the environment. Each organization will be different in the climate as well as in the direction style. The directional style will depend upon the philosophy, culture and outlook of the leader. Similarly, the organizational climate is also determined by its culture, its tradition and history of organization. There are a number of categories that defines the climate of many organizations.

According to Harrison, there are four broad categories, these are:

1. Power-oriented climate

2. Role-oriented climate

3. Task-oriented climate

4. People-oriented climate.

From the definition, a number of important points about organizational or school climate need to be outlined. This organization climate is:

1.   A question of perception by members of an organization or school (and sometimes by visitors).

2.   It is a set of unique and fairly enduring characteristics of a school.

3.   These characteristics distinguish one school from another and performance in the school.

4.   Climate influences the employees (and students) work behavior and performance in the school.

5.   Climate is a product of formal and informal group characteristics and other factors in the work environment a product of the interaction between students, teachers and administrators in a school.

6.   School climate is subjective because it is based on perception.

The Importance of School Climate

The concept of school climate is important to managers or educational administrators for a number of reasons:

1.   There is evidence that some school climates are likely to yield better results for specific tasks than others.

2.   There is evidence those administrators can influence the climates of their organizations or more specifically their own units within the organization.

3. There is evidence those administrators who have positive perceptions of organizational climate have greater acceptance of self and others than those with less positive perception of organizational climate.

4. Some research findings suggest that improving an organizations climate can be a useful strategy to improve in group relations within the organization.

5. There is evidence that an administrator will have a difficult time exercising his educational leadership roles without a sufficient supportive climate within which to work.

6. Finally, there is evidence that the organizational climate experienced by a particular work group or by a particular hierarchical level in an organization is determined primarily by the leadership behavior of the echelons above it (Peretomode, 1996).

There are several factors that can influence the climate of an organization such as the school size and structure of the organization. An organization characterized by mechanistic structures, i.e., one organized into strictly divided functional developments, with clear ranking of employees by rigidly, traditionalism and an emphasis by the book procedure. Conversely, less mechanistic structures may result in flexible, innovative and informal climates.

1. The leadership pattern or style is employed by the educational administrator, i.e., managers or educational administrators' attitude and approaches to their subordinates.

2. The communication networks used to convey messages.

3. The goals or nature\complexity of the organization. We will expect, naturally, to find a different climate in a school from that in a funeral home or disco studio.

4. Motivation. Do employees of the organizational work hard for both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and are they encouraged to do so by the organization. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transforms those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use these assets. (Ave, 2007).

Empowerment is the process of increasing the assets and capabilities of individuals or groups to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into action. This in turn enables them to better influence the course of their ties and the decisions which affect them. Since empowerment is giving an individual the opportunity to grow and use his\her experience to contribute to decision-making process. Therefore, empowerment is the process in which one discovers interval strength and the ability to influence change within one organization.

Empowerment is not granted overnight. This involves person's identity; change asserted that:

1. That individual need to develop a self and a sense of his\her relationship with each others.

2. Active participation in the process of considering change and enacting change need to take place.

3. An effective leader must provide the opportunity to develop and have critical thinking skills so that the individual can have tools needed to resolve problems and conflicts.

In essence, empowerment speaks of self-determined change. It implies bringing together the supply and demand sides of development changing their own attributes. Empowerment is a cross-cutting issues, it ranges from education and health care governance and economic policy. Activities which seek to empower poor people are expected to increase development opportunities, enhance development outcomes and improve quality of life. Decentralizing management of schools makes public schools work. Empowering schools operate on the belief that it takes a united effort to meet achievement standards and preparation. Conferring professional autonomy to teachers will enhance the attractiveness of the profession as a career choice and will improve the quality of the classroom teaching practice. Teachers who work together in a meaningful and purposeful ways have been found to be more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work. In a typical scenario in Edo State, Nigeria. For example, Education enterprise has been conceived mainly as a social service that does not require serious economic consideration. Indeed it was not regarded as profitable investment! Today, things have changed. Education is no longer a domesticated and parasitic organization. Ecological factors; internal education production process and situational dynamics have made economics of education imperative. Hence, its popularization in contemporary educational management. Any attempt to neglect economic view of education is to create unmanageable problems for the sector at very high costs on the long run. (Nwadiami 2010).

The optimism and faith in education as the magic wand for the solution to all problems that plague mankind are responsible for the pattern and level of investment in education. To invest in education requires huge sums of money, for nothing is cheap or free except ignorance. Somebody has to pay. How to finance education has remained a major problem in the realm of educational management.

