

A Study of Principals' Instructional Supervisory Strategies and Secondary School Teachers' Morale in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between the Principals' Instructional Supervisory Strategies and Secondary School Teachers' Morale in Rivers State – Nigeria. Four research questions and one hypothesis addressed the study. Two instruments titled “Principal Instructional Supervisory Strategies Questionnaire” (PISSQ) and “Principal Instructional Supervisory Strategies/Teachers' Morale Questionnaire” (PISS/TMQ) were utilized to gather data for analysis. A sample of 49 principals and 451 teachers were simple randomly selected from a target population of 245 principals and 5,136 teachers in 5 out of the 23 Local Government Areas secondary schools in Rivers State. Tables were constructed and means computed to provide answers to three research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to test the relationship between two simple means in the only hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed amongst others that the principals mostly relate with their teachers individually, maintains cordial relationship with their teachers, teachers' have high morale when they are involved in decision making; and there is no significant relationship between instructional supervisory strategies used by male/female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State. The study concluded that principals do use the human relations principles as strategies to influence positively on teachers' morale. The study therefore recommend principally that, principals should always mix up the instructional supervisory strategies to deduce the best behaviour and morale state of their teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Keywords:

Instructional supervision, Principal, Supervisory strategies, Teacher; Teachers' morale

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Background to the Study

Every organization requires management, and the school is not an exception. Management pertains to that most unpredictable phenomenon to human beings. It is concerned with his contacts with his fellow human beings and his behaviour under a wide range of pressures and influences, some not easily subject to measurement. The relationship between principal-teacher is conditioned by rules and regulations of the school system either made for it or by it for the internal regulation of its affairs. The principal administers (enforce) rules and regulations while teachers conform to the rules. The principal has the formal authority to assign tasks to teachers to which they comply but this is not enough to encourage them to exert extra effort and enthusiasm in the performance of duties. Extra effort, zeal and esprit de corps are important for creating a favourable organizational climate which will be conducive to the attainment of the set educational goals.

Fubara (1985) opined that no matter how skilful a manager may be in solving mechanical, sales, or financial problems, his value and effectiveness is severely limited if he cannot know and direct his associates. Therefore, a principal's effectiveness is severely limited if he cannot lead and direct the teachers. For schools' goals and objectives to be achieved, the principal as head of school has to supervise instructions, and as he does this he interacts with teachers and other staff. And as he supervise, he will exhibit some of leadership styles such as autocratic, (authoritarian) democratic (cordial) or laissez-faire (carefree). In a well organized educational system, the relationship between the principal and teachers should be cordial because it helps to increase the module of both the principal and teachers. This corroborates the work of Ogunsola (1973) cited by Odukwu (1993) who observed that as a school principal, his administrative patterns may have good intention towards his staff, but if it probably lacks human relations will produce misunderstanding and inefficiency and low productive level.

However, the above scenario may not always be the case in secondary schools in Rivers State. According to General Inspection Report of secondary schools in Rivers State as cited in Jamabo (1997), most teachers do not put their hearts in their work, they do not accept extra responsibilities. They are only concerned with teaching of their lesson which is often done half-heartedly. Jamabo opined that the state of affairs might have arisen from maltreatment of some teachers by the principal or by the preferential treatment given to some teachers. However, the problems might have arisen from the type of instructional supervisory strategies used by the principal.

Throughout the human relation movement, there was considerable emphasis on participation or deliberate attempt by management to permit subordinates to take active roles in decision making process. The old methods of supervision of using force or threats were to be replaced by a gentler more permissive type of control. To supervise a school effectively, the principal needs to know how to relate with those under him. However, the question arises whether the principal in the execution of his/her job was able to make use of instructional supervisory strategies, namely, effective supervision and participation in decision making by teachers in the matters that affects the proper running of the school?

