

## CREATIVE SKILLS OF PRINCIPALS FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed at identifying the degree of the administrative creativity skills of principals in public secondary schools in Abia State. The purpose of the study was to assess the delegation of functions, staff capacity building, and challenges to principals creative skills for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided for the study. The research design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was the one hundred and sixty two (162) public secondary schools in Abia State. The total number of respondents included the 123 male and female principals, who were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. A research designed questionnaire titled: Creative Skills of Principals for Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (SPEAPSSQ) was used for data collection. Cronbach's Alpha statistics was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the z-test statistics was employed to test the research hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings are that delegation helps to maintain effective control and provides better opportunity for staff development and that the challenges of creative skills of principals is that there is reluctance to let go stereotyped practices, lack of acceptance and lack of implementation. It was recommended that principals should look out for programs meant to build their creative skills and also teacher development programmes should be made priority and compulsory for teachers in public secondary schools in Abia State.

**Keywords:** Administration, Creativity, skills, Secondary school.

The word creativity has come to stay in the education industry. It is now regarded as a household name that cannot be easily shoved aside. From the individual perspective to bigger organizations, creativity is sequel to productivity. The educational sector is not

out in this siege for creativity, hence at odd times, employees with creative skills seem to soar in the midst of turbulent times.

With the present scenario, school principals need to move out of the box so as to beat the mundane, routinous,

conventional and stereotyped activities. They need to shift from prescribed rules and embrace current and recent ways of doing things. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has its specifications and expectations, so for secondary school principals to meet up with the challenge and demands of the time, they must align with the current wave. The truth is that, times are hard, there are lots of indices and indicators jolting towards a comatose economy-retrenchment, closed shops, salary cuts, unemployment, depreciation of the naira, huge budgetary cut, investment contraction, and other austere economic options. The knowledge society demands a radical, aggressive, viral, creative and innovative way of handling issues. The educational system by its nature is a complex organization and the school as an institution requires its leaders to wake up from their slumber if they must discharge their duties effectively. Al-liajaya and Al-round (2011) held that the success of education for achieving the goals in schools requires an educational leader and principal who is responsible for his educational role. The complex nature of the school system will not allow the principal to perform all the functions alone, therefore he must empower teachers through delegation of functions. These teachers in a bid to carry out their functions effectively must possess the right technological know-how to flow with the times. Mo'taman (2003) maintains that the success in future requires school teachers assigned with qualitative characteristics to get along with globalization, data processing and the

rapid development of various methods of communication and technology.

The principal in displaying his creativity skills must aspire and inspire staff capacity development. Education is a lifelong venture. People must keep learning so as to fit into the future which usually comes with lots of unprecedented changes. A teacher should not stop being a learner simply because he is recruited to teacher in a school. Knowledge is dynamic- teachers therefore, need continuous learning opportunities so as to stay abreast of globally emerging knowledge. Learning experiences for development of job experiences, relationships and assessment of personality design that helps employees prepare for the future of their career (Hoe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright, 2004). As the teacher undergoes training, they also impact the knowledge to the students. Alabi (2006) confirms the importance of developing the teachers who directly impact knowledge to students, including the school heads who supervise and guide teachers.

However, Shamegleh (2006), Al-Omyan (2002) and Vecchio (1991) listed several practices that help in developing administrative creativity;

- 1) Encouraging teachers to introduce their ideas which must be listened to and respected.
- 2) Finding effective communication methods between teachers which allow information and ideas to be exchanged and discussed.

3) Encouraging teachers to debate freely in order to motivate them to present creative thoughts.

4) Offering moral and financial support for innovators and sponsoring creative projects.

5) Giving chance for initiatives and ventures and to tolerate the results of failure.

6) Offering teachers personal independence

With the above, this calls for principals to discard routine and stereotyped work and embrace creativity, innovation and expanded knowledge for effective administration of schools. Now that the economy is in a bad shape, government subvention trickles, nothing moves. Naturally, when a country is undergoing some difficult times, it apparently suggests that the country's resources is stagnated and lopsided, and negatively skewed. Then for school administrators to manouvre and still be effective in their duties, there ought to be workable and practical solutions.

Some organizations and institutions that are clamped down and subsumed by the current state of the economy is possibly because their leaders do not have anything new to offer. Variety, they say, is the spice of life. The world is tired of routines and stereotypes. Globalization and technology have given credence to creativity.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

In all intents and purposes, the utmost desire of students in public secondary schools is to receive quality

education. The government, private sectors and other stakeholders of education all clamour for effective school administration. This can be achieved by working with recent concepts which changes the routine work of administrators into creative and leading processes. A cursory look at Abia State shows that principals' creativity skills for effective administration is lacking, especially, in a comatose economy. Gone are the days when school principals are complacent, some are even resilient to changes. The bite from the excruciating pains of the economy presently is not something that any one would sit tight at a place. Schools objectives must be actualized. The school administrators must ensure that the school environment, staff, students, and material resources are effectively managed. Governments and other private individuals have meticulously expended energy to ensure effective administration of public secondary schools. However, despite all the efforts, these public schools are still lagging behind. Therefore, the researcher is worried and anxious to know why. Is it that school principals lack the necessary skills to act beyond prescribed guidelines? Or could it be that principals are stiff towards adopting the required creative skills? Or could it be that some principals are skeptical towards creative skills for fear of being penalized? Or could it be that principals have not been attending seminars on self development? Or could it be that they lack the ability to align other skills (hard and soft skills) with creative skills? It is on this premise that the study investigates the implication of creative

skills of principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State.