Traditionally, governments (federal, state, local) particularly in developing countries and other – community; Parents Teachers Association (PTA), Alumni Association, Donations, Endowments, Philanthropist, Industrial and Company Tax Foreign Aids, etc have contributed immensely but in different proportions in supporting the management of education. Are the monies enough? No amount of money seems to be enough for the education sector!

More funds are required for both capital and recurrent inputs and their processing in education business. How to generate fiscal resources has aroused more than ever before economic interest even though government tends to politicize education by making it free in Nigeria and possibly elsewhere.

Wastage of resources has become a recent vulture in educational organizations in developing countries. Loss of learning months because of strikes; examination failure rate has increase; repetition and dropping out are disturbing developments in the school setting. Fiscal, material and human resources are misallocated and misused. Manpower drainage is high. The level of wastage in the school system has continued to worry concerned citizens and those who work with learners. There are however, no concrete economic data to support this claim and hence appreciate the enormity of the financial loss. But preliminary studies on economics of wastage started which educational economics and planners believe would reveal the state of the dilemma. How to minimize wastage and optimize education sector resources are central questions in economic discourse in contemporary Nigeria. (Nwadiani, 2010).

The quality of the products of the education system is largely dependent on the quality of inputs, production function resources' dynamics among other variables. There is a public outcry about the declining quality of the products of our educational system. The poor quality is reflected in the very low productivity and job performance of school leavers in the word of work. Employers are shocked that productivity is not matched with the amount of certificate. A lot of them exhibit so much ignorance in their claimed field of study. Error rates are high, wastage low initiative and non-commitment are expressed features. It is like the school system is merely playing the function of certificate without real knowledge. The overall economic loss on the long run to society calls for economic concern. The question is why is quality low?

Research suggests that while decentralization may have occurred from the system to school level, it has not necessarily occurred within schools. Further, where decentralization may have occurred within schools it tended to be about administrative rather than education matters. This situation should be concern, especially given evidence teachers are attracted to, and stay in, the profession if they feel they belong and believe they are contributing to the success of their school and students

The role of Federal Policy should be to encourage and facilitate these liberating forces in private schools and not to impede them. The strategy of empowerment as, spelt out in the collection of essays, about social issues, aims to do that. Stuart and butler (1990) asserted that to empower institutional leader can be considered as how leaders will be able to energize the team and inspire individuals. Fazzi (2008) wrote about the effectiveness of motivation through hope, vision, meaning and purpose. Fazzi also cities Mckee, Boyatzis and Johnson for defining resonance as a collective energy that supports higher productions. Gersh (2006) also asserted how R. Greenleaf introduced the philosophy of servant leadership as a conscious choice to place others, needs, as the highest priority. According to Gersh, Greenleaf is of the opinion that leadership grows out of service that effective leadership is measured by the fact that leaders

service becomes more autonomous as they serve. In doing so, the effective leaders empower their leaders.

Carey and Ness (2001), defines professionalism as a display of attitude and behavior that embody traits that individuals in a discipline of study practice, hence an effective educational leader should personify professionalism and in doing so, he or she would inherently promote collaborative cooperation amongst team members. Team effort strengthens the group and unifies efforts towards the common goal. The servant leader also leads by example. In doing so, not only is the educator empowered, he or she can model behavior after the leader whose action match his or her words.

A leader is one who is able to get things done by enlisting the help of others e.g.

a. The ability to persuade others to work towards defined objective enthusiastically the human factors that keeps a group cohesive and motivated towards goals.

b. Interpersonal influence directed through the communication process towards the attainment of goals.

c. Initiation of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing or changing organizational goals.

d. Influencing the actions, behavior, belief and goals of one person by another with the co-operation of the one being influenced.

An institutional leader has many functions; to be knowledgeable about the day-to-day activities and programmes of the school and its environment than any other person in the institution. He has to deal with teaching and non-teaching staff, students and members of the public. He must be concerned with the moral and spiritual tone of the school and maintenance of discipline. He\she must be an effective organizer, co-ordinate, supervisor, planner, innovator, director, controller of various activities. (Peretomode, 1996)

Developing effective management of skills to deal with specific challenges and problems of each organization is the urgent needs of many business and organization the global competitive environment, rapid challenges of technology and environment. The new tendency of training and development of successful organization over the world today is developing effective skills in dealing with specific challenge of their own mission and objectives in the new organization. Effective management skill is to help people and the organization in improving their own effectiveness and efficiency. Globalization and rapidly developing technology shows we are in a period of intensive competition. Hence proper management is vital in this complex environment and the quality of the leader and effective management styles can determine the culture of the organization; the productivity of its staff and ultimately success or failure. A leader should the ability to direct, supervise, encourage, inspire and coordinate and in doing so facilitate action and guide change. Leaders develop their own leadership qualities and those of others. Management utilizes planning organizational and communication skills. These skills are important in leadership also, but even more so are determination, compassion and sensitivity.