Statement of the Problem

On inspection of most secondary schools in Rivers State, one finds that physical structures are in dilapidated condition. Classes are over-crowded thus making it too difficult for effective management of students by teachers. In some schools, five students are made to sit on a seat that should have taken a maximum of three students, resulting in students pushing each other and disturbing while lesson is going on. In some cases simple instructional materials like chalk and duster are not available. There are no good toilet facilities for staff and students. There are many who feel this is a world of status symbols where people like prestigious offices. This is not the case in secondary schools in Rivers State where staff rooms are over crowded and shabby looking.

It has also become a common phenomenon everywhere to see students loitering about during school hours probably because the teachers has not shown up for his lesson due to the state of affairs in schools as enumerated above. Most of the problems mentioned herein could, without doubt lower teacher's morale. The problem now is, does the principal compound the situation further by using threat or force to make teachers perform their duties? According to Jamabo (1997), principals believe that their primary task in the school system is to get the job done without minding whether teachers are trampled upon. This is a wrong approach to management of staff. There is, therefore, the need to identify how principal relates with teachers and how such interaction affects teachers' morale.

Thus, this study is undertaken to investigate the influence the principals' instructional supervisory strategies (that is, supervision and participation in decision making) can have on secondary school teachers' morale in Rivers State. Specifically, this study intends to find out the relationship between the principals' instructional supervisory strategies and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

This study is primarily aimed at finding out the level of teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rives State. It seeks therefore to;

1. Find out how the principals relates with their teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Find out how the type of instructional supervisory strategy used by the principals affects teachers' morale.
3. Find out how principals involvement of teachers in indecision making affect teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Find out the relationship between the instructional supervisory strategies used by male/ female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

1. How do principals relate with their teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What type of supervisory techniques is used by secondary school principals in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does the principal involvement of teachers in decision making affect teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State?

4. To what extent does the principal involvement of teachers in decision making affect teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the instructional supervisory strategies used by male/female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Methodology

This research adopted the ex-post design. The population of the study comprised all secondary schools 245 principals and 5,136 teachers in the 245 secondary schools in Rivers State. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 percent of the entire population of the study. This selection gave a sample of 49 principals/schools with 2,257 teachers in five Local Government Areas of Rivers State. A further sampling was done to obtain 20 percent of teachers from the 2,257 teachers which gave a working sample of 451 teachers.

In this study, two (2) types of instruments in the form of questionnaire were developed by the researchers and titled "Principal Instructional Supervisory Strategies Questionnaire" (PISSQ) and "Principal Instructional Supervisory Strategies/Teachers' Morale Questionnaire" (PISS/TMQ). The first instrument (PISSQ) contains 16 items designed to elicit information about principals' instructional supervisory strategies, organized into the following blocks; 1-4 = Visitation by invitation; 5-7 = Announced Supervision; 8-11 = Unannounced Supervision; 12-16 = Participation in decision making.

The second instrument contains 14 items which was used by Chuke (1989) and were modified to elicit information on teachers' level of morale.

The instruments were subjected to close examination by experts in the area of educational management. And the reliability was established by the use of test-retest method. Correlation co-efficient of the two scores collated from the test-retest method were calculated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient (r). Calculated 'r' for PISSQ was 0.79 while the calculated 'r' for PISS/TMQ was 0.85 which was accepted as high for utilization. Out of the 500 questionnaires, 49 for principals and 451 for teachers, only 449 were returned (49 copies of the questionnaire for principals and 400 copies of the questionnaire for teachers were returned). This gave 90 percent return rate.

However, the data collected were hand scored for computerization and analysed. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation and frequencies were used. Also inferential statistic such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient "r" was used to test the relationship between two simple means in research question 4. The acceptance or rejection criteria was based on significant level at 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1

How do principals relate with their teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Principals and Teachers Mean Scores on Principals' Relationship with Teachers in Rivers State Secondary Schools.

