Principals’ Administrative Effectiveness and Staff Productivity in Selected Secondary School in South West Region, Cameroon

Authors

Joseph Besong Besong  
Department of Sciences of Education, Higher Teachers’ Training College, University of Maroua  
besongjoseph@yahoo.com  
Maroua, Cameroon

Abstract

The study investigates administrative effectiveness and their managerial implications towards staff productivity in terms of managing human and material resources, interpersonal relationship, managing school finance, discipline and motivation of staff. Two hypotheses were isolated and the researcher adopted ex-post-facto for the study. The researcher made an instrument known as Principals’ Administrative Effectiveness and Staff Descriptive Questionnaire (PAESDQ) to illicit data, using the questionnaire of a 4-point Likert scale from 300 respondents or sample population drawn from the selected secondary schools in the targeted Region for the study and a stratified random sampling technique was used. The data were analyzed using independent t-test. The result of the study showed that principals administrative effectiveness was significantly positive in terms of interpersonal relationship, managing school finance and motivation of staff but significantly negative in managing human and material resources. However, principals administrative effectiveness was not contingent on their sexes that is male or female in terms of the variables used or isolated out for the study towards staff productivity in South-West Region of Cameroon Males principals proved more efficient than their female counterparts in terms of administrative effectiveness in all the variables isolated for the study. Some profile recommendations made included that principals’ appointment should be based on administration or managerial qualification(s) and experience. Induction courses should be organized for those promoted to the rank of principals, to acquaint with simple ethics of management and administration of human beings Fresher’s or those from higher institutions of learning should not be appointed yet until after some years of practical experience, hence it is the best teacher. Political sentiments should not be found at the corridors of those saddled with this responsibility. Principals should be encouraged by motivating them in terms of incentives as grass-root administrators for effectiveness since they are representatives of both the Regional Delegate of Ministry of Education and the Minister of Education in their respective secondary schools in South-West Region in particular and those in other Regions’ secondary schools throughout the country in general. Fresher’s (i.e. newly employed teachers) from Higher Teachers’ Training Colleges posted to secondary schools in South-West Region and elsewhere in the country should be motivated so that they should not make teaching profession as stepping stone to other jobs which are more lucrative This will improve staff productivity in secondary schools in South-West Region in particular and the country at large.
I. INTRODUCTION

In any formal organization, there is an individual designates administrator who is important as the organization itself. The quality of the administrator is more than any single factor determines the success or failure of the organization's ability to accomplish its stated goals. In other Words, he manages human and material resources in order to achieve the predetermined objectives of the organization. While the organization (i.e. secondary school) expects productivity in terms of output, the staff who constitute the engines or factories to manipulate success have to be considered first hence their aims for employment is their dispositions or wants.

There is need therefore for the administrator to be articulated and transactional in dealing with these two phenomenon-school organization and the staff. According to Getzels Guba (1957) cited in Besong (2001), organization or school requires productivity in terms of output both internally and externally. In other words, the principal’s effectiveness may mean his disciplinary management but without human relations. Consequently, he is more of organizational or school rules and regulations or nomothetic dimension excluding the staff or human factor or idiographic dimension who constitute the inputs or human and material resources for productivity. Principals’ effectiveness connotes their capacity to coordinate many often conflicting social energies in a single organization (i.e., secondary schools inclusive) adroitly so that they shall operate as a unity Adams, (1963) cited in Besong (2001) principals’ administrative effectiveness may mean their interpersonal relationship with staff subordinates. It may influence productivity. When there is cordial relationship between the leader and his subjects, there will be conducive working climate. It may mean motivation.

Motivation does not only mean enticing your staff with financial reward, but it may mean sharing mutual understanding in terms of accepting your staff suggestions during meetings. Principals should see themselves as administrators of second-tier of Education in Cameroon in general and in South-West Region in particular. This nomenclature i.e. principal is unisex. It could be referred to male or female. As the chief executives of their secondary schools, their administrative roles include, planning, organizing, controlling coordinating, reporting and budgeting. An administrator has to execute what he has planned or forecast.

In organization, he has to command authority invested in him. In other words, he has to apply McGregor (1960) theory x so as to achieve the objective of the school, hence human beings need coercing so as to do work. However, McGregor theory should be applied hence the average human being learns, under proper conditions, not to accept but to seek responsibilities. He has commitment to objectives, which is a function of reward associated with their achievement. Since no man is an island, the principal’s administrative effectiveness relates to cooperating with his subordinates. In other words, he should work as a team if he wants to be very effective and efficient in his administration. In this view, the principals of schools must be associated with
high morale, effectiveness and efficiency in their administrative responsibilities.

