## SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

# FACTORS INHIBITING THE LEADERSHIP ROLES OF PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OHAOZARA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the factors that inhibit the leadership roles of principals' in the administration of public secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The study adopted a survey research design and was guided by four research questions. The population of the study comprised 9 principals and 94 teachers of secondary schools in the Local Government Area. Twenty question items questionnaire was used for data collection and mean analysis was used in answering the research questions. The result showed among other things that government does not react promptly to the demands of the school principals; school teachers are not adequate both in number and quality and that students do not adhere to school rules and regulations. Based on the findings recommendations were made to include: government should employ more teachers, and enough school materials.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Roles, Principal, Inhibiting, Administration.

## Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as the key that unlocks both individual and national development; and in recognition of this fact, the FGN (2013) maintains that education is instrumental for national development and social change.

Secondary education is the education children receive after primary school and it prepares students for the tertiary education and for middle level manpower development. The degree to which the secondary school system is able to accomplish these goals depends, among other things on the efficacy

of the principals in the performance of their administrative leadership roles.

The day-to-day administration of secondary schools rests on the principal who is the middle man between the government, the school and the community. Ukeje (1992) listed among other things capabilities and attributes which the principals must possess to include good human relations with staff, pupils and the community. For this reason, Buckner (2013) advocated reforms translating into better students' achievement hinges on the principal's ability to create interactions, and shared vision with the staff school and community. He went further to list the principals' leadership roles to include the nurturing and sustaining of a culture providing safe and conducive environment for effective teaching and learning, encouraging staff development and cooperating with the host communities. In other words, the principals' leadership roles extend from the school to the community which the school is established to serve. Leadership entails interaction between the leader and the group members. This interaction influences the group to act in a certain manner towards the accomplishment of stated goals. Hughes, Lunnet and Curphy (2009) defined leadership as a complex phenomenon involving the leader, the followers and the situation. The principals are the leaders who influence the actions of the team (staff, students and the community),

coordinate and direct the activities of the team to achieve educational goals through all the government approved programmes and curriculum. The leadership roles of principals depend on their ability to initiate the desired pattern of behavior and control the efforts of everybody involved in the achievement of school goals and effectiveness.

Administration is the utilization and coordination of human and material resources towards the attainment of pre-determined objectives of the organization. Basically, administrative activities are concerned with the efficient organization of all organizational resources and activities towards achieving predetermined purposes (Westwood, 2013). The administrator is the middle man between the management of the organization and its executives and is involved more in policy execution than in policy-making Ogbonna, (2013). The principals as middlemen therefore exercise leadership through direction, coordination and control of the subordinates (staff and students) and by extension to the host community. Administration involves leadership and principals as chief executives of their respective schools are expected to provide the right environments for effective learning and teaching to take place.

**Problem of the Study**

Otegbulu (2014) reported that lack of cooperation by school staff who should work together with the principals and interference in school

administration by parents and guardians constitute constraints to principals' effective administration of secondary schools. It is therefore, necessary to identify those factors that inhibit principals from giving effective administrative leadership in schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The problem of this study is to provide answers to the question: What are the factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the government-related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

2. Find out the staff related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

3. Identify the community related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

4. Identify the student-related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

**Research Question**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the government-related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

2. What are the staff-related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

3. What are the community-related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

4. What are the student-related factors inhibiting principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

**Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Survey research design according to Akuezuilo and Agu (2003) is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group. It was thought appropriate for this study which was

designed to extrapolate the outcome of the research sample to the study population.

The population of this study comprised principals and 94 teachers in the nine public secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State due to the small size of the population, the entire population was adopted for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a 20 item researcher developed questionnaire on a four-point scale with Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) response pattern. The questionnaire was dully validated by three experts in Educational Administration and Planning from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Using the test-retest procedure and applying the Pearson product moment correlation Co-efficient analysis, the reliability of the instrument was established at 0.83 using 10 teachers from Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State which has the same characteristics with Ohaozara Local Government Area.

A total of 103 copies of questionnaire were administered by the researcher to all the principals and teachers in the 9 secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, of the total number of questionnaire distributed, 96 copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and mean to answer the research questions. Mean ratings of 0.50 and above were considered as agreement while those below 2.50 were judged as disagreement.

**Result:**

Research Question 1: What are the Government-Related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State?

**Table 1: Mean Response on Government-Related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State.**

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | Decision |
|-----|-----------|------|----------|
| 1 | Government agencies give conflicting directives to school principals | 2.21 | Disagree |
| 2 | Government does not fund secondary schools adequately | 3.67 | Agree |
| 3 | Government does not provide resources for implementing the school programmes. | 3.71 | Agree |
| 4 | Government does not react promptly to the demands of school principals | 3.80 | Agree |
| 5 | Government neglects the demands of school principals who do not share the same views with them. | 2.31 | Disagree |

Table 1 showed that items 2, 3 and 4 are considered as government-related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State while items 1 and 5 are not considered as inhibiting Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State.

