PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACH AND SOCIAL SECURITY IMPASSE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The level of security challenges in the South East of Nigeria, with particular reference to Imo State these days, is quite alarming that one begins to wonder if there is still the maintenance of a smooth, seamless academic programme that ensures that the academic calendar is not being truncated in our secondary schools. The challenges related to social security can significantly hinder secondary school principals' ability to administer effectively. Principals must therefore become proactive in planning for instructional programmes as well as balance the need for a secure environment with the promotion of a positive school climate and conducive to learning. All these warrant the need to carry out a study to investigate how effective the principals' administrative approaches are in maintaining a seamless instructional programme, as well as safe school environment. Two research questions were posed for this study. The research design adopted is correlational. Related literatures were reviewed and relevant theory adopted. A sample of six hundred and ninety (690) was adopted. The questionnaire and rating scales were used as instruments for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using the Pearson r, for answering of research questions. Findings of the study included that: there is very high positive relationship between principals' instructional progamme administrative approach and social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should do more by learning to adopt the use of online and weekend instructional administrative approaches to make up for the lost Mondays and other days due to the Sit at Home orders.

Key Words: Administrative Approach, Social Security Impasse, Principals, Secondary Schools, Security Challenge.

Introduction

Education is a veritable tool for national development, be it primary, secondary or tertiary. The main objective of education is societal development. Education is known throughout the world as a key instrument to development. It requires effective management for it to thrive. Onuoha (2020) maintains that education is an ultimate key that opens the door to success. It is for this fact that many societies of the world invest heavily on education. The scientific and technological breakthrough provided by education is equally amazing and many countries of the world are engaging in a pervasive education as a result of that.

To achieve these and other objectives of secondary education, the school environment must be safe for the students, staff and facilities as well as conducive for teaching and learning. The responsibility of making secondary schools safe and conducive lies mainly on the secondary school administration, under the leadership of the principals (David, Tomilayo, Adebowale and Damilola, 2019).

Unfortunately, secondary schools all over Imo State have recently been bedeviled with increasing level of insecurity. In the past few years, there have been records of cases of killing and abduction or kidnapping of students and their teachers from schools as well as damage and/or

complete destruction of school buildings and other facilities. The effective and timely completion of the school calendar might be hampered if the principals of the secondary schools do not exhibit administrative approaches that could tackle the menace. This high and increasing rate of insecurity has become a social challenge to effective school management by the principals. There is therefore, urgent need for the adoption of effective administrative approaches by principals of secondary schools to arrest this challenge (John, 2015).

Social security impasse in this context, entails the challenges or negative impact that might be caused by the social security problems which occur from time to time in the society these days, on the programme of the secondary schools. The concern therefore, is not necessarily the emergent insecurity itself, but the influence of the principals' administrative approach on the severity and impacts on the secondary school programmes or the influence it has on the maintenance of smooth, undistorted programmes of the secondary schools irrespective of the social security problems. There have been incessant insecurity uprisings which have been resulting in closure of schools and disrupting of effective teaching and learning, as well as lack of guarantee for safety of students and staff in Imo State.Security problems emerge in different forms these days in Imo State. Schools are closed down from time to time due to issues of "Unknown Gun-men", "Sit-at-Home Orders", Kidnapping, Killings, Armed Robberies, Cultists Battles, etc. All these could cause obstructions to the smooth running of the schools which, if not tackled strategically, might impact negatively on the school calendar. The problem is that these schools are situated within the vicinities where these security problems occur. Therefore, there is need to investigate how the approaches adopted by the principals of the schools influence the mitigation of the challenges caused by this incessant social menace on the school calendar (Lukas, 2022).

Due to these security challenges, the management of the schools need to adopt effective administrative approaches to ensure that the security challenges do not hamper the smooth implementation of the school programme in accordance with the already planned school calendar. The principal who is the main manager of the school should therefore learn to be proactive in order to tackle this challenge (Akor, Abubakar and Ogunode, 2021). As a matter of fact, the administration of the secondary school revolves particularly around the principal. He is the one who sits at the top of the administrative ladder of the school. The principal is the major determinant of secondary education management system.

Moreover, managing educational issues requires extreme care because it is both a profession and humanitarian. The resources required for the attainment of defined goals therefore, need to be judiciously taken care of. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the secondary school principal to adopt effective administrative approaches in the managerial tasks especially, in the face of security challenges. These managerial responsibilities which among them are management of instructional programme and staff/student management, (Oku, Emenalo & Okeke, 2013) are quite encompassing and need to be tackled with effective strategies in the midst of security challenges.

Considering the above stated issues, it is obvious that the school principal has numerous administrative functions. Top on the list, as considered in this context is the administration of instructional programme and curriculum. The school principal needs to ensure that the school programme runs seamlessly (Iwu, 2019). Approaches that might assist him/her in achieving this might include involving Saturday progrmmes for the students, use of online studies, WhatsApp groupings, etc, to cover up for the lost programmes,due to the Mondays and other days taken by Sit-at-home Orders. It is pertinent that the school instructional programme and curriculum are effectively administered without obstructions. A school cannot be deemed to be effectively administered if it lags behind in the accomplishment of its scheduled calendar, as well as instructional delivery and students' academic performance. That should be the first point of call.

The next cardinal leadership responsibility of the school principal in achieving the school goal is mapping out strategies that could ensure the safety of the staff and students especially during the period of the insecurity. The principal could develop WhatsApp Groups where security threat information would be communicated, encourage and advise on how to evade danger while effectively carrying out their duties and studies during such periods, as well as advise on how to reconvene when insecurity abates. According to Peretomode (2019), the staff should be handled with care and love since they possess the capability to make or mar the school image and its programmes, while students are those for which the programmes of the school are established. Their safety needs to be put into consideration. Therefore the principals need to adopt effective administrative approaches of ensuring that the staff and students are safe while carrying out their duties as well as having their studies respectively. The desire to ascertain this motivated the researchers to go into this research in order to investigate the relationship between the principal's administrative approaches and the social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State.