In other words, it means assessing and wheeling human material resources in their schools. It equally means prudent spending of school finances or funds. This is a Characteristic of effectiveness i.e. the extent to which the observed behavior is congruent with bureaucratic expectations held for the role. Principals are leaders of their schools. This makes it clear as Babalola et al (2006) described the principals as those at the helm of secondary schools, the world over showing the way and influencing others think in like manner or in a particular way.

Therefore, principals in South-West Region should maintain status quo. It implies that for a principal to be an effective principal, he should be democratic in his Leadership style, hence no meaningful achievement or productivity can be achieved where there are strives, acrimonies and conflicts. Furthermore, principals’ administrative effectiveness connotes efficiency, which means managing scarce resources prudently so as to achieve maximum output or production. However, efficiency can mean productivity if the personal needs of the staff is satisfied. The implication of principal's administrative effectiveness in their Secondary schools especially in South-West Region is considering needs of their staff paramount and satisfying them. It implies that need dispositions of the individual staff with organization or school is more important or equitable to organizational needs.

Gtzels and Guba(1957) in Peretomode (2010) views shows that belongingness refers to the extent to which role expectations are congruent with need dispositions or personal needs. It means that the degrees of needs of individuals are congruent to effectiveness of principals, which is in itself efficiency as by-product of productivity. The implication is that except staffs who constitute the labor force of production are give good maintenance, otherwise there may be poor production hence the principals administrative effectiveness is organizational-oriented (i.e. School).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Who Is A Principal?

In context to the study, a principal is the head teacher of a school, especially the second tier of education (Hornby: 2001 pp. 925). “Principal” has been defined by the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (2002) as the person in charge of a school or college for children aged between approximately 11 and 18. Furthermore, principal are leaders in schools in other words, they are executives or heads of school organization. In addition, they are internal supervisors of their schools for effective production and adherence to rules and regulations of education in the country as well as in the region. It implies that the principals constitute the management cadre of Educational activities for efficiency through human and material resources in order to achieve the goals or objectives of education within his managerial armpits or jurisdiction.
B. What Is Administration?

Horn by (2001; pp.15) defined administration as the activities that are done in order to plan, organize and run a business, school or other institutions. However, administrative is connected with organizing the work of business or an institution. In other words, an effective principal is also responsible in assigning subjects or courses to his academic staff according to their disciplines or areas of specialization. This would lead to efficiency and productivity in the school. It implied effectiveness of the principal. The principal administrative role may extend to interpersonal relationship, which may usher conducive climate in the school as incentive for productivity or achievement as Besong (2001) noted when he studied head teachers’ effectiveness in Cross River State. He found out that effectiveness of head teachers is instrumental in accomplishment of objectives through cooperative action burn by the administrative prowess of the principal.

C. What Is Effectiveness?

Effectiveness is the ability to plan, organize and coordinate many and often-conflicting social energies in a single organization so adroitly (Adams 1963), cited in Besong (2001). It implies that, it is the right and duties attached to an individual irrespective of the gender of the incumbent. Effectiveness is equivalent to achievement muted by incumbent administrator or principal of secondary school. It implies that, it is an antecedent of function or role's achievement of the principal. It could be identified as a plan proposed in advance and accomplished later but within a stipulated time or duration of school. Ipaya (1996) cited by Besong (2001) noted in his study of effectiveness, that effectiveness is a part of function assumed by someone, a set of specific responsibilities, assumed by a professional in a setting.

The implication is that when a principal maintains high morale discipline and decorum among his staff and also students, he exhibits a personality of effectiveness worthy of emulation. Uche (2002) identified effectiveness in a series of his studies related to effectiveness, that it is a symbol of good administrative style of the incumbent, team work, morale or motivation of staff, good teaching conducive social climate and counseling as well as rules and regulations. The principal's ability to control and maintain school facilities, initiates projects and completes both the new ones and also those abandoned by his predecessor(s) is exemplary of effectiveness. Equally, monitoring performance regular staff meeting, interaction, encouraging staff participation in decision-making is evident of effectiveness but when the principal is all-wise, seems more knowledgeable, there is bound to be a disparity in the school at such, the staff may not be productive.

D. Who Are Staffs?

According to Hornby 2001 pp.1364) staff mean all the workers employed in an organization considered as a group of teaching staff in an institution to give instruction or facilitate learning in order to achieve the predetermined goals of the school. Principals in South-West Region in particular and in Cameroon general should acknowledged them-selves as staff of Ministry of
Higher Education. However, they were formerly staff of the defunct Ministry of Secondary Education. Some principals were promoted from a crop of teaching staff, perhaps through experience and longevity, while others through affiliation of the ruling party (CPDM). Furthermore, some might have been appointed as Principals because of their higher qualification(s). Gender or sex does not influence principals’ selection. It implies that principalship is unisex. Administrative prowess or effectiveness would determine if the principal is experienced and knowledgeable.