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

The objective of this study was to assess the creative skills for effective administration of principals in public secondary schools in Abia State. The study sought to;

1. identify how principals empower teachers through delegation of functions using their creative skills for effective administration of public secondary schools.
2. determine ways principals' creative skills bring about staff capacity development for effective administration of public secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions of the study are as follows;

- 1) How do principals creativity skills empower staff delegated of functions for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State?
- 2) How do the principals creative skills enhance staff capacity development for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State?

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses of this study is stated in a null form and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- 1) Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on how their creative skills bring about delegation of

functions for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State.

- 2) Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals in on how their creative skills bring about staff capacity development for effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey approach. The population consisted of 6,348 teachers, 162 of which are principals distributed over the 162 public secondary schools in Abia State. A sample size of 1,405 teachers, 162 of which are principals representing 20% of the population was selected using a table of random numbers. The instrument used for data generation 16 item questionnaire designed by the researcher with reliability coefficient index of 0.83. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and z-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results**

#### **Research Question One**

How can principals creativity skill bring about delegation of functions for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Principals on how Principal's Creativity Skills can bring about Delegation of Functions for Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Abia State**

| SN | Ways of Empowering teachers through delegation of functions                                     | Male   |            | Female |            | Mean set | Decision |
|----|---|--------|------------|--------|------------|----------|----------|
|    |   | Mean 1 | Std. Dev 1 | Mean 2 | Std. Dev 2 |          |          |
| 1. | Allowing teachers be in charge of assigned duties   | 3.16   | 0.42       | 3.06   | 0.47       | 3.11     | Agreed   |
| 2. | Teachers are given commensurable authority for the assigned task                                | 3.11   | 0.44       | 3.03   | 0.49       | 3.07     | Agreed   |
| 3. | Teachers are accountable for their responsibilities   | 3.19   | 0.41       | 3.07   | 0.47       | 3.13     | Agreed   |
| 4. | Assigned task are executed on time  | 2.98   | 0.52       | 2.82   | 0.54       | 2.90     | Agreed   |
| 5. | Teachers are motivated when assigned tasks  | 3.08   | 0.46       | 3.02   | 0.49       | 3.05     | Agreed   |
| 6. | Effective supervision on how delegation of functions can bring about principals creative skills | 3.15   | 0.42       | 3.05   | 0.48       | 3.10     | Agreed   |

Data in table 1 represented the mean and standard deviation of male and female principals on how principals creative skills can empower teachers through delegation of functions for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the mean criterion of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.11 and 3,08 for male and female principals respectively showed that the items in table 1 are creative ways of delegating functions for effective administration. Therefore, the ways of using creative skills for effective administration in public secondary schools includes, allowing teachers be in charge of assigned duties, giving teachers commensurable authority for their

assigned task, teachers being accountable for their responsibilities, ensuring that assigned tasks are executed on time, teachers are motivated when assigned task and effective supervision are the ways delegated functions are being executed for effective administration.

#### **Research Question Two**

What are the ways principals creative skills bring about staff capacity development for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of Male and Female Principals on Ways Principals Use their Creative Skills to Encourage Staff Capacity Development for Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Abia State**

| SN | Ways principals use their creative skills to develop staff capacity for effective administration | Male   |            | Female |            | Mean set | Decision |
|----|--|--------|------------|--------|------------|----------|----------|
|    |  | Mean 1 | Std. Dev 1 | Mean 2 | Std. Dev 2 |          |          |
| 1. | Encourage teachers to catch up with knowledge explosion  | 3.20   | 0.41       | 3.10   | 0.45       | 3.15     | Agreed   |
| 2. | Help teachers develop skills to meet up with globalization                                       | 3.14   | 0.43       | 3.08   | 0.46       | 3.11     | Agreed   |
| 3. | Encourage teachers to collaborate with colleagues in other fields                                | 3.12   | 0.43       | 3.02   | 0.50       | 3.07     | Agreed   |
| 4. | Professional associations help teachers in capacity building                                     | 3.07   | 0.46       | 3.01   | 0.50       | 3.04     | Agreed   |
| 5. | Educational websites   | 3.11   | 0.44       | 3.05   | 0.48       | 3.08     | Agreed   |
| 6. | Networking with other skills   | 3.17   | 0.42       | 3.07   | 0.46       | 3.12     | Agreed   |
|    | Aggregate Mean   | 3.12   | 0.44       | 3.05   | 0.48       | 3.09     | Agreed   |

Data in table 2 presented the mean and standard deviation of male and female principals on ways principals can use their creative skills to develop staff capacity for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.12 and 3.05 for male and female principals respectively showed that the items in the table are the creative skills needed by principals in the effective administration of public secondary schools. Therefore, the creative skills

needed by principals for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State are ; knowledge explosion, globalization, collaboration with colleagues, professional associations, educational websites, networking with other schools and conferencing.

