

## **PRINCIPALS' SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN RIVERS STATE**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated principals' social behavior management and public secondary school administration in Rivers State. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was 529 Principals in public secondary schools in Rivers State, with a sample size of 270 principals, which comprised of 130 principals from senior secondary schools and 140 principals from junior secondary schools representing 51% of the target population with a sample technique. The research instrument titled principals' social behavior management and public secondary school administration questionnaire (PSBPSSAQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated using Cronbach Alpha to establish the interval consistency of the instrument yielding a reliability index of 0.82. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation (SD), while the null hypotheses were tested with a Z-test at 0.5 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that principals have challenge implementing decision from teachers and they do not consider alternative decisions, but only based them on intuition. Also the study revealed that principals reject information from teachers either wrong or right but according to their source. Principals communicate with staff pre-inform them about planned targets. Based in the findings, the study concluded that when school administrations put into consideration the opinion of teachers and necessary alternatives before making decisions, it will result to effective administration of schools. Based on the findings school administration (Principals) should also seek the opinion of teachers most times, before making vital decisions as it bothers the school.

**Keyword:** *Social behavior, management, Communication, Decision making and secondary school principals*

### **Introduction**

The school is a social institution that interacts with its environment and actors

within the school system. Secondary schools are headed by principal who must have a vast administrative experience. The functional tool of the principal is that he

interacts with the ministry of education, teachers, students, parents and the community where the school is situated.

The principal plays a vital role in the daily interactions of the school. He interacts with teachers and students in order to improve teaching and learning competency. Halinger and Heck in Pont, Nushe and Moorman (2008) rightly pointed out that school leaders work mainly outside the classroom, their impact on student learning is largely mediated through other people, events and organizational factors, such as teachers, classroom practices and school climate.

The fundamental key to an effective school administration is the principal's ability to communicate, understand and influence the people with whom he interacts with. The command he has in communication skills affects the implementation of administrative tasks. In order to command change and promote a climate of effective growth, the principal must be able to recognize, internalize and apply communication skills. According to Nwitte and Bernadette (2016) for effective administration of any establishment, especially the school system,

communication is central and *sin qua non* to school management.

A principal that has adequate communication skill will be able to influence activities of the school. The school as a social system are peopled, with the principal who plays the role of communicating with teachers and students. They are also goal oriented, the people in the school system interact on a daily basis to achieve goals. Social behaviour involves two dimension, which are the institutions, with certain roles and expectations that will fulfill the goals of the system and the individuals, with certain personalities and dispositions in the system. These interactions constitute what is called social behaviour. This behaviour is a function of these major elements: Institution, role and expectation, which comprise the nomothetic dimension and the individual personality and need disposition, which together comprise the idiographic or personal dimension. Social behaviour in this context is predicated on the personality of the principal and the role he occupies in the school institution. Getzel and Guba in Kivanc (2014) defined social behaviour as a result of the

interactions between role and personality, therefore for the principal to lead effectively and efficiently he must understand the nature and relationship of these elements and manage it accordingly. In the administration of the school, the principal is influenced by his personality. Accordingly the behaviour of the principal and how he communicates is relative to his personal dispositions and the role he occupies as the head of the school. Management of the social behaviour, which is a function of both the role and personality of the principal is essential. Therefore as the principal performs his role as the leader of the school, which is the institution, his individualistic and personality latitude is involved. A principal who excludes himself from such would not be able to communicate with his teachers, his environment and the ministry of education.

For the school organization to thrive, it is necessary and purposeful for the principal to have a good communication skill. Communication therefore is the medium used in an organization to exchange information that has to do with the operations of the organization.

Communication is a process of creating, transmitting and interpreting ideas, facts, opinions and feelings Cole (1996). The principals' ability to manage command in communication affects the implementation of administrative tasks. An administrator that applies sufficient communication skills knows his onion and is able to define problems and take decisions, which is the second element of social behaviour discussed in this paper. Managing decision making skills helps principals in the administration of secondary schools.