It is said that a tree cannot make a forest. The implication is that the principals should acknowledge that they are mere team leaders who have to carry the staff they been either appointed from or appointed to administer. Carrying these staff or colleagues in the same profession, the incumbents have to be experienced, knowledgeable, to identify structures or blocks that impinge their administrative effectiveness. Maslow (1954) cited in Besong (2001) showed that motivation of staff through human needs should be paramount because the urge for employment is to satisfy his physiological needs, safety, social needs, ego or esteem needs and self-actualization or self-fulfillment. The staff idiographic or personal needs are their urgent urge for employment. Except their dispositions are considered paramount, there is bound to be dissatisfaction and adverse effect, similarly, Herzberg (1968) in Peretomode (2010) and cited in Besong (2001) simplified the motivational human needs hierarchy into two namely, hygiene motivational factors. He made it clear that hygiene Administrative prowess or effectiveness would determine if the principal is experienced knowledgeable. Factors stand for dissatisfaction (i.e. dissatisfiers), which means that whether there are present or not in the work place, work has to continue whereas the job satisfiers (i.e. satisfaction) or motivation factors may affect efficiency and productivity which are by-product of effectiveness hence poor staff or poor human relations. This hinders or slows productivity.

E. What Is Production?

Productivity is the rate workers, a company or a country produces goods and services and as well as the amount produced compared with much time, work and money needed to produce them. It means highly improved and increased level of production (Hornby, 20: 930). It implies that motivational factors are related to work itself. According to Herzberg, it means job enrichment by the use of more effectively the talents of people. The implication is that it involves building into individual greater scope for personal achievement, recognition and responsibility. It implies strengthening the motivational factors.

The implication or the obvious of this study is that principals may not achieve maximum production in their schools or in any organization without cooperation. In other words, cooperation would be possible when there is fair play or interpersonal relationship between the leader (principal) and the led (staff). In this circumstance, staff in secondary schools in South-West Region expects their principals to relate well. Vroom (1964), Porter and Lawler (1968) cited in Besong (2001) described this principle as “expectancy” hence their staff looks forward to their principals in terms of rewards, acceptance as members of the schools and paying attention to
newly posted staff from Higher Teachers’ Training Colleges to their secondary schools in South-West Region.

From my study of staff refusal or refusing posting to extreme parts of South-West Region was based on economic stress and principals’ administrative stress too. This study seeks to find out whether these variables: managing human and material resources; interpersonal relationship; managing school finance; staff discipline and motivation of staff can help principals administrative effectiveness to enable staff under them perform creditably to achieve high productivity.

III. Statement of Problem

The task of maintaining an effective machinery of a functional school system in Cameroon in general and in South-West Region in particular is one that demands a great deal of attention on the part of principals. The need for dedicated principals who are effective to encourage staff productivity in South-West Region in Cameroon cannot be over-emphasized. This may be due to political sentiments, which seemed to influence. Principals’ appointments without relevant qualifications and experience. The government philosophy of establishing Higher Teachers’ Training College should not be under-scored. The researcher seek to investigate if these variables are relevant for principals’ administrative effectiveness to influence academic staff productivity in South-West Region, Cameroon: managing human/material resources; interpersonal relationship; managing school finance; staff discipline and motivation of staff.

IV. Purpose and Significant of the Study

The purpose of this study specifically is to find out whether the principals’ administrative effectiveness can influence staff productivity in South-West Region in Cameroon. The variables isolated in the study are: managing human and material resources; interpersonal relationship, managing school finance staff discipline and motivation of staff.

In every social organization, there is a head or an administrator. In the case of secondary school, such a head is designated a principal. This study therefore concerns principals’ administrative effectiveness and staff productivity in South-West Region, Cameroon. This study therefore is significant to Ministry of Higher Education saddled with the responsibility of appointment of principals’ statewide. This will help them in their modus operandi involved. Principals in South-West Region secondary schools in particular and in the entire country at large, should know that the successes and failures in their secondary schools depends on their staff for productivity. Politicians should not use their influence in educational matters, especially in appointment of principals in the country. Researchers who may want to carry out this topic in a wider spectrum hence the literature added to existing one.

V. Research Assumption

This study is predicated on the following assumptions:

1 - That the principal is an administrator or executive head of a secondary school.
2 - That administrative connotes the ability to coordinate planned programmers' by the administrator for effective execution so as to achieve the predetermined goals of the school.
3 - That the respondents are capable to respond objectively to the questionnaire.
4 - That population under study is normally distributed.

