UNLOCKING THE POTENTIALS OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

Secondary schools whether private or government institutions need good leadership to be successful. Participative and democratic leaders contribute to effective business practices. Most individuals became great leaders in their business or careers through training, education, and team management. Teachers who work with school leaders that are employee centered, practice consideration, and transformational leadership are likely to be satisfied and committed to achieve academic excellence. The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not followers. Leadership should be elevating and inspiring. Private school directors or owners should encourage teachers by motivating and provides quality leadership that could lead to new heights, in performing their duties. Implementing one leadership theory is not sufficient but a combination of theories is necessary for effective school management. Private school leaders in Rivers State should practice different leadership theories such asOhio State studies, transformational, and transactional to create an environment that promotes academic excellence, staff development, and institutional success.

Introduction

Organizational performance and the development of a country across the globe is inspired by leadership styles, transparent, and selfless nature of the managers or leaders.Leadership converts potential into reality. It is the ultimate act which brings to successall the potentials in

the organization. Countries where leaders exercise impunity and insensitivity to the plight of the people are capable of experiencing low productivity and poor governance. Legacee (2016) remarked that leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behaviour of subordinates or people with similar status and convince them to follow a particular course of action. Leadership entails the social influence which an individual adopts to identify a structure or process by using others to achieve a set goal (Robbins et al., 2007). Furthermore, Chemers (2002) described leadership as a process of social influence by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Similarly, leadership is the ability of a person or an organization to direct and guide the workforce to achieve a goal. Leadership is also a process in which the leader motivates and searches for the voluntary participation of subordinates in a struggle to achieve organizational goals. Leadership is a global issue that cannot be neglected by any person, organizations, and countries because failure to have a successful leadership may affect the human, job performance, and infrastructural development of a nation (Stogdill, 1974). The wide spread of ineffective leadership or principals in most private secondary schools particularly in Rivers State has enthroned low academic standard, poverty, lack of discipline, youths' restiveness, social vices,teachers' dissatisfaction, low commitment, turnover, and underdevelopment.No organization has experienced efficiency, high productivity, profitability, infrastructural development, and unflinching employees loyalty without effective leadership and empowerment. Nwinye (2020) asserted that it is not enough for a person to be addressed as a strong manager or leader, he may be recognized as a strong leader or manager when he restores confidence, justice, equity, empowerment, satisfaction, with policies that create strong institutions and promote progress of humanity.

Literature Review

Leadership is the process by which a manager or leader directs, influences, coaches, and mentors subordinates to exercise positive behaviours necessary for the achievement of organizational goals (Nuhu, 2010).Leadership denotes the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of a vision or set of goals(Kuchynkova,2013). Correspondingly, leadership refers to the ability of a superior to influence the behaviour of subordinates and persuade them to follow a particular course of action. Individuals may assume leadership role, based on the position that he holds in an organization such that the leader is designated with the title, authority, and responsibility to lead the group or school.Effective managers and principals are to work with other people to achieve remarkable transformations in the performance of an organization. If the owner of the school or principal fail in their obligations the employees are likely to express dissatisfaction.Leadership is quite important for an organization which acts as agents to bring about change for the progress of the organization. Leaders establish direction by developing a vision of future for the organization, communicate the vision, mission,to the people in the organization and harmonize them thereby inspire the people to translate the goals, vision, and mission into reality.

Theories of Leadership

Different types of leaders have employed various theories or approaches that influence the behaviour of employees towards the goals of the organization. The theories or approaches to the study of leadership are divided into three areas:Trait theory, styles or behaviouraltheory, and situational or contingency theory.

