

Principals' Leadership Practices for Successful Achievement of Secondary Education Goals in Anambra State

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Abstract

The study ascertained principals' leadership practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State. The study was guided by three research questions. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 263 principals in the state government owned schools in Anambra State. They were all used for the study. Data was collected using a 33-item researchers' developed instrument titled "Principals Leadership Practices Questionnaire". Data analysis was done using arithmetic mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that principals' administrative, curriculum and disciplinary roles are the leadership practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that State Education Board should develop and equip principals in administrative, curriculum and disciplinary management skills.

Keywords: Leadership, Principals, Secondary education

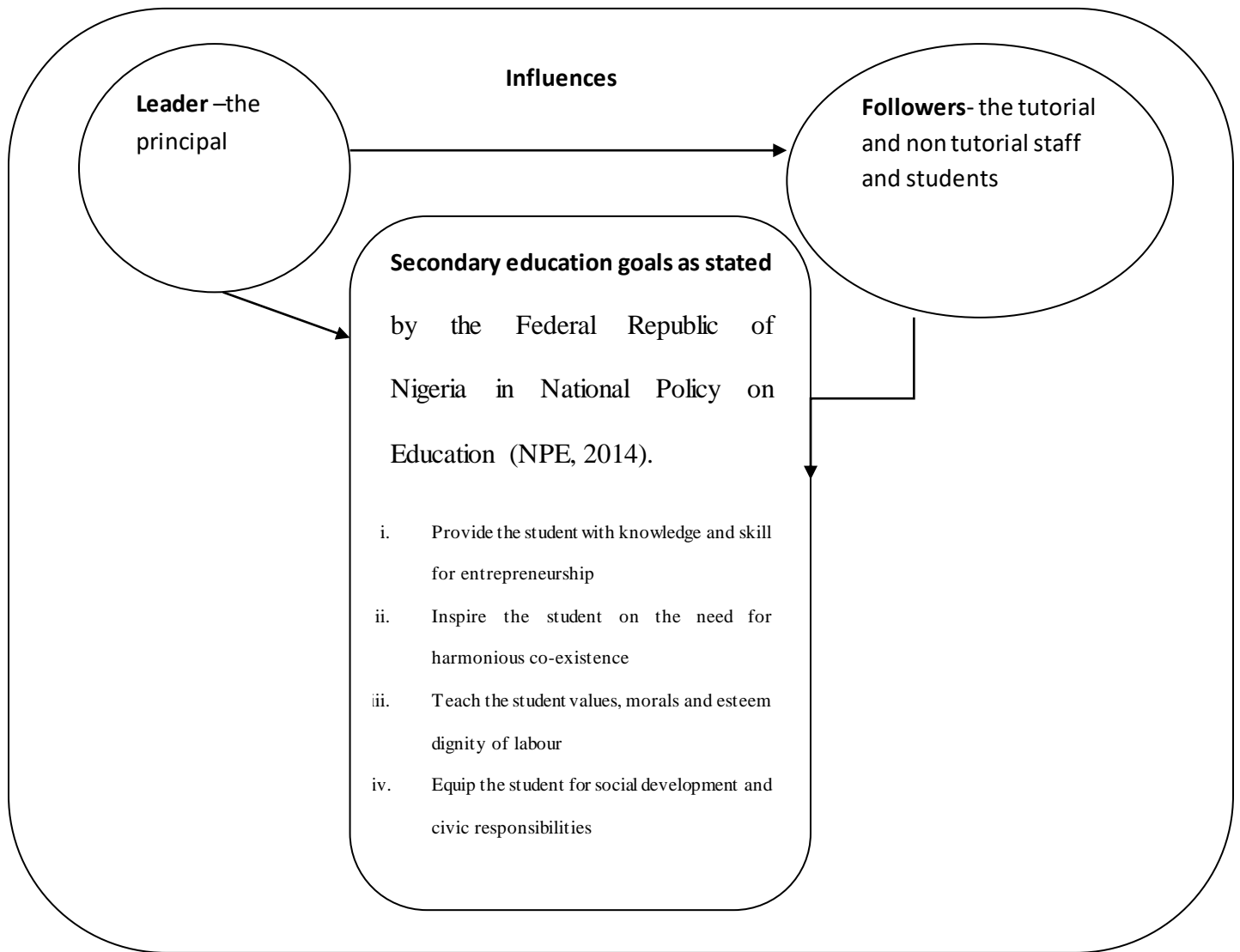
INTRODUCTION

Secondary education is an essential level of schooling that aimed at grooming students for self-reliance and furtherance of formal education. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria in the national policy on education, secondary education is the education received after primary education and before tertiary education; aimed at preparing students for useful living within the society and higher education. The goals of secondary education according to FRN (2013) are to:

- ❖ Provide the child with knowledge and skill for entrepreneurship
- ❖ Inspire the child on the need for harmonious co-existence
- ❖ Teach the child values, morals and esteem dignity of labour
- ❖ To furnish the child for social development and civic responsibilities

The above goals of the secondary education cannot be actualized without the principal who is in the helm of affair in the school. The school principal is the head in secondary school or college whose strategic position aid to spur the activities of school members into achieving the national educational goals. In the views of Okeke and Ikediugwu (2020) the principal is the administrative head of secondary school that is responsible for ensuring smooth running of daily affairs in the school. This is to say that school principals are the academic and administrative heads in the school whose vital responsibility is to spur the activities of school members into achieving national secondary school education goals. They are the head of administration, instruction and the chief executors of national policies on education in secondary school. According to Ezeugbor and Anozie, (2019), a principal is the foremost administrator of a secondary school that takes charge of the day to day activities in a school. In other words, the quality management of secondary school lies with the executive heads of school; the principal. More importantly, Okeke, Njoku and Obasi (2020) noted that principals' job performance include maintaining order, discipline of both students and staff that enhance school effectiveness and students' academic achievement. Similarly, Ugwu, Okeke-James, Igbokwe and Oparaji(2020) noted that the principal is the head and the supervisor of pedagogy as they assign job responsibilities or roles to teachers.

In view of the above, it is obvious that in the pursuit of the goals of secondary education such as grooming the students in moral, skills and social development can only be achieved when the principals assumed their leadership roles. Leadership is an onerous position set for people that have capacity to guide others towards goal achievement. According to Surji (2015) leadership is a method whereby an individual influences a team to achieve a common goal. This is to say that the principal is to bring about change and innovation in educational and school objectives through focusing the efforts and activities of both staff and students to the desired goal. In the education, leadership according to Ezeugbor and Thompson (2019) is the continuous effort towards stimulating and influencing staff and students enthusiastically to work towards the realization of the set goals. In the views of Walters and Marzaon in Ezeugbor and Anozie(2019) leadership is seen as the process of enlisting and guiding the talent of teachers, learners and parent towards achieving common educational goals. The various scholarly definitions of leadership revolve around three important ideas: the leader, follower and purpose. The diagram below will aid in applying these three ideas to secondary school. Fig 1



role go beyond mere directing; it encompass both staff and students personnel administration. He ensures this through considering staff and students’ opinion in making decision, identifying and meeting the professional needs of teachers, motivation, financial and security management and control of staff and students towards achievement of the set educational goals (Omenyi, Nwonkwo and Nwite, 2015). This means that the principal is in the hem of school programme drafting and evaluation exercises in the school which help to determine the pace of the school.

Secondly, the principal performs curriculum management role. Specifically, Chuka-Okonkwo (2020) maintained that the assessment for curriculum management and quality education is particularly the role of the principal. In the views of Ofojebe and Ugwo (2020) the principals’ curriculum management role depicts ability to influence school members to strive for

the accomplishment of teaching and learning objectives. This principals' role entail ensuring that necessary resources for implementation of school program are made available, evaluating students' progress, providing a detailed teacher assessment policy in the school, ensuring a teaching plan for teachers to address weaknesses in their teaching. The principal discharges this role by exclusively assessing the content and methods of teaching for effective teaching and learning exercise.

Thirdly, the principal discharge disciplinary roles. Onye (2020) stated that the varying differences in temperamental, cultural and social make-ups and background oftentimes result to conflict which is capable of thwarting the academic exercises in the school. This informs the need for principal to discharge disciplinary roles. Okeke, Njoku and Obasi (2020) stressed that the principal is the chief executive who keeps things running in good order and discipline in secondary school. They are to monitor and maintain standard in school which promotes school discipline. It is pertinent that the principal maintains conducive school climate where school members can efficiently function. School discipline helps smooth functioning of the school and achievement of educational goals. This he can accomplish by ensuring conflict resolution. The principals manage the differences in views, opinion and operations of school members. This agrees with the assertions of Ugwu, Okeke-James, Igbokwe and Oparaji (2020), that principals of secondary schools should minimize conflicting with their teachers by accommodating the views and opinions of the teachers. In other words, the school principal should not be a dictator rather a democratic leader.

The post of school principal is no doubt a strategic position that performs various leadership roles such as administrative, curriculum and discipline management at different points in the school. Thus, the totality of performance, behaviours and achievement of secondary school goals lies to a great extent on the principals' leadership responsibilities. The observation of the researchers seem to show that most secondary school principals are not usual successful because of the inability to apply some best leadership practices. Therefore, this study is aimed at proffering best leadership practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals. For this reason, the distinction between principal and leadership appear to be of uttermost important.