Research Question 2: What are the Staff-Related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

**Table 2: Mean Response on Staff-Related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State.**

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | There are not enough teachers to do the required work. | 3.67 | Agree |
| 7 | School staffs lack resources to do their duties. | 3.51 | Agree |
| 8 | School teachers antagonize school principals. | 2.11 | Disagree |
| 9 | There is clique formation among the teachers. | 3.71 | Agree |
| 10 | There is no cooperation between the teachers and the principals. | 2.31 | Disagree |

Data in table 2 showed that items 6, 7 and 9 are the staff-related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State while items 8 and 10 were not considered as Inhibitors to Principals' Leadership Roles.

**Table 3: Mean Response on Community-Related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State.**

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Members of the community oppose the view of principal on school programmes. | 2.16 | Disagree |
| 12 | Members of the community petition the government against the principal. | 2.04 | Agree |
| 13 | Members of the community do not contribute their resources to the implementation of school programmes. | 3.61 | Agree |
| 14 | Members of the community do not understand their roles in the implementation of school programmes. | 2.18 | Disagree |
| 15 | Members of the community do not keep to agreement with the school principal. | 2.21 | Disagree |

Data as presented in table 3 indicated that items 11, 12, 14 and 15 are not inhibiting factors to Principals' Leadership Roles in Secondary Schools Administration in Ohaozara Local government Area of Ebonyi State while only item 13 is an Inhibiting Factor.

**Table 4: Mean Response on Student-Related Factors that Inhibit Principals' Leadership Roles in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.**

| S/N | Statement | $\overline{x}$ | Decision |
|-----|-----------|------|----------|
| 16 | The student population is too large for the principal to manage. | 2.31 | Disagree |
| 17 | Students do not adhere to school rules and regulations. | 3.51 | Agree |
| 18 | Students loiter during classes. | 2.65 | Agree |
| 19 | Students play truant. | 2.60 | Agree |
| 20 | Students damage school property. | 2.11 | Disagree |

Table 4 showed that items 16 and 20 are viewed as non-inhibiting factors to principals' leadership roles, while items 17, 18 and 19 were seen as student-related inhibiting factors to the principals' leadership roles in secondary schools in Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

**Discussion**

The results of the study showed that the government does not react promptly to the school principals' demands and that this inhibits the principals' leadership roles in school administration. It is necessary for the government to understand that administration involves the systematic co-ordination of human and material resources to achieve educational goals and objectives. Effective school administration entails efficient and timely planning and co-ordination of human and material resources for the achievement of objectives. FGN (2013) stated that the federal and state governments shall set aside a predetermined percentage of their support to education, but if the support is not prompt, adequate, serious threat will be posed to the leadership of the principals, and this will negatively affect secondary education.

The results further showed that inadequate staffing and clique formation are among the staff-related factors that seriously challenge the leadership roles of the school principals. The leadership of any school will face problems when teachers are not adequate, both in number and quality, to handle effectively the school subjects.

The teachers are the main determinants of quality in education (Egwu, 2008) and if they are not enough the effectiveness of the principal in achieving school objectives will be undermined. The findings of this

study also showed that clique formation by staff inhibits principals' leadership roles. This corroborates Otehgbulu (2012) which reports that clique formation is a constraint to secondary school administration in Enugu State.

The result of the study showed that members of the community do not keep to the agreed terms with school principals.This challenges the leadership of the principals. The community is very important to the well-being of the school. The school children come from the community, parents and guardians contribute to the education of their children and wards respectively. Therefore for the school to achieve its goals there should be smooth school community relationship.

The findings revealed that students do not adhere to school rules and regulations. They engage in truancy and loiter during classes; do not respect the instructions of the school principals. This is disheartening as it shows that both the principals and teachers have not been able to successfully carry out assigned roles in the education of students. The truth of the matter is that if something serious is not done, the leadership performance of the principal will continually be hindered and the objectives of the schools may likely not be achieved.

### Conclusion

Principals are vital and instrumental to the achievement of the educational objectives of secondary schools. This is because principals hold full responsibilities to co-ordinate teachers, students, members of the community and educational materials as well as implement the educational programmes of the school.Principals play diverse roles in the administration of secondary schools. However, these roles when inhibited pose a threat to the realization of school objectives. The study investigated the factors inhibiting the principals' leadership roles in the administration of secondary schools. These factors emanate from the government school staff community and students.The principals cannot effectively play their roles if these factors abound. These inhibiting factors pose a challenge to the principals' leadership roles and thus, should be adequately addressed if schools are to achieve their stated goals and objectives.

### Recommendations

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

1. The local communities should be made to be aware of their duties to the schools in their area.

2. The school principals should see that harmonious relations are maintained with the staff to enhance co-operation and facilitate achievement of the predetermined objectives of the school. Thus, teachers should be involved in decision making to give them a sense of belonging.

3. Principals should set up committees that include the different groups in the school to identify and address prevailing issues, envisage

problems and reduced clique formation among staff, as this will in turn enhance school administration.

4. The principals should clearly aid community members to enhance understanding of their roles and their contributions to the implementation of the school programme.

5. Principals should ensure that school staff especially the guidance counselors are integrated in the administration to enable students conform, to school rules and regulations.

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