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## MANAGING PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated management of principals' leadership skills for capacity building in public secondary schools in River State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised of 524 principals, consisting of 338 male principals and 186 female principals in public secondary school in Rivers State, while the sample for the study was 310 principals comprising of 183 male principals as well as 127 female principals. The instrument used for the collection of data was questionnaire titled "Managing Principals Leadership Skill for Capacity Building Questionnaire" (MPLSCBQ). The questionnaire contained 15 questionnaire items which was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management, faculty of education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach alpha and produced an index of 0.81. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the research with the assistance of two trained research assistants. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that principals use face to face method among other ways for managing their communication skill. They also develop work team among others for managing their interpersonal skill. However, these principals disagreed on the itemized ways of managing their technical skills for capacity building in these schools. It was recommended based on the findings of the study that the government should channel more financial and technical resources to these schools to improve the principals' leadership skills for improved capacity building in Rivers state.

Keywords: Principals, Leadership, Capacity, Building, Rivers State.

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## INTRODUCTION

The principal is regarded as the administrative head of a secondary level of education. He is saddled with diverse administrative functions that contribute to the achievement of short and long-term educational goals and objectives. This includes improving on the abilities and skills needed by all school personnel to deliver quality educational services. Principals are often selected after spending some years successfully as a classroom teacher, head of department or any other leadership capacity (Gurr & Drysdale, 2012). This is because their years of experience plays a vital role in enhancing the capacity of all school personnel to deliver quality services with the right skill and knowledge which is referred to as capacity building.

Capacity building deals with the entire process of accessing, retaining and building on the best skills, knowledge, attitude, skills and other resources needed by an individual or group to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. Khan (2014) noted that capacity building contributes to the improvement of individuals and the entire organization collectively. However, the principal as the head of the school must be able to apply the right skill in order to be able to enhance the capacity of all employees to provide the best educational service individually and as an organization.

The principal as the head of the school needs to operate with the right set of skills if the school under his leadership must make reasonable progress. Knapp (2007) added that leadership skill of the principal refers to the learned ability to bring about pre-determined result with maximum certainty often with minimum time and energy (Akinola, 2013). However, the management of these skills possessed by the principal is of great importance in the discharge of his overall work function. Werang (2014) noted that for a teacher to function effectively, he must be able to operate using the right administrative, conceptual, technical, interpersonal as well as other lifelong skills. However, what the teacher does with these skills acquired over the years goes a long way to determine if he will be able to influence the capacity of the school to deliver improved services.

Communication skill as an essential leadership skill needed by principals was defined by Pavord and Donnelly (2015) as the ability to share ideas and information meaningfully within a group. However, the process of managing this ability can go a long way to influence the capacity of other employees including the principal to deliver the best service. Tyler and Eze (2016), pointed out that in the process of managing communication skills, principals must learn to listen to others, get feedback, use sufficient gesture and other communication symbols, be brief and concise when communicating, treat everyone equally and use proper documentation. This process will help to boost the capacity of all stakeholders to improve on their service delivery for the achievement of the goals and objectives of the school (Tyler & Eze, 2016).

Principals also need to learn how to manage their interpersonal skill as this helps in the building of a dependable work team. Interpersonal skills according to Sharma, Goswami and Gupta (2016) referred to social skills needed for effective interaction with others. Obakpolo (2015) pointed that it is the behavior used when interacting with other people. However, principals must learn to manage their interpersonal skills if they intend to carry everybody in the school along and improve on their ability to deliver quality service. Furthermore, for a principal to achieve adequate capacity building in the school, he or she must learn to manage interpersonal relationships by acknowledging other people's expertise, be empathic, be a problem solver, and take responsibility for the action of other workers by learning to appreciate the effort of other employees (Barton, Larson & Aslanargun, 2012).

It is equally important for principals to develop technical skill which is the ability to perform well on the job. Leadership capacity is often strengthened when the leader takes up additional responsibilities (Simon, et al., 2018). The principal must therefore be able to develop the right set of technical skills needed to carry out his job functions professionally. In addition, the management of the principals' technical skill is also important so as to influence other employees positively and improve on their capacity to perform better.