Statement of the problem

Achievement of secondary education goal can be achieved by the principal through discharging his leadership roles. Leadership roles are the ability of the principal that direct the activities of the school members to accomplishing the stated secondary education goals. In secondary school, it is the responsibility of the principal to perform three vital leadership functions: administrative roles, Curriculum management roles and disciplinary roles.

However, in Anambra State there are clear expressions of lapses in principal leadership roles. Such as poor job performance among teachers (Okeke-James, Igbokwe, Ogboo, Ekweogu & Anyanwu, 2020), poor teachers' motivation (Okwueze,2020) and increase in students' indiscipline (Unachukwu & Okeke-James, 2017) in secondary schools in Anambra state is a clear expression of lapses in principal leadership. It is the light of the above that the problem of this study was to ascertain principal leadership practices for achievement of secondary school goals.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain principals' leadership practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State. Specifically, the study found out:

1. Principals' administrative practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State.
2. Principals' curriculum management practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State
3. Principals' disciplinary practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the principals' administrative practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State?
2. What are the principals' curriculum management practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State?
3. What are the principals' disciplinary practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State?

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The total population comprised 263 principals. There was no sampling in this study; all the 263 principals in the public secondary schools in Anambra State were used for the study. A structured questionnaire titled Principals' Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PLPQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument contains 33-item structured on a five point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagree (D). The researchers with the help of one researcher assistance who are secondary school principal in secondary school in Anambra State administered copies of the questionnaire on the principals. Out of 263 copies of questionnaire distributed, 230 copies were duly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 87% return. Mean and Standard deviation were used for answering the research questions. Any response above 3.0 was taken as accepted; while the mean score which rated below is taken otherwise.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the principals' administrative practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State?

Table 1: mean ratings and standard deviation scores of principals' administrative practices for achieving secondary school goals

S/N	Principals' administrative practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals.	N	SA	A	U	D	SD	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	I delegate authority to staff members in my school	230	192	38	-	-	-	4.83	.37	Accepted
2.	I provide timely guidance and feedback to staff members and students	230	178	51	-	1	-	4.77	.45	Accepted
3.	I am highly respected by the school staff	230	157	72	-	1	-	4.67	.50	Accepted
4.	My emphasis is on leadership by example	230	160	70	-	-	-	4.70	.46	Accepted
5.	I ensure that staff members are trained for leadership	230	155	73	-	2	-	4.67	.53	Accepted
6.	I consider staff opinion in making decision	230	160	69	-	1	-	4.69	.49	Accepted
7.	Students' opinion are sought when initiating actions that will affect them	230	131	96	-	3	-	4.54	.57	Accepted
8.	I try to identify and meet the professional needs of teachers	230	166	62	-	1	1	4.70	.54	Accepted
9.	I like working as a team	230	148	80	-	1	1	4.62	.56	Accepted
10.	I consistently hold one-on-one meeting with each school staff	230	138	77	1	1	1	4.47	.81	Accepted
	Grand \bar{X}	230						4.67		Accepted

As revealed on Table 1, the respondents all agreed to all the listed. This is because all the items have mean greater than 3.0, which is the criterion mean.

Research Question 2: What are the principals’ curriculum management practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State?

Table 2: mean ratings and standard deviation scores of principals’ curriculum management practices for achieving secondary school goals

S/N	Principals’ curriculum management practices for achievement of secondary education goals	N	SA	A	U	D	SD	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Decision
11.	I ensure that school members participate in development of school goals	230	164	65	-	1	-	4.70	.49	Accepted
12.	Success in my school has been achieved through team work	230	212	18	-	-	-	4.92	.27	Accepted
13.	School staff are encouraged to work towards the same goals	230	148	82	-	-	-	4.64	.48	Accepted
14.	Provides information that helps to implement school program	230	151	76	1	1	1	4.63	.57	Accepted
15.	I stimulate teachers to think only of best performance from the students	230	136	92	1	1	-	4.58	.53	Accepted
16.	I ensure that necessary resources for implementation of school program are made available	230	123	105	1	1	-	4.52	.53	Accepted
17.	I evaluate teachers using students’ assessment	230	141	83	-	6	-	4.56	.64	Accepted
18.	Retention and pass rate of students in my school is above average	230	149	74	1	6	-	4.59	.64	Accepted
19.	There is a detailed	230	102	124	2	1	1	4.41	.58	Accepted

