

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILL FOR HIGHLY INNOVATIVE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FOR NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM.

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ABSTRACT: *The problem of quality education and sustainable development, especially in Nigeria has attracted much attention in all academic discussion, whereby scholars have blamed it on several factors, without recourse to the emotional state of the school principals. Self-management is an important construct of emotional intelligence that has impacted positively on other disciplines such as psychology, medicine, business and others, other than education as seen from the review. This has created a gap in knowledge which necessitated this discussion. This paper therefore addressed capacity building needs of emotional intelligence of self-management, towards highly innovative principals for Nigerian secondary schools. The paper considered only three of its characteristics of conscientiousness, achievement orientation and trustworthiness. It is concluded that, emotional intelligence of self-management be included in educational management and teacher training programmes, to equip this group of learners with the skill, to become highly innovative and creative in managing Nigerian secondary schools, which will certainly lead to quality education.*

KEYWORDS: Capacity Building, Skill, Innovation, School, Principal, Education System

INTRODUCTION

The greatest challenge facing education system in recent times is the problem of quality, and how to maintain this quality for sustainable development in human society, especially in the Nigerian nation. It is an observable fact that the exit qualifications of some graduates from the different tiers of education system in Nigeria has become questionable, because some of them seem to have undermine the status of certificates obtained from these institutions. This problem is not a preserve of the higher institutions of learning, but common to all levels of education. At all tiers of education, this problem has been traced to the principals' leadership style which may have resulted in the principals' inability to resolve and manage conflicts, poor decision making skills, resulting in hasty and autocratic rules and regulations, principals' inability to wield influence on the subordinates and their inability to display interpersonal relationship skills, poor instructional supervision, misappropriation of funds, leading to poor maintenance of infrastructural facilities. School principals sometimes refuse to recommend teachers for professional development, which often results in hatred and other acts of insubordination leading to teachers' attrition, willful resignation and manipulation of transfers by teachers, thereby causing distortions in the teaching and learning processes poor communication skill which may lead to emotional pains and victimization of teachers. It is sometimes common to hear teachers complaining of principals' attempt to sit on their promotions and allowances. A situation like this may culminate in a tensed environmental climate of the school organization.

Most of the causes of the problems leading to poor quality are most often traced to school administrators' poor leadership skills, poor interpersonal relationship, poor maintenance of teaching/learning materials, poor supervision of instruction and so on. Sometimes also the problem is blamed on school leaders' poor skills in personal and professional needs assessment of teachers and subsequent recommendation for retraining, as well as school leaders' inability to get the students, parents, community members as well as other educational stakeholders involved in the management of the schools through shared decision making. These problems must have been responsible for teachers' non-challant attitude and poor commitment to their duties, truancy by both teachers and students thereby leading to poor quality of the products of Nigerian education institutions. This has worried parents, students and teachers themselves as well as the entire Nigerian society, as most graduates produced from some Nigerian educational institutions can hardly defend the certificates obtained. Worried by this, scholars have tried severally at various times and places to find solutions to this problem. For instance, Okon (2008) conducted a study in Cross River state on conflicts resolutions strategies of schools' principals. Also, scholars such as Olaminyan (2008); Enueme and Ekwunye (2008), Ereh, (2010), Akpan, (2011); Ekpo and Bassey (2011); Alawolu and Ahaino (2011); Idio, Sale, Arop and Alade (2011) conducted various studies at various times on leadership problems towards finding solutions to quality of education in Nigerian education system, without recourse to the fact that the fundamental issues may be beyond leadership practices of the education leaders. This may be possible for the reason that most or all of those in the leadership positions in educational sector, especially those involved in the first two tiers of the educational system, must have grown to the leadership position through years of service, without any formal leadership training. The implication may be that, natural human traits without formal training may be unproductive. It can be agreed that in any human endeavour, which includes educational leadership, people who are believed to be highly intelligent may not succeed or perform better than those who are believed to be less intelligent. The difference in performance may be hinged on abilities which may be as a result of the leaders' emotions.

Emotions, according to Goleman (2005), are guiding forces that help humans in facing predicaments and tasks that one's intelligence alone cannot handle. Goleman went further to say that, for better or for worse, intelligence can come to nothing when emotion holds sway. That is to say that, when leaders' emotional states such as anger, anxiety, excitement and so on, control or determine the leaders' job performance, intelligence may no longer hold. In other words, leaders need to act or lead based on their emotional intelligence that will guide their actions, inactions and reactions to situations and people. Salovey and Mayer in Goleman (2005), describe emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotions accurately and adaptively, and the ability to regulate emotions in ones' self and others. In other words, there is need for leaders, especially those in educational leadership positions to develop skills in emotional intelligence of self-management, so as to be able to manage others, for reason that one cannot give to another what one does not have.