Hysong (2008) pointed out that managing technical skills at work involves regular training, rotating job from time to time, developing a work schedule, assigning responsibilities to other experts in the school as well as prioritizing pending tasks. This enables the principal to deliver quality services for the success of the school. The principal as the head of the school cannot afford to fail in his capacity as a leader this will affect the entire administration of the school negatively. It is therefore important for the principal to learn to manage his or her leadership skills to improve the capacity of other employees to develop quality service. This will help in the development of a workforce that can contribute to the success of the school both in the short and long run.

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

The aim of the study was to examine the management of principals' leadership skills as a tool's capacity building in public schools in Rivers state. Specific objectives of the study were to:

- Ascertain the management of principals' communication skill for capacity building in public schools in River State.
- Determine the management of principals' interpersonal skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.
- Determine the management of principals' technical skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

- In what ways are principal's communication skill managed for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State?
- In what ways are principal's interpersonal skill manage for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State?
- In what ways is principal's technical skill manage for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage communication skill and capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage interpersonal skill and capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage technical skill and capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

## METHODOLOGY

Descriptive and survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was 524 principals consisting of 338 male principals and 186 female principals while the sample for the study was 310 comprising 183 male principals as well as 127 female principals. Instrument used for the collection of data was questionnaire titled “Managing Principals Leadership Skill for Capacity Building Questionnaire” (MPLSCBQ). The MPLSCBQ contains 15 questionnaire items which was validated by two experts in Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University. The reliability of the MPLSCBQ was estimated using Cronbach alpha and produced an index of 0.81. The MPLSCBQ administered and retrieved by the researcher and two trained research assistants. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypothesis was tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** In what ways are principal’s communication skill managed for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation scores on ways principals manage communication skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

S/NO	Item	Male Principals n = 183			Female Principals n = 127		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Feedback mechanism is institutionalized	2.60	0.99	Agreed	2.66	0.99	Agreed
2.	Information shared are properly documented	2.68	0.94	Agreed	2.70	0.77	Agreed
3.	Face-to-face interaction is often used for official matter	2.80	0.83	Agreed	2.76	0.80	Agreed
1.	There is room for questioning when an information is not clear	2.57	1.02	Agreed	2.53	1.04	Agreed
2.	Content of communication are kept brief and concise	2.44	1.05	Disagreed	2.08	1.02	Disagreed
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.62</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

\* criterion mean score of 2.50

From the above table 1, male and female principals responded to items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 2.60, 2.68, 2.80, 2.57 and 2.44 as well as 2.66, 2.70, 2.76, 2.53 and 2.08. The mean scores from the male and female principals from items 1, 2, 3 and 4 with scores of 2.60, 2.68, 2.80 and 2.57 as well as 2.66, 2.70, 2.76 and 2.53 were above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making while the item 5 with mean score of 2.44 for male principals and 2.08

for female principals were rejected for being below the criterion mean score of 2.50. In summary, the average mean scores of 2.62 for male principals and 2.55 for female principals showed that they both agreed on the ways of managing communication skills for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question Two:** In what ways is principals' interpersonal skill manage for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores on ways principals manage interpersonal skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

S/NO	Item	Male Principals n = 183			Female Principals n = 127		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
6.	Team work is promoted in the discharge of work functions	2.79	0.84	Agreed	2.71	0.85	Agreed
7.	Principals promote the networking of work functions among all staff	1.47	0.85	Agreed	2.68	0.71	Agreed
8.	Regular recreational activities is used to foster goal achievement	2.40	1.07	Disagreed	2.58	0.86	Agreed
9.	Responsibilities are often designated for meaningful interaction	2.63	1.00	Agreed	2.48	0.98	Disagreed
10.	Principals improve on their personality traits through regular training	2.75	0.95	Agreed	2.49	1.03	Disagreed
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.41</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