VI. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study delimited in South-West Region of Cameroon from which some secondary schools were selected, using stratified method. The scope included the following variables: managing human and material resources; interpersonal relationship managing school finance; staff discipline and motivation of staff.

VII. METHODOLOGY

The researcher focused on hypotheses, study area and data collection procedure. The null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, thus:

1 - H O: Principals’ administrative effectiveness does not significantly influence their staff productivity.
2 - HO: Principals' administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity is not dependent on their sex.

The study covered South-West Region of Cameroon. That is, the study area included all the secondary schools. A stratified technique was used in selecting the schools. The characteristics by which the principals were stratified were longevity of the principal in the school and staff strength or population. A sample population of 300 respondents was drawn, using stratified random technique.

VIII. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher collected data by the use of a constructed instrument called Principals Administrative Effectiveness and Staff's Descriptive Questionnaire (PAESDQ). Section A of the instrument had sixteen (16) items made of a 4-point likert scale. Four (4) of the these items measured each of the 4 sub-variables, namely: principals' administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity in terms of managing human and material resources; interpersonal relationship; managing school finance; staff motivation. The instrument was face-validated by experts in measurement and evaluation. Copies of the instrument (PAESDQ) were submitted to them to ascertain whether they measured what they purported to measure. Those items found ambiguous were reframed and used. A trial test was carried out using split-half reliability coefficient estimate of 0.64 to 0.87, figures, which confirmed that the instrument was reliable enough for use in the study. The researcher administered the questionnaire in two ways i.e. by post and by personal administration. This is due to the vastness and terrain of the area. This measure ensures a 100 percent returns rate.

T - test statistics in form of population t-test (test of single mean) and in data analysis.
IX. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1:

$H_0$: Principals’ administrative effectiveness does not significantly influence staff productivity.

Observation of the results presented in Table 1, disclosed that the principals’ administrative Effectiveness towards their staff productivity is significantly negative in terms of managing human and material.

**Table 1: Population t-test (test of single mean) analysis of principals’ administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Expected mean [x]</th>
<th>Observed mean [x]</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing human and Material resources.</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>5.647*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationship.</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>6.6813*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff motivation.</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>6.647*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing school finance.</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>12.923*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $P < .05$ ; df = 299 ; critical t-value = 1.968.

Resources ($t=5.647$, $p < .05$); interpersonal relationship towards staff productivity ($t=6.6813$); managing school finance towards staff productivity ($t=12.923$) and staff motivation towards staff productivity ($t=6.647$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected because the obtained t-values were found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.968 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 299 degrees of freedom.

Furthermore, the results in this table one (1) revealed that the observed mean is that principals’ administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity in terms of managing human and material resources was higher than the expected mean of principals’ administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity of 10.00. Statistical comparison of these observed mean values and the expected mean, administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity in terms of managing human and material resources was higher than the expected mean principals’ administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity of 10.00, using population t-test analysis for single mean, positive t-values were obtained.

From the findings therefore, principals’ administrative Effectiveness towards staff productivity is significantly negative. The implication therefore is that principals in South-West Region in Cameroon have low or poor managerial techniques of human and material resources.

**HYPOTHESIS 2**

$H_0$: Principals’ administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity is not dependent on sex.
TABLE 2: INDEPENDENT T-TEST ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPALS’ ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS TOWARDS STAFF PRODUCTIVITY ON SEX.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing human and material resources.</td>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>4.375*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationship.</td>
<td>12.03</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing school finance.</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>4.292*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff motivation.</td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>10.82</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.125*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P < .05; df = 288; critical t-value = 1.968.

The result of the independent t-test analysis presented in Table 2 above indicated that principals’ administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity is not significantly dependent on sex of the principals in terms of managing human and material resources (t=4.375 p < .05); interpersonal relationship to staff productivity (t=2.556, p< .05); managing school finance (4.292, p< .05 and principals’ administrative effectiveness generally (t=2.125, p<.05). The null hypothesis was rejected given the fact that the obtained t-values were found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.968 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 228 degrees of freedom. This result also revealed that principals’ administrative effectiveness is not significantly dependent on sex with regards to staff productivity in terms of motivation of staff (t=1.560, p< .05), alpha level of significance with degree of 288.

Further examination of this results in table two above, showed that male principals’ administrative effectiveness had higher mean than their female counterparts in their administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity in all the variables studied. It implies that male principals had better administrative effectiveness towards staff productivity than their female principal counterparts.

X. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the analysis showed that principal’s administrative effectiveness towards their staff productivity is significantly negative. The findings means that the principals in South-West Region of Cameroon have negative or poor perception of administrative effectiveness of their staff towards productivity as such are not familiar with managing or administrative mechanisms for managing human and material resources but significantly positive in terms of interpersonal relationship; managing school finance and staff motivation. By implication therefore it seems that the principals are not familiar or exposed to administrative tactics and as such have negative perception about what it involves in managing human and material resources. The obvious of the findings borders on the fact that principals in this Region are yet to be groomed on the modalities in administrative effectiveness.
This is so because some or many of them have no proper orientation and their appointments are at ad-hoc bases. This true too, hence most of them have not done courses related to educational administration and so lack the fundamental principles. Maslow (1954) cited in Besong (2001) maintained that motivation should be one principle of principal’s administrative effectiveness. The implication is that principals in secondary schools in South-West Region should consider their staff in their schools hence they constitute the manpower on which the authorities depend. This is in consonance to Getzels and Guba (1957) cited in Peretomode(2010). They emphasized the importance of idiographic or individual staff needs dispositions which principals should make it mandatory hence nobody would work without fulfilling his need dispositions.

Principals whose administrative effectiveness is more of nomothetic i.e. organizational or school-oriented never achieve higher productivity from their staff. In other words, Besong (2001) related principal’s administrative effectiveness to human ability to achieve the objectives of his school through human relationship. Except the principals in South-West Region in particular and in Cameroon generally incorporate their staff in their day-to-day administration, otherwise poor or low productivity both internally and externally. It implies encouraging and persuading them than using McGregor theory X, the climate in the school will not be conducive for productivity. The results of hypothesis two (2) showed that principals’ administrative effectiveness towards their staff productivity is not dependent on their sex. From the findings, it shows that male and female principals in secondary schools in South-West Region differ significantly in terms managing human and material resources; managing school finance and motivation of staff for productivity.

Besong (2001) studied sex of administrative effectiveness of Primary Headteachers and found out that male and female headteachers differed considerably in almost all the variables. The finding showed the male excelled their female counterparts in managing school finance. The study of Messengill and Dimac (1979) cited in Besong (2001) supported this finding. Ross (1976) in Besong (2001) study in England revealed that males’ earlier exposure to education made them more confident and superior in administrative effectiveness. Further explanation to this finding is that male principals have the inclination to be more cautious in their administrative effectiveness than female counterparts in stabilizing or maintaining their job in terms of being effective. They need to be sensitive and knowledgeable even if they are not given orientation in terms of in-service or induction courses on administration. In addition, males are breadwinners and are automatically leaders of their homes. Therefore there is likelihood for them to maintain decorum so as to achieve maximum educational achievement.

However, the findings of Peterman and Kennedy (2003) showed that principals who participate in educational management orientation usually perform well in administrative issues. The implication is that male principals feel the pangs of unemployment more than their female counterparts who enjoy the privilege of being provided by spouses in most cases.
XI. CONCLUSION

On the strength of the findings, these conclusions, are drawn, on principals administrative effectiveness towards their staff productivity, is significantly negative in respect of managing human and material resources. Their administrative effectiveness on interpersonal relationship; managing school finance and motivation towards staff productivity are significantly positive. However, principals administrative effectiveness was not contingent on their sexes i.e. male or female in terms of the variables used or isolated for the study towards staff productivity in South-West Region of Cameroon. Male principals excelled more efficient than their female counterparts in all the variables isolated for the study.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusion, these recommendations are made.

1 - Administrative or managerial qualification(s) and experience too should be the yardstick or parameter of appointing principals in South-West Region.

2 - Induction courses should be organized for those promoted to the rank of principals, to acquaint them with simple ethics of managing human and material resources, interpersonal relationship, school finance and motivation of their staff.

3 - Fresher’s or those from higher Institutions Learning should not appointed yet until after some years of practical experience, hence it is the best teacher.

4 - Political sentiments should not be found in the corridors of those saddled with this responsibility. This will improve staff productivity in secondary schools in South-West Region in particular and the country at large.

5 - Principals should be encouraged by motivating them in terms of incentives as grass-root administrators for effectiveness since they are representatives of both the Regional Delegates of Ministry of Education and the main Minister of Education in their respective secondary schools in South-West Region in particular and those in other Regions in general.

6 - Fresher’s (i.e. newly employed teachers) from Higher Teachers’ Training Colleges posted to secondary schools in South-West Region and else-where in the country should be motivated so that they should not make teaching profession a stepping stone to other jobs which are more lucrative in terms of effective administration of human and material resources and interpersonal relationship.

REFERENCES