S/N	Items	Principals N = 49 \bar{x}	Teachers N = 400 \bar{x}	Mean (\bar{x}) Set	Rank Order
1.	Principal relate with teachers:				
(a)	Individually	3.68	1.84	2.76	1 st
(b)	During Classroom Visitation	0.16	0.84	0.50	3 rd
(c)	During staff meeting	1.16	1.32	1.24	2 nd
2.	Principal relationship with teachers is:				
(a)	Cordial	3.84	2.44	3.14	1 st
(b)	Antagonistic	0.16	0.68	0.42	3 rd
(c)	Carefree	0.00	0.88	0.44	2 nd

Table 1 above shows that principals and teachers agreed that the principals relate with them individually with a mean set score of 2.76, followed by principals relating with teachers during staff meeting with a mean set score of 1.24. Also, the table shows that both the principals and teachers in Rivers State Secondary schools were of the view that the relationship between the principals and teachers was cordial with a mean set score of 3.14

Research Question 2

What type of supervisory techniques are used by secondary school principals in Rivers State?

Table 2: Principals' Supervisory Techniques

S/N	Variables	Principals	Teachers	Mean Set	Rank Order
1.	Supervision by Invitation	2.57	2.46	2.52	2 nd
2.	Announced supervision	2.53	2.46	2.50	3 rd
3.	Unannounced Supervision	2.97	2.23	2.60	1 st

Table 2 above shows that both the principals and teachers were of the view that the principals uses unannounced supervisory technique more than other techniques with a mean set score of 2.60, followed by supervision by invitation with a mean set score of 2.52

Research Question 3

To what extent does the principal involvement of teachers in decision making affect teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Principals and Teachers Mean Score on the extent of Principals' involvement of Teachers in Decision Making and Teachers' Morale.

Sample	Mean (\bar{x})	SD
Principals	3.17	0.42
Teachers	2.69	0.99

Table 3 above shows that the principals are of the view that to a large extent teachers' morale is high with a mean score of 3.17, while the teachers are of the view that to a moderate their morale is high when they are involved in decision making with a mean of 2.69.

Hypothesis 1

There is no relationship between the instructional supervision strategies used by male/female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Relationship between Male/Female Principals' Instructional Supervisory Strategies and Teachers' Morale

Variables	Cases	Mean	S.D	Cal. 'r'	Crit 'r'
Male Principals	400	2.64	0.12	0.043	0.304
Female Principals		2.66	0.07		

Table 4 above indicates that calculated 'r' value of 0.043 is less than the critical 'r' value of 0.304 at 0.05 level of significance. We therefore conclude that there is no significant relationship between instructional supervisory strategies used by male/female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Summary of Findings

In this study, it was found that:

1. Secondary schools principals in Rivers State relate individually with their teachers, and this positively improve teachers' morale
2. Principals in secondary schools in Rivers State exhibit cordial human relationships with their teachers and it makes teachers' morale to be high.
3. Principals involvement of teachers in decision-making in secondary schools in Rivers State positively influences teachers' morale.
4. There is no relationship between instructional supervisory strategies used by male/female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Principals in Rivers State secondary schools relate with teachers individually. The teachers with a mean set score of 2.26 indicated that principals relate with them individually.

This result is a bit surprising. The researchers would have thought that because of the tight schedule of principals, they would not have the time to relate individually, but would rather prefer to relate with teachers during staff meetings. However, earlier researches had shown that face to face encounter are necessary for continuing relations. This might explain why the principals who knowledgeable of this fact, would prefer individual

relations with teachers to boost teachers' morale. Principals in secondary schools in Rivers State exhibit cordial relationship with their teachers with a mean set score of 3.14.

This result is also surprising because earlier researches of leadership styles had painted the principals as bully, arrogating to themselves maximum authority, and used divide and rule tactics in relating with teachers. However, the result agreed with the work of Edem (1982) and Essang (1987) in Ezekiel Hart (1998). They opined that leadership style can be classified into different groups such as autocratic (antagonistic), cordial (democratic) and laissez-faire (carefree). They went further to emphasize that face to face encounter between the leader and the led can only be possible in a conducive environment. This means that principals can only relate better with their teachers and positively impact on teachers' morale when their relationship with them is cordial.

