

Transformational Leadership Practices of Demonstrating High Performance Expectation and Excellence in the Management of Personnel by Secondary School Principals

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Abstract

This study examined the extent of relationship between transformational leadership practice of High Performance Expectation and Excellence in personnel management by secondary school principals in Cross River State. The study employed a correlation survey design. The population comprised 5614 (232 principals + 5382 teachers). Cluster random sampling technique was used to select 46 from 232 schools and 375 out of 5382 teachers from public secondary schools from the three education zones of Cross River State to respond to questionnaire items. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the 232 public secondary school principals. The instruments entitled “Transformational Leadership Practice Questionnaire (TLPQ) and Excellence in Personnel Management Questionnaire (EPMQ) were used for data collection. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to answer the research questions, while multiple regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The results were that: leadership practice of high performance expectation is utilized by principals in Cross River State, but to a low extent; there exists a significant relationship between transformational leadership practice of high performance expectation and excellence in the management of personnel by principals in Cross River State. It was recommended that ministries of education and Educational institutions should mount capacity-building programmes like workshops, conferences and in-service training to empower school principals in transformational leadership skills of high performance expectation, to reverse leadership problems in Cross River State and in the country as a whole. Curriculum planners and government should include transformational

leadership of high performance expectation concept in the curriculum at all levels of education.

Keywords: Transformational leadership practice, High Performance Expectation

Introduction

School leadership is considered a key element in effective education management. No wonder Sharrat and Sharrat, (2006); Bogler, (2001), Hanson and Anderson (2007) affirmed that leadership styles and practices affect organizational outcomes, positively or negatively. Personnel management especially in public secondary schools in Cross River State and in Nigeria as a whole is beset with leadership problems, reflected in conflict situations such as teachers' uncooperative attitudes, lack of commitment, absenteeism, confrontational behaviors, as well as constant lateness to work as a result of underlying unmet needs and demand

In recent past, there has been series of changes in Nigerian educational system, from one philosophy to another and from one leadership style to another, in an effort towards solving the leadership problems. With increase in state and national focus on improving the quality and standard of education in Nigeria, there is the dire need to work towards a change and innovation in education, specifically in school leadership practices. The importance of leadership in any organization including educational activities, especially leadership in personnel management in schools have attracted researchers' attention around the world, especially in Nigeria and specifically in Cross River State. It was in a bid to solve leadership problems towards improving education system in human society that Sashkin and Sashkin (2004) first coined the term transformational leadership. Burns in Downtown, (1978) first introduced the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership in his treatment of political leadership. It is worthy to note here that principles and theories of management apply same to all organizations, be it school, business or even ministries. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach's, (1999) research identified transformational leadership practices as useful in successful organizations, because it is a leadership practice that moved away from control to building commitment and capacity in personnel.

Bass in Kelly (2007) states that transformational leadership involves stimulation of subordinates into action and requires personalities that are more active, and ideas that are more proactive than reactive. Transformational Leadership practices of high performance expectation shapes organizations through the leaders' own actions. In other words, this concept of leadership in schools has to do with a school principal who is ready to lead the school by carrying every member of staff along, through modeling his character, in a way that will motivate them to work together as a team through cooperation, to bring about a positive change in the school organization.

This means that principals of secondary schools should imbibe transformational leadership practice of demonstrating high performance expectation by personally guiding the implementation of a shared vision. Demonstrating high performance expectation is carried out in form of modeling by leaders for their subordinates to follow. In other words, it can be described as leadership by example. Sutton (2006) posited that, school principals should shape their schools or bring about improvement through team building, positive innovation and setting standard of high performance expectations for excellence with continuous quality improvement. He concluded that principals should embrace the role of servant-leader and

enrich themselves by serving their own subordinates. In their own opinion Sharrat and Sharrat (2006) maintained that school principals who have a vision for improvement convey high performance expectations and would expect the personnel to be innovative, hardworking and professional.

Principals may also practice transformational leadership practice of demonstrating high performance expectation through monitoring students' progress. This will indirectly be a monitoring of teachers' performance of their teaching duties, because if teachers do not carry out their teaching assignments effectively, the end result will be students' poor achievement. This happens in a vicious circle, that is, if the principals lead autocratically, (using leadership model other than transformational leadership model) the personnel, especially teachers would not put in the best of their efforts and the students will not gain or learn effectively.

