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Supervisors' Leadership Frames: Implications for Implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) In Nigeria (Pp. 290-301)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership frames of supervisor of public schools in Nigeria required for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria. This study draws on work of Bolman and Deals (1990) four-Frame Leadership Model. Using Three research questions and three null hypotheses, the samples of the study consisted of 600 supervisors of public schools in Nigeria. Data collection was done through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, its internal coefficient of internal consistency was 0.85 using Cronbach alpha. The data obtained were statistically analysed using mean scores and independent t-test analysis. Result indicated that distributed leadership is essential ingredient for promoting educational excellence. It was concluded that distributed forms of leadership among the wider staff is likely to have a significant influence on the academic achievement of students/pupil outcomes than that which is likely top down. It was recommended among others that the type of leaders demanded for effective implementation of UBE are not leaders involved in money running at billion of naira in foreign bank account to the detriment of welfare of their people. That it should be an engagement of

many people in leadership activity of directing and following the contour of expertise in an organization.

Introduction and Brief Literature Review

The centrality of school leadership in national development is incontrovertible. The school leadership has recently emerged from several years of being in the shadows of educational administration and supervision to enjoy its enviable position in the things of education. In Nigeria, schools and colleges have grown 'larger than earlier generations have dreamt possible. The budgets have also grown faster yet these institutions are in crises and being attacked for lack of performance. According to Nigerian Union of Teachers (2006), educational leaders have worked conscientiously and relentlessly to secure their jobs and achieve the schools' goals and objectives. In the contemporary period, the case is different. This according to Nwachukwu (2006) has been attributed to supervisory leadership. Indeed, there is some foundation for this optimistic position. Researchers on school effectiveness and school improvement have consistently highlighted the importance of supervisory leadership in generating better schools (Sammons, 1999; Hopkin, 2001; Efanga, 2006).

The role of leadership in quality assurance of an organization is undisputable. In educational organizations, supervisory leaders are expected to set the school goals properly, create classroom climate that is characterized by warm, human relationship which is permissive and challenging enough to stimulate expression and creativity (Hall & Hord, 2006, Sergiovamin, 2006). These important roles of supervisory leaders lead Bolman and Deal (1994) to categorize leadership into four frames: Structure, Human Resource (people), political (functions) and symbolic frames. However, these frames focus on the what rather than the how of leadership.

The structural frame focuses on the importance of formal roles and relationship. The human resource frame suggests that organizations are made up of people who have different needs feelings and interest. The political frame views organization as political arena in which resources are scarce and people compete for power why the symbolic treats organization as unique culture which has rituals, ceremonies and myths.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of making changes in education in order to meet the needs of a changing world. The foregoing has therefore, aroused the curiosity of the researchers to investigate the

supervisors leadership frames: implications for implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) captures the essence of Universal Basic Education (UBE), the aspirations and expectation when it submitted that the objectives of UBE shall be:

- To develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- the provision for free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school age;
- reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance quality and efficiency);
- catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotions of basic education.
- ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership frames of supervisor of public schools in Nigeria required for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria.

Problem

The implementation guidelines for the UBE programme published by the Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja (1999) recognizes in details the importance of supervisory leadership for the programme to succeed. This is according to the paper in a bid to counter the factors that were known to have hindered the achievement of the goals of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) two decades ago. It envisages that more appropriate approaches will have to be developed for the effective implementation of the programme. It was based on these aforementioned problems that the researchers conducted the research to explore the leadership frames of supervisor of public schools in Nigeria.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

Three research questions were formulated to guide the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Questions

1. Which leadership frames do the supervisors of public schools prefer for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria?
2. Do leadership frame differ in relation to the supervisors years of experience in the field?
3. Do supervisors consider themselves as effective managers and leaders in the field?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between structural frame of leadership and human frame of leadership in the implementation of UBE in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between Human frame of leadership and Distributive leadership in the implementation of UBE in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between distributed frame of leadership and structural frame of leadership in the implementation of UBE in Nigeria.

Methodology

A survey research design was used for the study. The survey design was used because it is non experimental. It is ex-post facto design, this implies that the cause(s) of the event had already occurred.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population for the study consisted of all school inspectors in Nigeria. Six hundred federal and State school supervisors randomly selected from 36, states in the country constituted the study sample.