Decision making is one of the most important activities the principal engage daily as he performs his role. Schools successes have been critically linked to effective decisions. Decisions are made at all levels of school organization. Eisenfuhr (2011) defined decision making as the process of making a choice from a number of alternatives. Decision making involves a final choice from all other alternatives and finally taking a desired choice from those alternatives for decision making purposes. Decision making is an important tool of principals in school administration. Decision making is central in administration, the hallmark of any

effective administration is decision making. The principal plays a vital role in the daily interactions of the school, and the level at which he takes decisions on vital issues in the school will go a long way to enhance the administration of the schools, because school success is critically linked to effective decisions. Principals who do not integrate both their personality and their role, while taking decisions, will be subject to constraints while taking decisions. Dietz (2003) identified that a good decision, while subject to the constraints of knowledge and resources maximizes the wellbeing of those affected by it. Therefore principals while taking administrative decisions should consider the wellbeing of the organization and the role they occupy as the head of the school. It is understood that the principal prior to his role as the head of the school, has his expressive personality and disposition. Therefore in order for him to make critical decisions he needs to integrate these two factors, which is referred to as social behavior. According to Getzel and Guba in Kivanc(2014) social behavior is as a result of the interaction between the role and the personality. That is to say as the principal fulfills his role as the head of the school he

brings to bare his personality. Getzel and Guba in Kivanc (2014) opined that both the personality and the role rules behavior. Therefore for effective administration of the school both the role and the personality of the principal should come to play. Social behaviour is formed by expectations, roles, personality and need disposition of the principal in the school environment. It is as a result of the interactions between the idiographic and the nomothetic dimension.

### **Statement of Problem**

School administration inevitably deals with the fulfillment of both the nomothetic role expectations and idiographic need disposition of the principal, while the school's goals are being achieved. The unique goal of the school as a social system is to integrate the demands of all the actors in the school, in a way that is institutionally protective and individually fulfilling. Decision-making as the live wire of the school should not be personalized, ideally secondary school principals are expected to integrate the two dimensions of social behaviours, in factors such as decision-making and should be able to communicate with all the actors in the

school not hoarding information from those they perceived are not in their good books. Observations have shown instances where some principals take decision on matters bothering the school, without communicating its outcome to other members of staff. It is on this premise that this research is carried out.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The study investigated the social behaviour of principals and the administration of public secondary school in Rivers State. Specific objectives of the study was:

1. Examine principals' communication skills and how it affects public secondary school administration in Rivers State.
2. To find out how decision-making can improve on secondary school administration in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following research questions guided the study;

How do decision making improve on public secondary school administration in Rivers State?

1. In what ways do principals communication skills affect public secondary school administration in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses was tested in the course of the study;

1. There is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of urban and rural principals on how decision-making affects public secondary school administration in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of senior secondary school principals and (UBE) junior secondary school principals on how principals' communication skills affect public secondary school administration in Rivers State.

### **Methodology**

The research employed a descriptive survey aimed at finding out principals'

social behaviour management and public secondary school administration in Rivers State. Research instrument for data collections was a self structured 10 item questionnaire inline with the modified Likert four point scale. The instrument was validated. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish internal consistency of the instrument, which yielded a reliability index of 0.82.

Population of the study comprised of 529 principals of public secondary schools in

Rivers State, out of which 258 is from senior secondary and 271 is from the junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Sample size comprised of (130) principals of senior secondary school and 140 principals of junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Out of the entire population. Data was analyzed using standard deviation (SD) and rank order statistics while the null hypotheses was tested with z-test statistics at 0.5 level of significance.

## Results and discussion

**Research Question One:** How do decision making improve on public secondary school administration in Rivers State?

**Table 4.1: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), Standard Deviation (SD), on the Responses of Urban and Rural principals on how decision making improve on public secondary school administration in Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS		Urban Principals		Rural Principals		Remark
			$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
1	Principal has challenge implementing decision from staff.	3.20	0.97	2.96	1.02	3.08	Agreed
2	Principal do not evaluate other alternative before making decision.	3.31	0.90	3.03	0.98	3.17	Agreed
3	Principal do not accept alternative solution to problem while taking decision in the school	3.22	0.97	3.18	0.78	3.20	Agreed
4	Principal process information from teachers before taking decision in other to analyze the problem	3.19	0.93	3.03	0.98	3.11	Agreed
5	Principal takes decision based on intuition and perception	3.31	0.90	2.90	1.02	3.11	Agreed
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>3.13</b>	

Data on Table revealed that all the items (1-5) had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were seen as how decision making improve on public secondary school administration in Rivers State. In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.13 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents agreed that most principal has challenge

implementing decision from staff, do not evaluate other alternative before making decision, do not accept alternative solution to problem while taking decision in the school, process information from teachers before taking decision in other to analyze the problem and takes decision based on intuition and perception.