This is why Greenfield (1991) stated that beliefs about students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach is affected by a principal's leadership behaviours. In essence, principals must be responsible for assisting and leading their schools to higher-level performance since they are in the formal position of leadership to lead the change. This means that principals must be held accountable for effective and efficient management, which must include productive evaluation of teachers, including on-going feedback, necessary mentoring, staff development and the site-based assistance necessary to create an effective teaching. When school principals lead using available resources, most of all effectively managing the personnel under them, by demonstrating high performance expectation, the personnel will strive towards school improvement.

This is why Sharrat and Sharrat (2006) noted that educational leaders and principals together need to be explicit about target setting for schools and classroom performance. Sharrat and Sharrat (2006) went on to say that improvement is ensured when principals and teachers set high expectations and reasonable performance targets. Principals need to reassure their personnel of their support and expectation, the need for them to be the best they can possibly be, while at the same time the principals will show the same commitment. In other words, the school principals should lead the personnel by example, so as to encourage them to work towards achieving positive results. Commenting on the principals' use of transformational leadership practice to demonstrate high performance expectation, Bas in Epitropaki,(2001) noted that the school principals instill pride in individual staff using pep talks and motivational speeches to build organizational morale, and use their own behaviour to set an example of what is expected.

Sharrat and Sharrat (2006) specified that principals' high performance expectations influenced the implicit school culture. They concluded that if there are committed administrators who have certain standards, those standards obviously rub off not only on the teachers but on the students too. Also Cotton in Al Fitzpatrick (2007) in a study on "Effective schooling research practices: A synthesis update", noted that leaders express an expectation and strong desire that instructional programmes will improve over time. Also that when improvement strategies are organized and systemically too, they are given high priority and visibility, while implementation of new practices is carefully monitored and staff

development is supported.

Research Method

The study was a correlational survey designed to determine the extent of relationship existing between transformational leadership practice of demonstrating high performance expectation and excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals. The study was carried out in Cross River State, made up of 18 local government areas, comprising the Northern, central and southern senatorial districts, representing the three education zones. The Northern education zonal head office is located in Ogoja council secretariat comprising 72 public secondary schools, 72 principals and 1465 teachers. The central education zone has its head office located in Ikom council secretariat, comprising 74 public secondary schools, 74 principals and 1749 teachers. The southern education zone has 86 public secondary schools, 86 principals and 2168 teachers. This brings to a total of 232 public secondary schools in the three senatorial education zones, with 232 principals and 5382 teachers. Although teachers were not studied here but were used to respond to questionnaire items, as they are closer to the principals and could give the required information concerning principal's leadership practices than the principals themselves.

The population comprised all public secondary school principals and teachers in Cross River State. There are a total of 232 principals and 5382 teachers in public secondary schools. All principals were used as purposive sample to respond to questionnaire items, because they met the criteria for the study, while 372 teachers were randomly selected to respond to questionnaire items on behalf of their school principals. Only public secondary schools were used for the study since the government education policies and regulations are more binding on them than on the private schools. Cluster sampling technique was used to draw teachers' sample. Here 20% of the schools from 232 schools were selected, where 14 schools were randomly picked from northern education zone, 15 and 17 from the central and southern education zones respectively. Thereafter, 35% of teachers from 5382 were randomly selected to ensure equal representation from each cluster through balloting, where 375 teachers in all were selected.

In the process of administering the instruments, three questionnaires were lost, and 372 were retrieved. Two structured questionnaire titled transformational leadership practices Questionnaire (TLPQ) on high performance expectation and another on Excellence in Personnel Management questionnaire ESPMQ with the following subset; communication, caring, creating opportunities, credible leadership and creating a unique school climate. The two types of questionnaire were administered to the same groups of respondents.

Both instruments had a total of 20 items which was scored using 4 point Likert-type rating scale.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer research questions. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at alpha .05 level of significance

Table 1. Interpretation of Result

<i>Correlation</i>	Interpretation
0.80 – 1.0	Very high relationship
0.60 – 0.80	High relationship
0.40 – 0.60	Medium relationship
0.20 – 0.40	Low relationship
0.00 – 0.20	Very low relationship

Results

Table 2. Mean and Standard deviation scores of Principals (N=232) and teachers (N=372) on High Performance Expectation

		Principals (N = 232)		Teachers (N = 372)		Overall		Decision
	High Performance Expectation	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
15	Lets us know we are responsible for all students	3.44	.67	3.37	.64	3.40	.65	A
16	Is an exemplary leader to personnel	3.26	.80	3.38	.61	3.34	.69	A
	Cluster Mean	3.35	.59	3.37	.49	3.36	.53	A