From the above Table 2, it shows that male and female principals responded to items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 with mean scores of 2.79, 1.47, 2.40, 2.63 and 2.75 for male principals and 2.71, 2.68, 2.58, 2.48 and 2.49 respectively. The responses of the male principals revealed that they agreed on items 6, 9 and 10 with mean scores above the criterion mean scores while items 7 and 8 with mean scores below the criterion mean scores of 2.50 were disagreed. On the other hand, the response of the female principals showed that items 6, 7 and 8 were agreed while items 9 and 10 were disagreed based on whether the mean score was above or below the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making. Summarily, the average mean scores of 2.41 and 2.59 from the male and female principals showed that the male principal disagreed while the female principals agreed on the ways of managing interpersonal skills for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question Three:** In what ways is principals' technical skill managed for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Means and standard deviation scores on ways principals manage technical skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

S/NO	Item	Male Principals n = 183			Female Principals n = 127		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Principals procure required For professional self development	2.15	1.03	Disagreed	1.99	1.10	Disagreed
12.	New principals take advantage of mentoring from their colleague	2.36	1.06	Disagreed	2.65	1.02	Agreed
13.	Principals engage in job rotation to promote them technical competence	1.96	0.99	Disagreed	1.66	0.94	Disagreed
14.	Principals collaborate with management experts for improve administrative competence	1.99	0.96	Disagreed	1.95	0.95	Disagreed
15.	Principals endeavor to attend Training programmes when organized	2.45	0.89	Disagreed	2.70	0.85	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>

From the above table 3, the male and female principals disagreed items 11, 13 and 14 with mean scores of 2.15, 2.36 and 1.96 for the male principals and 1.99, 1.66 and 1.95 for the female principals. On items 12 and 15, while the male principals disagreed with mean scores of 2.36 and 2.45 respectively, the male principals agreed with mean score of 2.65 and 2.70 on the same items. In summary, the average mean scores of 2.18 and 2.19 from both the male and female principals used for the study showed that they both disagreed on the ways of managing principals' technical skills for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

### Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female principals on the ways they manage communication skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test of no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage communication skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

Variable	n	Mean	SD	z- cal.	z- cal.	Significance	Remark
Male Principal	183	2.62	0.97	1.96	0.05	0.05	not rejected
Female Principal	127	2.55	0.92				

From the above table 4, showed the z-cal value of 0.64 was below the z-crit, value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected indicating that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage communications skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant differences between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage interpersonal skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test of no significant between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage interpersonal skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State

Variable	n	Mean	SD	z- cal.	z- cal.	significance	Remark	
Male Principal	183	2.41	0.94	308	0.64	1.96	0.05	not rejected
Female Principal	127	2.59	0.87					

From the above table 5, the value of z-cal, was 1.73 while the value of z-crit was 1.96. Since the value of z-cal of 1.73 was below the value of z-crit of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected implying that there was significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage interpersonal skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage technical skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test of no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage technical skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

Variable	n	Mean	SD	z- cal.	z- cal.	Significance	Remark
Male Principal	183	2.18	0.99	0.09	1.96	0.05	not rejected
Female Principal	127	2.19	0.97				

From the above table 6 indicated that the value of z-Cal was 0.09 while the value of z-crit was 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected indicating that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the ways they manage technical skill for capacity building in public schools in Rivers State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Management of principals' communication skill for capacity Building in Public Schools in Rivers State

Communication forms an integral part of the administrative processes of any formal organization. It is through the communication skills adopted by the head of the organization that the subordinates are guided on duties that must be performed for the goals and objectives of the organization to be achieved. However, employees of an organization are better equipped for their administrative functions when the process of communication are adequately managed by the administrative head. This contributes to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

However, as revealed from the responses of the sampled respondents, principals often manage their communication skills by documenting relevant information, making use of feedbacks as well as using face-to-face method of interaction. This no doubt helps teachers, students and other school personnel to be well equipped and by implication strengthening their preparedness for accomplishing assigned tasks as mandated by the principal. Supporting this finding, Romanow and Bruce (2006) pointed out from his study communication skills help in the building of social capital which is very vital for achieving improve organizational goals and objectives. Principals therefore need to learn how to manage their communication skill as this can foster or hinder the participation of other social users in the achievement of plans and programs set up by the principal for the success of the school system.