**Research Question One:** In what ways principal's communication skills affect public secondary school administration in Rivers State?

**Table 4.2: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), Standard Deviation (SD), on the Responses of Senior secondary and UBE principals on ways principal's communication skills affect public secondary school administration in Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS	Senior Sec. Principals		UBE Principals		$\bar{x}^2$	Remark
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD		
6	Principals reject information, whether they are right or wrong but according to their source.	3.18	0.94	2.94	1.03	3.06	Agreed
7	Principal communicate easily and well with teachers and members of staff.	3.25	0.92	2.95	1.01	3.10	Agreed
8	Principal gives opportunity to teachers and students to hear and discuss with them	3.27	0.87	2.92	1.00	3.10	Agreed
9	Does communication permeates every aspect of your school? i.e. the principal pre-inform all member of his staff about planned targets	3.32	0.92	2.98	1.02	3.15	Agreed
10	Principal ensure a high level of feedback as he relates with staff	3.32	0.86	2.91	1.03	3.12	Agreed
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>3.11</b>	

Data on Table revealed that all the items (6-10) had weighted mean scores above

the criterion mean of 2.50 and were seen as the ways principal's communication

skills affect public secondary school administration in Rivers State. In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.11 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents agreed that most principals reject information, whether they are right or wrong but according to their source, communicate easily and well with teachers and members of staff, gives opportunity to teachers and students to hear and discuss with them, pre-inform all member of his staff about planned targets and ensure a high level of feedback as he relates with staff.

## **Discussion of Findings and Implications**

### **How Decision making affects Public Secondary School Administration**

From the study, the respondents agreed that most principal has challenge implementing decisions from teachers, do not consider other alternative before making decision, do not accept alternative solution to problem while taking decision in the school, process information from teachers before taking decision in other to analyze the problem and takes decision based on intuition and perception.

March (2010) noted that decision making is so important and can have such significant effects on the operation of schools and posited that administration is decision making. Decision making according to Eisenfuhr (2011) is a process of making a choice from a number of alternatives to achieve a desired goal or result. This implies that when school administrators' consider the opinion of teachers and explore necessary alternatives before making decisions, it will result to effective school administration.

### **How Principal's Communication Skills affect Public Secondary School Administration**

From the study, the respondents agreed that most principals reject information, whether they are right or wrong but according to their source, communicate easily and well with teachers and members of staff, gives opportunity to teachers and students to hear and discuss with them, pre-inform all member of his staff about planned targets and ensure a high level of feedback as he relates with staff.

Ijaiya (2000) observed that schools effective teaching implies



effective communication between the teacher and his students. Nwite and Bernadette (2016) opined that effective communication is an essential ingredient to the secondary school principals for effective administration. Akinola (2013) carried out a study on principals' leadership skills and school effectiveness: The case of South Western Nigeria, the findings revealed that secondary school principals in South Western Nigeria possessed technical, interpersonal, conceptual and administrative skills and a significant relationship was found between principals' leadership skills and school effectiveness. This is in line with the present study because, one of the skills a school administrators should possess is good communication skills. It implies that when there is good communication among teachers, students and principals, administration of secondary schools will be enhanced. when principals possess better communication skills, it will foster a cordial relationship with teachers, thereby leading to better ways of solving administrative challenges.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study it is concluded that when school administrators consider, the opinion of teachers and explore necessary alternatives before making decisions; it will result to effective administration of schools. Also, when there is good communication among teachers, students and principals, it fosters cordial relationship between them in the school thereby enhancing effective administration of the school. Suffice it to say that, when principals possess better communication skills, it will foster a cordial relationship with teachers, thereby leading to better ways of solving administrative challenges.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it is recommended as follows:

1. Principals should be able to possess better communication skills especially, as it has to do with teachers' relation. This will enhance better ways of solving administrative challenges.
2. School administrators (principals) should also seek the opinion of teachers most times before making vital administrative decision.

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