#### **Test of Hypothesis**

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how the creative skills of principal empower teachers through delegation of functions for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State.

**Table 3: Summary of z-test Value on the Difference between the Mean Score Rating of Male and Female Principals on how the Creative Skills of Principal Empower Teachers through Delegation of Functions for Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Abia State**

| Gender of Staff | N   | Mean | St. Dev | Df  | z-cal value | z-crit        | Decision        |
|-----------------|-----|------|---------|-----|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Male            | 80  | 3.11 | 0.45    | 198 | 0.45        | $\pm$<br>1.96 | Not significant |
| Female          | 120 | 3.08 | 0.49    |     |             |               |                 |

Data in table 3 presented the summary of z-test value on the difference between the mean score rating of male and female principals on how the creative skills of principal empower teachers through delegation of functions for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State. Looking at the analysis, the z-calculated value of 0.45 is less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 0.05 alpha significant value and 1.98 degree of freedom. Based on this, the null hypotheses was adopted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how the creative skills of principals empower teachers through delegation of functions for effective

administration of public secondary schools in Abia State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals in ways principal creative skills bring about staff development for effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State.

**Table 4: Summary of z-test Value on the Difference Between the Mean Score Ratings of Male and Female Principals on Ways the Creative Skills of Principals can bring Staff Capacity Development for Effective Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Abia State**

| Gender of Staff | N   | Mean | St. Dev | Df  | z-cal value | z-crit | Decision        |
|-----------------|-----|------|---------|-----|-------------|--------|-----------------|
| Male            | 80  | 3.12 | 0.44    | 198 | 0.45        | ± 1.96 | Not significant |
| Female          | 120 | 3.05 | 0.48    |     |             |        |                 |

Data in table 4 presented the summary of z-test value on the difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on ways the creative skills of principals can develop staff capacity for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State. Looking at the analysis, the z-calculated value of 1.06 is less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 0.05 alpha significant level and 1980 degree of freedom. Based on this, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on ways the creative skills of principals can develop staff capacity for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study are that the ways principals use their creative skills

to empower teachers through delegation of functions for effective administration of public secondary schools include; allowing teachers to be in-charge of assigned duties, giving teachers commensurate authority for assigned duties, teachers being accountable for their responsibilities, ensuring that assigned tasks are executed on time, teachers are motivated when assigned tasks, and effective supervision. This implies that, if principals use their creative skills appropriately and delegate functions to teachers, staff and students will be happy and this will lead to effective administration of public secondary schools. The test of hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on the way principals use their creative skills to empower teachers through delegation of functions for effective administration in

public secondary schools in Abia State. They are of the opinion that delegation of functions to teachers would continuously enhance effective administration of public secondary schools.

The findings also revealed that ways principals can use their creative skills to develop staff capacity include; encouraging teachers to catch up with knowledge explosion, helping teachers develop skills to meet up with globalization, encouraging teachers to collaborate with colleagues, encouraging teachers to belong to professional associations, educational websites, encouraging teachers to network with other schools, and encouraging them to attend conferences. All the above listed show that if principals use their creative skill maximally, there would be an enhanced teachers capacity development. The test of hypothesis two showed that there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on ways principals use their creative skills to develop teachers for effective administration of public secondary schools in Abia State. In line with the findings, John (2005) posited that staff development should be varied to meet the individual skills and readiness levels of the teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that principals creative skills stands to alleviate some anomalies in a comatose economy. When principals spread their tentacles, delegate some functions to their teachers, allow the teachers to be in-charge of such

responsibility, and also provide the teacher with commensurate authority for the assigned task, in return, teachers will be motivated and spurred towards effective administration of the school. Also, when principals use their creative abilities and competences to encourage teachers to be professionally developed by attending conferences, networking with other schools and belonging to professional bodies, consequently, the teachers would see it that the principal has their interest at heart and they would go all out to ensure that school objectives are achieved.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the researcher recommended the following;

- 1) Principals who are still tenaciously holding on to prescribed and accustomed practices in the education system should carefully be checked by the Ministry of Education and look for possible solution.
- 2) Principals should team up with their teachers so as to achieve school objectives
- 3) Principals should provide the necessary amount of authority to their teachers when assigned functions.
- 4) In addition, principals should re-strategize for workable and practical solutions that will help the school.

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