A safe, orderly school climate is one of the several characteristics of schools that consistently show good achievement gains. Individual experiences of school climate are shaped by perceptions of safety, teaching and learning, inter personal relationships (including students' and among adults), and the institutional environment. When considering climate, the evidence of close relationship between academic and behavioral difficulties calls for integrating intervention efforts through a single system that can monitor progress in both areas and respond accordingly with intervention as needed as well, as providing professional development and peer coaching to support teachers and administrators as they manage school and classroom climate and promote positive behavior. Positive relationships and effective classroom management strategies are necessary to establish contexts that support the academic and behavioral competence of all students at all grade levels, including students with disabilities, and they can also promote student connectedness and reduce behavior problems, achievement gaps, dropout rates, and teacher attrition (Blum, McNeely and Rinehart, 2002: Kennelly and Monrad, 2007). Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) and other similar frame works of programs may provide a more consistent school climate by helping educators structure the environment and provide positive reinforcement. Schools using a social and emotional learning (SEL) framework explicitly teach SEL skills and foster an overall climate of inclusion, warmth, and respect which can prevent bullying and promote educational success (Ragozzino and catalysts used by leaders

as levers for change are related to improving school climate, a significantly reduce discipline referrals by altering class transition schedules; reduce truancy by locking super flours entrances and communicating to parents that the school day is protected instructional time, and improve the physical plants by cleaning up debris and painting of walls. Case study schools have improved school climate with a number of methods including: administrators increasing their visibility in the community and in building trust relationships; adopting a college bound focus; implementing approaches such as a proactive behavioral program, support for health lifestyles, and an emphasis on local industrial historical culture, increasing communication via partnership with faith organizations, requiring teachers to live with families improving the physical plants making the school unsafe, a consistent enforce discipline policy, implementing positive behavior supports, switching middle school students to self contained classroom, (citing stronger teacher-student relationship, increased safely, and decreased in time transaction); and requiring staff to emulate the actions and behavior they expect from their students (Brinsi, kowal, and hassel, 2008; Brinson, Rhim 2009).

This paper therefore suggests the on-going developments in societies and the provision of education as reflected in the roles, recruitment, development and development of schools leaders and how, as a result of these developments, the role of school leaders is changing. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that particular leadership practices can achieve these outcomes. It is concluded that school leaders remain of crucial importance for continued improvement of education. Given this

importance, the paper then focuses on school leader development and retention (empowerment or professional development, Huber and West, 2002). Within schools that are learning organizations evolve new types of relationship between students, teachers and leaders based around a reasonably common set of characteristics that include a trusting and collaborative climate, a shared and monitored mission, taking initiatives and risks, and ongoing, relevant professional development. The key relationships in the ways school leaders are empowered included factors such as teacher satisfaction, school effectiveness, improvement, capacity, building teacher leadership, distributive leadership, organizational learning and development. School leaders can be a major influence on these school-level factors as well as help buffer against the excesses of the mounting and sometimes contradictory external pressures. A skilled and well supported leadership team in schools can help foster a sense of ownership and purpose in the way that teachers approach their job. One of the most consistent findings from studies of effectiveness school leadership s that authority to lead need not be located in the person of the leader but can be dispersed within the school between and among people. There is a growing understanding that leadership is embedded in various organizational contexts within school communities, not centrally vested in a person or an office. The real challenge facing most schools is no longer how to improve but, more importantly, how to sustain improvement. Sustainability will depend upon the schools internal capacity to maintain and support developmental work and sustaining Improvement requires the leadership capability of the many rather than the few, (Bil, 2003).