Table 2 above shows the mean and standard deviation for principals and teachers for each of the items on high performance expectation. The mean and standard deviation for each item and cluster range from 3.44, - 3.26, SD = .67 – 80 for principals and 3.37-3.38, SD = .64 - .61 for teachers. The overall mean range from 3.40, SD = .65 for principals and 3.34, SD = .69 for teachers. While the cluster mean and standard deviation range from 3.35; SD = .59 for principals and = 3.37, SD = .49 for teachers, with the overall cluster mean of 3.36, SD=.53. The results show that the respondents agree that transformational leadership attribute of high performance expectation (HPE) is utilized by secondary school principals in Cross River State, but to a low extent.

This results shows a low relationship meaning that principals utilize this transformational leadership attribute in the process of day to day management of the school although they are not trained. This implies that if principals are exposed to training in transformational

leadership practices of demonstrating high performance expectation, they can do better.

Table 3. The correlation coefficient of high performance expectation and excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals

Variables	Correlation Coefficient(r)	Interpretation
Demonstrating high performance expectation (DHPE)	0.12	Low relationship

The analysis of the correlation coefficient above shows that (r) is 0.12. This value has been interpreted to mean a low relationship (Nwana, 1982). The result therefore implies that there exists a low relationship between demonstrating high performance expectation and excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals in Cross River State. To further explore the significance of their relationship, a corresponding H_0 was tested as shown on Table 4 below.

Table 4. The result of multiple regressions of high performance expectation and excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals

Variable	Multiple R	R ²	R ² Change	B	BETA	Standard E	% Variance Added	F-value	F-Critical P<0.05
High Performance Experience (HPE)	.3639	.1324	0.0049	.863573	.187169	.192355	0.49	22.850	9.85

The result on Table 4 above shows that demonstrating high performance expectation has multiple R of .3639, R² of .1324, R² change of .0049, indicating a predictive power of 0.49 percent for attainment of excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals. The result also shows that the observed F-value of demonstrating high performance expectation is 22.850, while the critical F-value for high performance expectation for 1 and 603 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of significance is 9.850. Since the observed F-value of 22.850 of 0.49 of the variance added to the total variance in the attainment of excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals is

higher than the critical F-value of 9.85, the null hypothesis in respect of demonstrating high performance expectation was therefore rejected. This result shows that there is significant relationship between demonstrating high performance expectation, with a low relationship observed from answering the research question implying that although the relationship is significant, transformational leadership attribute is utilized to a low extent by school principals in Cross River State.

This results imply that transformation leadership practice of high performers expectation is being utilized by secondary school principals through their day to day management of schools to a low extent because they are not trained, they will do better if they are trained.

Discussion

The study agrees with Sutton (2006) who provided some useful explanation maintaining that this attribute of transformational leadership practice can be used to attain excellence if school principals embrace the servant leader approach, an aspect of transformational leadership practice of demonstrating high performance expectation and enrich themselves by serving their subordinates. This leadership attribute is similar to role modeling, which is leadership by example, whereby the school principals have to demonstrate to their subordinate what should be done. This may then mean that if the school principals are empowered through capacity building programmes to develop skills in demonstrating high performance expectation, it will impact positively on the leadership practice in leading the personnel. The results also agrees with Sharrat and Sharrat's (2006) earlier claim that such practices may enhance personnel beliefs about their own capabilities, a sense of self-efficacy and may contribute to their day-to-day enthusiasm for their work. This means that when school principals are equipped in the skill to demonstrate high performance expectation, they will be empowered to advise, assist, and model for individual staff. He argued that their role must be embracive, involving monitoring or supervising every activity that goes on in the school including students learning.

Principals need to be equipped in transformational leadership skill of demonstrating high performance expectation through capacity building programmes. When principals are equipped with this leadership skill, they will be empowered to empower others with the skill to demonstrate high performance expectation. In other words, when appointment of principal is considered, priority should be given to those people who are trained in leadership skill for the job, as this eventually will affect personnel management. Conclusively, based on the finding of the study, it was discovered that there is a significant with a low relationship existing between demonstrating high performance expectation and excellence in the management of personnel by secondary school principals. The implication of this result is that principals need training in transformational leadership attribute of demonstrating high performance expectation, so as to improve upon leadership problems in secondary schools in the area of study and the country as a whole.

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