Self-management is the ability of an individual to regulate distressing emotions like anxiety, anger etc, and to inhibit emotional impulsivity. It may also be described as emotional self-control which is the ability of an individual to keep disruptive emotions and impulses in check, leading to integrity which will guide their moral values. With self management skill, leaders including school principals will become adaptable and flexible in handling changes in the organization. It will help leaders or school principals not to easily get provoked to the point of loosing focus while on their job. This may manifest in how the leaders control their excitement, as they improve upon or meet a standard of excellence through their initiatives. Self-

management refers to one's ability to handle stress and stressful situations without overreacting. It is about finding a balance between mind, soul and body in order to handle emotions optimally (Wolmarans and Marlens, 2001). Goleman in Rahman et al (2012) maintains that self-management is the ability to handle feelings as they are being experienced and encompasses managing techniques such as knowing when to comfort one's self and when not to let every emotion overcome one's being. Simply put, self-management can be described as the ability of an individual to control and redirect disruptive impulses and moods towards positive and meaningful directions. Self-management is therefore the propensity to suspend judgment and to think before acting. Self-managed principals or leaders can deal with multiple demands without losing focus or energy, and are comfortable with the uncertainties of organizational goals attainment (Goleman et al, 2002). That is to say, that those principals can remain flexible in adapting to new challenges to perform work well, finding ways to manage disturbing emotions to maintain higher quality of work output and to ensure professional standards (DuleWicz and Higgs, 2000). In a study, Goleman in Sahidur (2013) claimed that more self-managed engineers were top performers than their peers.

It is noteworthy to say here that biological impulses drive our emotions, of which although we cannot do away with them, but we can strive to manage them. Self-management is akin to an ongoing inner conversation which frees us from being imprisoned by our feelings. People who engaged in such conversation feel bad moods and emotional impulses just as everyone else does. However, such principals should find ways to control them and even channel them to useful directions.

Goleman et al (2002), maintain that individuals with emotional self-management skill can find ways to manage their disturbing emotions, impulses and resources and even to channel them into useful ways. That is why self-management is often associated with self control, which is the absence of distress and disruptive feelings. This is displayed by not being perturbed in stressful situations or by dealing with a hostile person without lashing out in return. Acquisition of self management skill certainly will help individual leaders to manage their internal state and resources by means of calmness. Emotional intelligent skill of Self-management is characterized by conscientiousness, achievement orientation and trustworthiness, to mention but just these three variables for the purpose of this discourse and is presented thus;

Conscientiousness: is said to be a personality trait which is characterized by being thorough, careful and vigilant. When a leader in any organization, especially in education such as school principals desire and do things well, they can be described as being conscientious. Conscientious people exhibit self-discipline, are dutiful, achievement-oriented, display planned behaviours and are generally dependable in character. Conscientiousness is one of the five factor model of personality traits and is an aspect that has been traditionally described as character. Conscientious leaders are organized and efficient, unlike those who are easy going and disorderly. Leaders who have developed emotional intelligence of self-management may be described as highly innovative, and will be ready to act on opportunities opened for them to maximize with optimism. These groups of people with such trait or character are hard working and reliable, and are likely to be conformists. In extreme cases, this group of people may be workaholics, perfectionists and compulsive in behaviour. On the other hand those who do not possess this character or personality trait are said to be less goal oriented, less success driven, anti-social and seem to lay back. These groups of people most times engage in criminal behaviours. It can be clearly seen from the analysis of conscientiousness that leaders who possess this trait or characteristics of conscientiousness will make for highly innovative school

principals which the Nigerian education system needs, towards reviving the failing standard and the progressive decline in the quality of education in Nigeria. This is because they will be neat, hard-working and reliable in managing the schools under their care and leadership, which will push them to develop achievement orientation characteristic, which is of importance as a construct of self management skill.

Achievement orientation: is simply the desire for success, where an individual places high value on competent performance, with a high motivation to attain high level skills in competition. Parson (1981) sees achievement orientation as a relatively stable personality trait, noting that achievement orientation has been of great concern to researchers in both Psychology and Education and that it is characterized by :

- (1) The presence of the motive
- (2) The nature of the situation evoking the motive
- (3) The goal of the behaviour.

The presence of motive as an indicator of achievement orientation may be described as a desire to excel in reference to a standard of excellence, while the situation which evoke achievement behaviours are those in which competences of performance is central. The general aim of achievement behaviour is simply that of obtaining positive reinforcement for a demonstrated competence. Achievement behaviour can also be described as a behaviour directed toward the attainment of approval or avoidance of disapproval for competence of performance in situations to which standards of excellence are relevant. It can be seen from this stand point that in the Nigerian system of education, there is need for capacity building in emotional intelligence skill of self-management which encompasses achievement orientation, that will develop a burning desire toward achievement behaviours. When the school principals are equipped with achievement orientation skill, they will certainly develop the desire to excel in the management of the schools with regards to the standard for quality education, rather than working on the status quo. These types of school administrators or principals will go out of the normal routine of management principles to find a new way of managing schools for excellent results. It is only when this is done that Nigerian secondary school principals can be described as highly innovative principals.