Furthermore, the respondents revealed that principals can use face-to-face communication to foster capacity building in the school. Explaining why this is necessary, Oguche, Lamidi and Gabasa (2017) asserted from the findings of their study that human knowledge and relationships can only be managed from acquired communication skills. When principals adopt the right communication strategies, it helps to empower his subordinates both socially, mentally and otherwise. This goes a long way to enhance participation for the success of the school under his or her leadership.

### **Management of Principals interpersonal skill for capacity Building in Public Schools in Rivers State.**

The need for principals to develop and manage their interpersonal skills properly is as essential as the success of the school he is managing. Since the principal alone cannot perform all the function required for the success of the school, there is need to develop and manage proper interpersonal skill as this will help to improve on his administrative performance as well as assist other members of the school to bring out their hidden potentials or the collective interest of the school, Okoro, Washington and Thomas (2017) observed in their study that interpersonal skill improves hiring prospects and contributes to rapid promotional advancements.

Principals' are able to develop a professional work team when they are able to manage their interpersonal skill adequately. This helps in developing the potentials of both the principal as well as members of his team for the success the school. The findings of the study showed that both male and female principals believed that team work is a major strategy used by principals to manage their interpersonal skill or capacity building in the school. This may explain why Khan and Ahmad (2012) noted that top level managements since it is the top management staff that decides how teams are being structured for the goals and objectives of the school to be achieved. Furthermore, the principals sampled for the study tend to be at variance on the use of networking, delegation of responsibilities and engaging in recreation as a way of managing principals' interpersonal skill for capacity building in the school. This tends to suggest that the personality trait of these principles may interfere with how they manage their interpersonal skill. Principals therefore need to be oriented on the need to manage their interpersonal skills based on

professional ethics and not sentiment as this will go a long way to determine the extent to which they can influence other school stakeholders to be productive in their service delivery.

### **Management of Principals Technical Skill for Capacity in Public Schools in Rivers State**

The technical skill of the principal lay's emphasis on how well the principals is able to carry out the demand of his job a professionally as possible. The functions performed by the principal in any school system are very sensitive to the success of the goals and objectives of the school and as such, the principal cannot be complacent in the discharge of these duties. The manner in which the principals manage his technical skills goes a long way to determine the technical competence of the other stakeholders in the school which is relevant for the success of the school in general. Surprisingly, it was revealed from the responses of the respondents used for the study that the principals are not doing enough in the management of their technical skill for capacity building in the school.

Chiemeka-Unogu (2018) reported in the findings of his study that technical development sessions help to improve capacity building in schools. However, the principals used for the study disagreed on the ways used for managing their technical skills for capacity building in public schools. This finding reveals the need for the government to put in measure to support principals both technically ad financially to adequate manage their technical skills for the personal and general capacity building in the school. Memisoglu (2015) reported in the findings of his study that teachers agree that principals possess the technical skills which helps them manage social responsibilities and organizational effectiveness. However, there is need for other stakeholders such as the government to prove the needed assistance to help principals institutionalize measures that will help them manage their technical skill professionally. This is because the quality of the workforce in the school depends largely on the technical competence of the principal who is the administrative head.

### **CONCLUSION**

It was concluded based on the findings of the study that; there are diverse ways that principal's communication, interpersonal and technical skills are being managed for capacity buildings in public secondary schools in River State. This implies that the management of these skills helps in the fostering the capacity of these principals a well as their subordinate in the discharge of their administrative functions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- Principals need to adopt the use of face-face communication in the discharge of essential information to other stakeholders in the school. Since the use of this method of communication helps to enhance e capacity building of other school personnel both cognitively and otherwise, there is need for principal to adopt this strategy regularly when sharing vital information with members of the school.
- Since team work plays a vital role in the capacity building of other school personnel, it will be important for school principals to create work teams in key areas of school

administration which will be headed by him. This will help the principal to influence key areas of the school administration positively as well as build work teams that will contribute to the achievement of school goals and objectives.

- There is need for the government to provide technical and financial support for school principals to develop their technical competence. This will enable these principles to embark on regular technical training sessions where relevant skills and knowledge acquired will also be transferred to other school personnel.

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