Instrumentation

The instrument for collecting data for the study was a five-point Likert type structured questionnaire, which was constructed by the researchers based on variables under study and validated by experts in Educational Supervision. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a sample of 40 supervisors were selected from three states, they were not included in the list from which

the study sample was finally drawn. Cronbach Alpha method was used to analyse the data, which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.85. This was considered high enough for the study.

Data Collection and Statistical Analysis

All the school supervisors to whom the instruments were administered responded to the question and returned the completed questionnaire. The data collected were abstracted and analysed using weighted mean with a cut-off point of 2.50, while the null-hypotheses were tested using independent t-test analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

As shown in table 4, the calculated t-value was 0.79 and was less than the critical t-value of 1.98 at the degree of freedom 598. The null hypothesis was therefore retained, thus, there is no significant difference between structural frame of leadership and Human Frame of leadership in the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.

As shown in table 5, a calculated t-value of 4.21 was obtained, this was tested for significance by comparing with critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level with 598 degree of freedom. The obtained calculated t-value was greater than the critical t value of 1.98. The difference between the mean of scores of Human Frame of leadership and Distributed Leadership was therefore significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This outcome suggests that distributed leadership is likely to have a significant influence on academic outcome of students.

In table 6 the calculated t-value of 3.52 was higher than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 levels. This means that there is a significant difference between the two forms of leadership. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Judging from the mean, Distributed Forms of leadership has more influence on the implementation of UBE, it implies that students' academic achievement is enhanced by distributed forms of leadership.

Discussion of Findings

The result of analysis of data summarized in table 1 and 4 showed that Human Frame of leadership does not differ significantly from structural frame of leadership in the implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria, but human frame has mean score which was higher than the structural frame. It means that supervisors use of human resource frame dominantly shows that they think that the schools must fit teachers' needs as

organizations and people need each other otherwise organizations will exploit people or people will find ways to exploit organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1994). Such exploitation would compromise quality assurance. Previous researchers have also presented similar results about supervisors attaching more importance to teachers' need and skills than the school's goals and achievements (Fallan, 2003, Chsbee, 2004; Welherill & Applefield, 2005). Furthermore, the supervisors seem to utilize the structural frame which stipulates that people should focus on getting the job done rather than doing what they please (McNeal & Christy, 2001). Based on the task and environment for quality assurance, coordination may be achieved through authority, rules, policies and standard operating procedures, information systems, meeting or a variety of informal techniques (Bolman & Deal, 1994). This shows that although supervisors value the human side of the school they still give a lot of importance to rules, authority and structure which are recurrent concepts for proper implementation of Universal Basic Education.

Results in table 5 showed that the calculated t-value of 4.21 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level with 598 degree of freedom. The difference between mean of scores of the two variables (Human Frame and Distributed leadership) was significant. The null hypothesis was rejected. These outcomes suggested that distributed forms of leadership are likely to have a significant influence on academic achievement of students. These findings support Groom's (2002) conceptualization of supervisory leadership as a collective phenomenon where leadership is present in the flow of activities in which a set of organization members find themselves enmeshed. Wasley (1991) reiterated that teachers need to be involved in the process of deciding what roles, if any, they wish to take on and must feel supported by the school administration.

Analysis of data on hypothesis 3 indicated that there was a significant difference between mean scores of distributed forms of leadership and structural frame of leadership. Distributed forms of leadership had mean scores of 37.81 which was higher than 32.66 of the structural frame. This implies that Distributed forms of leadership have more influence in the implementation of UBE in Nigeria. These findings support Bass and Avohio (1999). They believe that by engaging the followers higher needs, transformational politicians move followers beyond their self-interest to work for the greater good and that, as they do so, they become self-actualizing and become leaders themselves. Similarly, Sergiovani (2001) opined that leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher level goals that are common to

both. Both want to become the best. Also, Groom (2000) suggested that distributed leadership implies different power relationship within the school where the distinctions between followers and leaders tend to blur.

Result in table 2 also shows that supervisors with 1 to 10 years of experience scored high on the three frames (Structural, human resource and Distributed). As Derelg, (2003) similarly observed, the decline in the number of scores obtained as the principals gain work experience can be attributed to the phenomenon of being burn-out, in order words, demotivation due to the number of years spent in a particular job. This may also be due to the long period that principals spend in a particular job with no hope for further promotion and change feeling ready for retirement and getting fossilized day by day both individually and institutionally as well. The extent to which such principal assure quality leadership is limited. Moreover, supervisor who have a work experience of 1 – 10 years obtained the highest level of scores from the human resource frame. The reason being that within the first years of their appointment principals are more energetic and willing to contribute to the empowerment of the school. As the structural frame stipulates, they dwell on establishing a clear organizational structure and setting goals for the school. They tend to coordinate and control the work environment. Furthermore, they are more idealistic and they value the relationships and feelings of individual (Bolman & Deal, 1994).