The theory used in this study is the Contingency Theory which was popularized by Fiedler in 1967. The proponent posited that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the interaction of certain leader attributes with specific demands of the environment.

Statement of the Problem

The researchers are worried about the terrible social security challenges affecting all sectors of Nigerian society including the education sector. In the light of this, the focus of the problem is on secondary schools, with the South Eastern Nigeria in general and Imo State in particular recording highly, a devastating share of this security challenge. There is hardly any week that passes without the incidence of school closure as a result of any of the following: Sitat-home order, attack by unknown gunmen, kidnapping on rampage, Fulani herdsmen invasion, armed robbers and cultist in operation, etc. The researchers observed that the Mondays Sit-athome order has become traditional in the entire South East including Imo State. There is then the worry on how these incidences affect the smooth running of the secondary schools. There is equally a worry concerning the maintenance of the school instructional programme calendar, safety of the staff and students, etc. Other worries could be on the issue of the staff and/or students being taken unawares during any social disruptiveness. This could lead to loss of lives or one being harmed. It is a known fact that the management of all these issues rests on the hands of the principals of the schools who are expected to adopt effective administrative approaches of maintaining the smooth running of the school programmes as well as the safety of staff and students. The question that calls to mind therefore is: what is the relationship between the administrative approaches adopted by these principals for safety and maintenance of the school calendar, and the severity of these security challenges on the schools in Imo state. The desire to ascertain this therefore, triggered the researchers to go into this research in order to find out the principals' administrative approaches and the social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate principal's administrative approaches and security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the study investigated the following:

1. Relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State.
2. Relationship between principals' staff/students administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State.
2. What is the relationship between principals' staff/students administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State.

Method

The correlational research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study is 6,904,comprising of 6,798 SS2 students and 106 teachers of the secondary schools in the public secondary schools of Imo State. A Sample of 690, representing 10% of the population and comprising of 644 students and 46 teachers, was used. The sampling techniques employed was multi-stage: purposive, simple random and clustered sampling techniques. The researchers purposely sampled only SS2 students and teachers of the selected secondary schools.

The researchers adopted the use of rating scales as the instrument for data collection in this study. The instrument was developed by the researchers after a thorough review of literature. Two instruments were therefore used in this study, one addressing issues pertaining to the principal's administrative approaches while the other addressed the security challenges. They covered the specific objectives of the study. The instrument was validated by experts in education. The reliability of the instrument was tested through a test re-test method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.74 was realized showing that the instrument was reliable for the study. The researchers computed the raw scores, by using Pearson "r" statistics to answer research questions.

Results

Research Question One

1. What is the relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State?

Table 1: Summary of Analysis on Relationship Between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State

	n	r	MR	DR	REMARK
X	690	0.80	Very High	Positive	Very High positive Relationship
Y	690				

Table 1 shows the result on the summary of analysis on the relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State. With the sample size of 690 and a correlation result of 0.80, it indicates that there is a very high positive relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State.

Research Question Two

1. What is the relationship between principals' staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State?

Table 2: Summary of Analysis on the Relationship Between principals' staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State

	n	r	MR	DR	REMARK
X	690	0.60	Moderate	Positive	Moderate Positive Relationship
Y	690				

Table 3 shows the result on the summary of analysis on the relationship between principals' staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State. With the sample size of 690 and a correlation result of 0.60, it indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools, in Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Principals Instructional Programme Administrative approaches and Social Security Impasse in Secondary Schools

The finding of this study, on the relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State, reveals that there is a very high positive relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State. This means that what is happening at the efforts of the principals on the instructional programs administrative approaches in the schools is greatly affecting the social security impasse. Omenuko (2020) found that the more democratic the principal is in his administrative approaches, the more the students' indiscipline behavior increased and vis-àvis. On the contrary, Ape (2016) found that there is no significant relationship between cultural factors and security challenges in secondary schools. Mbadire (2019) equally found that there is no significant relationship between traditional politicking and security challenge in Southeast, Nigeria. However, based on the finding of this study, it can be concluded that there is a very strong relationship between principals' instructional programme administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools.

Relationship between Principals' Staff/Student Administrative Approach and Social Security Challenges in Secondary Schools in Imo State

The finding on relationship between principals staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State reveals that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse in secondary schools in Imo State. This equally means that whatever efforts that the principal is making concerning the staff/student administration during the insecurity period is affecting the social security impasse moderately. This finding still supports that of Omenuko (2020) which showed that the more democratic the principal was in administrative approaches, the more their indiscipline behavior increased and vis-à-vis. However, this finding was contradicted by that of Paulson (2020) which revealed that the principal's administrative approaches do not improve the attendance to school by students at the junior secondary schools (UBE students). Probably, the students might have other family and personal problems that might have instigated them to remain indifferent even with the

principal's administrative approaches. However, based on the finding of this study, it is concluded that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals staff/student administrative approaches and social security impasse.

Recommendations

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

1. principals should do more by learning to adopt the use of online and weekend instructional administrative approaches to make up for the lost Mondays and other days due to Sit at Home orders.
2. Government through the Ministry of Education, should organize workshops where issues on staff/student administration during periods of insecurity can be further addressed to help the principal to understand how best to handle such issues during periods of insecurity.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby concluded that principals' instructional programme and staff/student effective administrative approaches reduces social security impasse in the secondary schools

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