Statement of Problem

Every organization has its environment internal & external environment. The performance of the leader as well as his or her followers depends very much on the climate of operation. The operational or organization climate could be opened or closed friendly. There is no doubt that when operational climate is favorable, the leaders performance will be enhanced. The organizational environmental, school climate or operational climate are determined by many complex factors. For a leader to efficiently and effectively manage his or her organization, he must be properly empowered to harness, adapt and manage the operational climate. Unfortunately, in the Nigerian educational system, it would appear that the secondary school leaders are not properly empowered to manage the school organization climate; for example there are problems of inadequate facilities, shortage of staff, too many students beyond the carrying capacity and insufficient funding of the schools. Consequently, there is often much uncertainty, instability and crisis's in the organization environment. It becomes necessary therefore to inquire into strategies for the empowerment of these school leaders in order to make them more effective in the management of the school climate. To guide this study therefore, the following research questions were raised;

Research Questions:

(1). Does empowerment of school heads result in effective management of school climate?

(2). Does any relationship exist between staff empowerment (development) and job effectiveness among secondary school head teachers in Edo state?

(3). Does any relationship exist in the mode of empowerment of leaders in public and private schools and school climate?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were formulated and tested at .05alpha level.

(1). Staff empowerment (development) will not have significant influence on job effectiveness among secondary school heads in Edo State, Nigeria.

(2). The mode of empowerment of leaders of public and private schools will not have significant influence on school climate.

Purpose:

The aim of this study is to examine the place of school heads in the effective management of school climate.

Significance:

(1). This study is significant as it addresses a better understanding of the effective management of school climate in relation to job efficiency in school organization through empowerment of school heads.

(2). It will also guide future policy makers and administrative heads in aspects which will help them to achieve organization objectives in good time as well as to promote moral and motivation of staff.

Methods

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used in the study. This design was chosen because it provides appropriate methodology for perception and opinion.

Population

The population of this study consists of three hundred and thirty Head teachers in Edo State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling technique by balloting was used in the study. This was used because; it gave equal opportunity to every member of the population to be selected. For this study, to get this sample, a random selection of 1/3 samples by replacement was drawn from the population 330 which yielded one hundred and ten (110) respondents that were used for the study.

Instrumentation

The twelve item questionnaire titled ''Empowering School Heads for Effective Management of School Climate in Edo State Nigeria''. (ESHEMSC) was used to measure empowering school heads in relation to effective school climate. A 4-point likert scale was used in measuring responses to the questionnaire. The empowerment of school heads characteristics included, job effectiveness and mode of empowerment of public and private schools. The instrument went through all the pre-test required and was found to have reasonable face and content validity. Reliability co-efficient was computed to be 0.68 using the split-half statistics. The index 0.70 was arrived at after it was corrected by the Spearman Brown Prohencency Formula.

Administration of the Instrument

The instrument titled ''Empowering School Heads for Effective Management of School Climate in Edo State Nigeria''. (ESHEMSC) was administered by the investigator to the principal (subjects) Head Teachers that were sampled. The administrations of the instrument were made possible by the help of three research assistants.

Analysis and synthesis of the data

The data collected were analyzed using Chi-Square (X^2) to test the hypotheses at .05 because it permits addressing research problems involving frequencies where the variables have been classified into two or more mutually exclusive categories.

Table 1: Chi-Square (X^2) Showing Influence of Job Effectiveness on School Climate.

Variables	N	x^2	S.D	Cal-x^2	Tab-x^2	Remark
School climate	108	3.1	1.1	68.7	7.62	Sig.
Job Effectiveness	108	4.6	1.0			

Significant: Df=3; P<0.05

In table 1: Chi-square(X^2) was used to determine the significant influence of empowerment for effectiveness as antidote to school climate. The X^2 value of 68.7 was found to be statistically significant as it is greater than the table-value of 7.62 at .05 levels of significant; with 3 as the degree of freedom. Thus, the hypothesis that staff empowerment will not have influence on job effectiveness in Edo State secondary schools in Nigeria were not accepted.

Table 2: Chi-Square (**x²**) Showing Influence of the Mode of Empowerment of Public and Private Schools.

Variables	N	x^2	S.D	Cal-x^2	Tab-x^2	Remark
School climate	108	3.1	1.1			
Mode of empowerment of public and private schools	108	4.6	1.0	46.4	7.62	Sig.

Significant: Df=3;P<0.05

Table 2: the data 2, showed that the Chi-square (x^2) of 46.4 was greater than the critical value of 7.62 as the computed x^2-value of 46.4> 7.62 at .05 level of significant with 3 as the degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that the mode of empowerment of public and private schools will not have influence on school climate in Edo State, Nigeria was not accepted.