20.	teacher assessment policy in my school There is student assessment policy in my school	230	86	144	-	-	-	4.37	.48	Accepted
21.	There is a teaching plan for teachers to address weaknesses in their teaching	230	160	62	-	8	-	4.63	.67	Accepted
22.	I provide opportunity for students' feedback on the teaching in the school	230	158	59	-	12	1	4.57	.78	Accepted
23.	I use test scores of students to evaluate teacher's performance	230	144	78	-	8	-	4.56	.68	Accepted
24.	I ensure that I update and advance in my professional career	230	134	90	2	1	-	4.58	.54	Accepted
	Grand \bar{X}	230						4.59		Accepted

From Table 2, the respondents all agreed to all the listed. This is because all the items have mean greater than 3.0, which is the criterion mean.

Research Question 3: What are the principals' disciplinary practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State?

Table 3: mean ratings revealed that all the items have mean ratings above the cutoff mean of 3.0 which is the criterion mean.

S/N	Principals' curriculum practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals.	N	SA	A	U	D	SD	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Accepted
25.	I have the capacity to resolve conflict in the school	230	178	52	-	-	-	4.77	.42	Accepted
26.	I have the ability to overcome challenges in the school	230	144	82	-	4	-	4.59	.59	Accepted
27.	The school staff obey	230	104	88	-	22	16	4.05	1.21	Accepted

28.	me out of fear of punishment I do not permit verbal and physical abuse of teachers in any way	230	140	85	1	3	1	4.57	.62	Accepted
29.	I regularly appraise the teachers in my school	230	140	82	1	7	-	4.54	.66	Accepted
30.	There is student disciplinary policy in my school	230	97	133	-	-	-	4.42	.49	Accepted
31.	I create an orderly atmosphere in the school	230	142	87	-	1	-	4.61	.52	Accepted
32.	I monitor the work of the students in the school	230	133	91	-	5	1	4.52	.66	Accepted
33.	I ensure that classroom work is in accordance with school goal	230	151	77	-	1	1	4.63	.56	Accepted
	Grand \bar{X}	230						4.52		Accepted

Discussions

Principals' administrative practices for achieving secondary school goals in secondary schools in Anambra State as found out by the study included; delegating authority to staff members in my school, providing timely guidance and feedback to staff members and students, laying emphasis is on leadership by example, considering staff and students' opinion in making decision, identifying and meeting the professional needs of teachers. This finding is an indication that secondary school principal accepted that when the above administrative practices are adopted will aid in achieving the secondary school education goals. This finding agrees with the assertion of Omenyi, Nwonkwo and Nwite (2015) that educational goals are attained when proper decision making, guidance, motivation, financial and security management and control of staff and students are ensured in the school.

The finding of the study also indicated that principals' curriculum management practices for achieving secondary school goals in secondary schools in Anambra State include; providing information that helps to implement school program, stimulating teachers to think only of best performance from the students, ensuring that necessary resources for implementation of school program are made available, evaluating teachers using students' assessment, ensuring that retention and pass rate of students in my school is above average, providing a detailed teacher assessment policy in my school, ensuring a teaching plan for teachers to address weaknesses in their teaching, ensuring that teachers provide the opportunity for students' feedback on the

teaching in the school, ensuring update and advance in professional career. This finding is in line with the views of Ofojebe and Ugwo (2020) who stated that the principals' curriculum management role depicts ability to influence school members to strive for the accomplishment of teaching and learning objectives

The result of the study also revealed that the principals' disciplinary practices for successful achievement of secondary education goals in Anambra State include; the capacity to resolve conflict in the school, the ability to overcome challenges in the school by not permitting verbal and physical abuse of school members, creating an orderly atmosphere in the school, ensuring that classroom work is in accordance with school goal and monitoring the work of the students in the school. This affirmed the assertion of Okeke, Njoku and Obasi (2020) that the principal is the chief executive who keeps things running in good order and discipline in secondary school. They are to monitor and maintain standard in school which promotes school discipline.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, it was concluded that principals' adoption of leadership practice will help to achieve the secondary education goals in Anambra State. This shows that promote integrity and accomplishment of secondary education goals will be ensured by upholding best leadership practices.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. State Education Board should develop and equip principals in administrative, curriculum and disciplinary management.
2. Principals should develop official guideline for general school discipline.
3. Principals should adopt useful curriculum management practices to enhance educational processes and teachers' functional performances
4. Principals should endeavour to motivate teachers and students by discharging these administrative roles: delegating authority to staff members in schools, providing timely guidance and feedback to staff members and students, laying emphasis is on leadership by example, considering staff and students' opinion in making decision, identifying and meeting the professional needs of teachers

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