Also Davis and Filley as cited by Oguru (1997) maintain that good morale on the worker's part implies good leadership. To ensure good morale, the appropriate environment that will foster it must be created. Leadership styles they believe is a factor that affects employee's morale. This is actually the implication of the finding in this study. Principals involvement of teachers in decision making in secondary schools in Rivers State positively influences teachers' morale with the principals mean score of 3.17 and teachers mean score of 2.69 respectively.

This finding is in congruent with Nwachukwu (1988) who found out that 65.8 percent of the graduates who left their employment gave lack of participation as one of the key reasons why they changed employment. This is to specifically emphasize also the findings of Afolayan (1982) in Oguru (1997) that teachers' participation in school decision making serves social, psychological and emotional purposes by giving staff a sense of belonging to the organization as well as a feeling of being recognized and respected. Consequently, it increases their commitments to achieving the organizational goals.

Also, Likert as cited in Oguru (1997) reported on a study carried out by the Institute of Social Research of Michigan University that supervisors who are person-oriented show interest in their employees' problems, assist them in planning their work, make them aware of the plans of the company and involve them in decision making, by seeking their opinions. Employees who worked under such supervisors showed high morale. Further, an experiment carried out by Coch and French, at the Harwood Manufacturing Corporation was reported by Hoy and Miskel (1991). It was found that workers resisted changes in their jobs despite improvement in their working conditions. While seeking for ways to overcome the resistance, they simultaneously increased productivity. Two groups of workers formed the experimental group. The first group were only informed of the need for change and the kind of changes to be made without participating in decision-making. The second group was allowed a little participation in planning the changes and adopting them. After one month, it was discovered that production did not improve while absenteeism, turnover rate and grievances mounted for the first group; production increased for the second group that was allowed some degree of participation. However, when the first group was later on exposed to the same condition as the second group, a high

level of productivity was recorded. Absenteeism, turnover and grievances were also limited. These two cases cited above further corroborates the outcome of the present study that teachers participation in decision making increases their morale, thereby resulting in higher productivity.

Lastly, there is no relationship between instructional supervisory strategies used by male/female principals and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.

This finding supports the general assumption that certain variable like gender of a leader in an organization affects the way he/she relate with his/her subordinates. This finding therefore imply that male principals uses instructional supervisory strategies different from the ones use by their female counterpart. In this case, it corroborates to the school of thought which opined that, female bosses, in an attempt not to be seen as weak, try to exert their authority without minding whose "ox is gored". However, the research of principals bases of power in relation to principals' styles of leadership conducted by Kappelman (1981) does not support this finding. One of her findings indicated that there is no differences between male and female principals' bases of power as perceived by teacher, although male principals are perceived as using the power bases of reward and coercive more than their female principals.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between principals' instructional supervisory strategies and teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State - Nigeria. The findings of this study indicate clearly that principals of secondary schools in Rivers State are professionals and skilful school managers. Their positive relationship with their teachers, especially the involvement of their teachers in decision making are some of the known instructional supervisory strategies that increases teachers' morale for sustainable achievement of school goals and objectives. Hence, it could be concluded that principals do use the human relations principles as strategies influence positively on teachers' morale in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. In-service training especially for non-professional teachers should continue to be encouraged to maintain high morale of teachers in secondary schools.
2. School principals should integrate their teachers into the school administration not only in decision making, but also in holding regular staff meetings and carry out classroom supervision in a friendly atmosphere in their day to day running of the affairs of secondary schools.,
3. Seminar, symposia and workshops should be organized for teachers to make them highly aware of the importance of being involved in internal school administration. This will make them to come together to fight a common cause and project the good image of their respective schools.
4. The principal need to be mindful that human beings are difficult to predict because how they behave in one situation may be different to how they will react in

another. In other words, Principals should always mix up the supervisory strategies to deduce the best behaviour and morale state of their teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State.

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