Findings

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between staff empowerment (development) and job effectiveness. Reasons probably could be attributed to the fact that professional development brings about continued improvement of education. This study also revealed that leaders in the public schools, are more empowered than the leaders in private schools, reasons probably could be attributed to the fact that many private proprietors may not give enough room for leaders to operate, because of lack of autonomy; since school need maximum autonomy in order to guarantee academic and intellectual freedom and to ensure that educational creativity is not stifled by the strong hand of bureaucracy. Secondly, proprietors may want to consider profit-making issues, particularly when limited resource is considered rather than investing on leadership development or capacity building.

Discussion

This study has justified the submission of Stuart and Butler (1990) who asserted that Decentralizing managements of schools make public schools work. Because school heads feel valued and supported in their work, which enhance the   attractiveness of profession as a career and this choice will improve the quality of the classroom teaching practice. The results of this study are also in confirmation of Blum et al who asserted that skills acquired through empowerment foster an overall climate of inclusion, warmth, and respect which can prevent bully and promote educational success. The skills are used by leaders as levers for change which are related to improving school climate.

Conclusion

It was concluded from the study, that lack of empowerment brings about inefficiency. Hence, if knowledge is improved upon, it will bring about wholes tic development in school communities. Consequently, staff development school climate should be considered in the scheme of things in Edo State Secondary Schools in Nigeria; in

order to create room for job effectiveness and by logical extension, school management transformation. Based on this, recommendations were proffered:

Recommendations

1. Since capacity building is also as important as infrastructural development, it is therefore necessary for school heads to be encouraged to participate in conferences and workshops; since this allows for exchange of ideas; bearing in mind that through such training, participants also gain ideas for successful leadership. Therefore, school leaders should be supported morally, financially, materially, and otherwise.

2. The issue of collaboration or staff exchange should be encouraged which benefit institutions e.g. national and international conferences where techniques and strategies are acquired. Absence of these makes operational leadership difficult.

3. There should be stakeholders' freedom of operation for school heads. For instance, private proprietors should be given greater place in participation and decision-making. They should be allowed some measure of authority.

References

Ave, N. 2007. "Achieving Gender Equality and Women Empowerment". Wellington: New Zealand International Aim and Development Agency.

Bil Mulford, 2003. Approaches to School Governance and the Changing Role of School Leaders: Changing Roles and Impact on Teachers and School Effectiveness. *Leadership for Learning Research Group. Faculty of Education, University of Tanzania.*

Blun, McNeely and Rinehart 2002; Kennelly and Monrad, 2007. *Positive Behavior Intervention and Support.* Retrieved from (http.//www.pbis.org/).

Brinsi, Kowal and Hassel, 2008; Brinson, Rhim. 2009."Centre on Innovation and Improvement: *Establishing a Supportive School Climate and an Effective Approach to Discipline". Retrieved from http://www.cassel.org/standards/-learning. php.*

Carey, J.R, Ness K., 2001. "Erosion of Professional Behaviors in Physical Therapist Students". *Physical Therapy Education, 15(3), pp 20-24.*

Fazzi, C., 2008. "Effective Leadership Can be Learned. *Dispute Resolution".* Journal of Learning. 13(1) pp 13-18.

Gersh, M., 2006. "Servant-Leadership: A Philosophical Foundation". *Professionalism in Physical Therapy Education,* 20(2), pp 12-16.

Huber, W., 2002 & Nicholas, H., 2003. Overview of School Leadership Development: *Retention Development of School Leaders.* Liberal Education, Vol. 89.

Nwadiani ,M. 2010." Economic Dimension of Education Planning in Nigeria. *Theory and Practice"*. Benin: Monose Amalgamates Publishers. 9-14 pp.

Nwagwu, C.C., 2008. "With Effective Management, all students can learn: no excuses or exceptions". Inaugural Lecture Series, 93. University of Benin, Ben*in University Press. Pp 1-5.*

Peretomode *V*.F., (1996). Educational Administration. *"*Applied Concepts and Theoretical perspectives for students and Practitioners". Lagos*:* Joja Press Ltd.

Stuart, M. and Butler, 1990. "Heritage Foundation: A Strategy to Eliminate the Deficit". Washington, DC: Universe Books Ltd. pp 175-225.

Tysvold, D.V Sun, H., 2006. "Effects of Power Concepts and Employee Performance on Managers. *Empowering Leadership and Organizations"*. Development Journal 27(3), pp 217-234.

Weihrich, H. & Koontz, H., 2005. "Management: A Global Perspective". New Delhi: Tata McGraw-hill Publishing Company Ltd.