Also one can, infer that principals with a work experience of 1 – 10 years consider themselves as being more Human rather than structural leaders. A Human leadership is associated with such term as charisma, being a role model to others and inspiration, principals within their first years of work experience want to impose such concepts on their teachers because effective leaders value Human aspect and recognize the importance of articulating a vision that provides purpose direction and meaning to an organization in an information age. This is necessary for quality assurance.

Summary

The findings from this research shed light on each of the three research hypotheses. This research supports Hopkin's (2001) Conceptualization of supervisory leadership as a professional supervisory today which enthusiastically accept leadership challenge for making teaching and learning better for future students.

Implications for College Programmes

Although this research focused on the ways in which supervisory leadership in the context of a school promotes implementation of UBE in Nigeria, the results provide support for the school inspection that are designed to improve students out comes in enlarged educational system.

Recommendations

1. That the burden of leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared among experienced professional colleagues. The moral and ethical foundation for leadership will be strengthened, for the overall advantage of instruction in our schools if school administrators place outer world concerns such as the welfare of schooling before inner concerns for self-expression and personal success in their leadership roles.
2. The type of leaders demanded for effective implementation of UBE should not be leaders that involved in money laundering, buying of large estate overseas and banking unused money running at billion of naira in a foreign bank account to the detriment of welfare of their people.
3. Many people in the school organization should be involved in leadership activity of directing and following the contour of expertise in the schools.
4. The State Ministry of Education and Boards might use the leadership frames for interviews when appointing new principals. They may wish to structure their interview questions in ways that address Bolman and Deal's leadership frames.

Conclusions

Supervisors of secondary schools in Nigeria were perceived as using more of human, structural and distributed leadership frames. The structural frame was the least used. As the years of experience of the principals progressed, the use of structural leadership frame diminished. By so doing, the extent to which principals used leadership frames for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria is limited. As recent research supports that effective leaders and effective organizations rely on multiple frames and perspectives, it can be enormously liberating for administrators to see that there is always more than one way to respond to any organizational problem or dilemma in a bid to ensure effective implementation of the UBE. In this

information age, more needs to be done to improve supervisors' leadership for effective implementation of UBE in Nigeria.

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Table 1: Leadership Frame and Supervisors

Variables	<	Decision
Structural Frame	4.04	Accept
Human Frame	4.17	Accept
Distributed Leadership	4.82	Accept

Table 2: Leadership Frames of supervisors in Relation to Years of Experiences

Variables	< 1 – 10 years	Decision	< above 10 years	Decision
Structural	4.37	Accept	3.92	Reject
Human	4.64	Accept	4.46	Reject
Distributed	4.96	Accept	4.45	Accept

Table 3: Percentage Ratings of Supervisors' Effectiveness

S/N	Items	Highly Effective	Averagely Effective	Ineffective	Require Training to be More Effective
1	Leaders	5% (3)		90% (56)	97% (57)
2	Managers	22% (13)	75% (88)	4% (5)	82% (56)

Table 4: Independent t-test Analysis; Comparison of Structural Frame and Human Frame Leaderships in the Implementation of UBE

Variables	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Structural Frame	32.66	4.37	598	0.79	1.98	NS
Human Frame	33.63	4.82				

NS = Not significant at alpha level of 0.05

N = 600, P > 1.98

Degree of freedom (df) = 598

Table 5: Independent t-test Analysis; A Comparison of Human Frame and Distributed form of Supervisory Leadership in Implementation of UBE

Variables	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Human Frame	33.63	4.82	598	4.21	1.98	S
Distributed Leadership	37.81	2.89				

S = Significant at alpha level of 0.05

N = 600, P > 1.98 Degree of freedom (df) = 598

Table 6: Independent t-test Comparison of Mean Scores of Distributed Frame of Leadership and Structural

Variables	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-cri	Decision
Distributed Frame	37.81	2.89	598	3.52	1.98	S
Structural Frame	32.66	4.37				

S = Significant at alpha level of 0.05

N = 600, P > 1.98 Degree of freedom (df) = 598