Having highly innovative secondary school principals in Nigerian education system will therefore mean that, Nigerian school principals will be able to create new ideas and new ways of managing the financial, human and material resources under their care, set meaningful and achievable goals, which are an attributes of self-management of achievement orientation, for effective teaching and learning thereby attaining educational set objectives. Elliot and Harackiewicz,(1994) noted that a number of personality variables have been postulated to moderate the effects of goals on performance such as achievement orientation, locus of control and self-esteem, and lamenting the disappointing scarce empirical studies in personality variables as moderators of goal effects on intrinsic motivation. This scarce empirical literature as noted by these scholars affects investigation into the problems facing education system in the area of education management. This is because it makes it difficult to ascertain what kind of school principals the education systems, especially the Nigerian education system needs and should employ to manage the secondary schools.

It can be agreed from this stand point that, if Nigeria's secondary school principals are equipped with the skill of emotional intelligence of self management, it will impact positively on their job performance, resulting in their being highly innovative, developing new ideas, creative and current in thinking towards facing challenges of the times. This will certainly move the nation's education system from the present state of unnecessary craze for paper qualifications resulting in examination misconduct at all levels with its consequent dwindling quality, towards qualitative and functional Nigerian education system. This is because the principals will think more positively about education of the Nigerian child, become more involved in the educational practices to the extent of contributing meaningfully by being involved in the appraisal and reorganization of the educational goals and curriculum that will be relevant to the needs of the environment of the learners. It is through this that the Nigerian education system may be improved for the overall development of the citizenry and the entire nation. A principal who is equipped with the skill of achievement orientation will become innovative, with a changed attitude towards managing education resources in his/her care. Those with a stronger sense of control over not only themselves, but the events in their lives are less likely to become angry or depressed when faced with job stress or to quit, but since they are not quitters, they become trustworthy.

Trustworthiness: as an attribute of emotional intelligence of self-management is an important trait and is indispensable in leadership practices, if any organization as important as education must achieve its set objectives. This is because, it is an attribute of self-management that can impact positively on education leaders like secondary school principals, and may help them become highly innovative. In other words, if those in leadership position are not trusted, the said organizations stand a chance of little or no progress. Trustworthiness entails building confidence in others and this competence translates into letting others know one's values, principles, intentions, feelings, and acting in a way that are consistent with them. Trustworthy individuals are forthright about their own mistakes and comfort others about their lapses. Trustworthiness, to Hailey, Gustafsson, Abbey and McCartney,(2014) is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions of behaviours of others. Simply put, to be trusted is to have built confidence in another person in some ways. An education leader or principal who is equipped with this skill will have maximum cooperation from the staff and students of the school as well as from the community where the school is located. These types of leaders can then be described as trustworthy leaders or school principals.

Educational leaders or school principals who are equipped with emotional intelligence skill of self-management comprising the afore mentioned attributes will be able to manage their weaknesses, paying attention to subordinates' complains at the time, work towards the achievement of organizational or personal goals, despite all obstacles. Emotional intelligent skill of Self-management is therefore, a mechanism that may bring about feelings of satisfaction when organizational goals are attained. This is because it will help to inhibit the school principals' negative feelings that would have discouraged the efforts of the educational stakeholders (teachers, students, non-teachers as well as the entire school community) made towards attainment of the set goals. This therefore points to the fact that, highly innovative principals' job performance may be closely related to their emotional intelligence of self management. Empirical Studies in psychology, medicine and public administration, other than education have shown that, emotional intelligence does explain differences in real life's administration, even when numerous other measures are controlled (Gardner and Stough, 2002).

Highly innovative Principals' job performance based on emotional intelligence of self management therefore may have the greatest impact on the performance of teachers, which may in turn impact positively on students' academic performance. It can be seen from reviews that scholars have agreed that, effective job performance of school leaders is more likely to lead to effective schools (Enueme and Ekwunye, 2008; Akpan, 2008; Ereh et al, 2013). This may not be far from emotional intelligence skill of self-management as indicated by the variables considered, since no one can give what one does not have. This means that a school principal like any other organizational leader can effectively manage others only when they can manage themselves.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed capacity building needs of emotional intelligence of self-management towards highly innovative principals for Nigerian secondary schools. Emotional intelligence of self-management with its indicators such as conscientiousness, achievement orientation and trustworthiness are extensively discussed. With highly innovative principals in Nigerian secondary schools, new ideas, technological advancement, new knowledge will be easily adapted to. Secondary school principals will become creative, and find new ways of doing things to bring about improvement in their schools. Through such training programmes, principals of schools and teachers will be equipped with this needed skill for a more effective management of secondary schools, and moving along with the ever changing knowledge. It is therefore concluded that, emotional intelligence of self-management be included in the training programme for teachers and education management courses.

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