Trait approach relates to where leadership is inherited and inborn among the leaders. On the other hand, trait theory of leadership is the trace of leadership quality from birth, status, and family background.Trait theories of leadership recognize personal qualities and characteristics that differentiate leaders from non-leaders (Burns, 1978). In most cases those who succeed or failed acquired the skills and experience from their parents or families. It describes the physical or behavioural tactics of the leader or manager. Ordinarily, leaders are few but majority of persons start life as followers. Trait approach assumes that effective leaders are brave, aggressive, more decisive and born with other specific characteristics or traits such as education, appearance, and social status (Basit et al., 2017). Leaders appear to be intelligent having self-confident than non-leaders. A lot of persons may have these traits but most of them cannot occupy leadership positions because of prevailing circumstances. Most of the traits emerged from leadership experience but not from the ability of the leader.

Characteristics of Trait Theory

i. **Intelligence:** Intelligence signifies the mental reasoning of a leader that guides his actions. Leaders are not expected to have poor communication skills and weak in knowledge. Although, it is not necessary that a leader must be genius but he should be above average, sensible also understand the good or bad aspect of life. Managers or leaders must be decisive in demonstrate a high level of self-awareness. A leader must have the ability to control his own emotion, develops feelings for other persons plights. Leaders who are intelligent are not influenced by poverty cycle or exhibit unreasonable loyalty to the detriment of the people.

ii. **Initiative:** Personality desire that relates to creating new ideas, inventiveness and innovation. It represents sense of independence. A leader should have the freedom to use his personal opinion in handling job related problems. He should give genuine advice that may enhance job performance and the satisfaction of the followers or subordinates.

iii. **Self-confidence:** The extent to which leaders or managers have confidence in their statements and actions. They believe in their personality attributes with less influence from members of the society. Self-confidence connotes positive assessment of individual value. It is the trust the leaders have in themselves which enable them to fulfill their promises to employees or followers. Leaders or managers must express self- assurance or confidence in their relationship with subordinates and assigning of tasks to employees. If employees have trust in the work behaviour of the manager they may reciprocate by loyalty as well as improve their commitments in the organizations.

iv. **Integrity:** Integrity is the moral conduct and the truthfulness of a leader. He must be sincere, honest in his actions and decision making. Leaders that have integrity are

perceived to be effective but those whose integrity is doubtful lose their respect which may affect their business and representation. Integrity makes a leader to avoid conflict through encouraging peaceful work environment.

v. **Helicopter factor:** This entails the ability of a leader to rise above every challenge conceives difficulties as daily activities that could be solved. As a leader, he should not be afraid of problems relatively apply conceptual skills in managing such situations. Even when non leaders perceive the problems as dangerous or not easy to handle, the leader must be prepared to provide solutions to the problem.

vi. **Adjustment:** The ability of the manager or leader to be tolerant, agreeable with achievement opinions in addition to punctuality in all his activities. He must plan his programs in accordance with the organizational goals. The leader is expected to adjust or modify his interest so that it will not conflict with organizational interest.

vii. **Social background:** The social background of a leader denotes physical appearance, social status, popularity, interpersonal skills must be acceptable by the followers and the members of the public. If a leader has poor social status he could be criticize by his outlook (Kellerman, 2012).

Criticism of Trait Theory

1. The theory relied on a small group of individual attributes which neglected other features such as values, motives and expertise.

2. It did not consider the structural conditions that determine leadership.

3. There is no fixed set of traits that differentiate effective leaders from ineffective leaders. Some leaders may not see these attributes as essential factors that drive leadership.

4. Leaders are not completely different from followers those who are not leaders can as well have the same traits with the successful leaders.

5. It is difficult to measure the traits of effective leader. These traits are mere assumption.

6. The assumption that leadership is inborn contradicts the principles of training which develop individuals to occupy leadership position and become successful leader.

Styles or Behavioural Theory

Behavioural approach investigated the impact of leadership styles on individual and group behaviour(Basit et al., 2017).This approach entails the pattern or form of leadership that the leader or manager demonstrates to determine the reactions of the employees. For instance, most employees or followers are willing to express loyalty and commitment when the behavior of the leader is favourable. Although, the behavior of the leaders determines the styles of followership and subordinates. Behavioural theories of leadership emphasize heavily on the actions of a leader. It signifies the exceptional behaviour embraced by persons in formal positions of authority which distinguish leaders from non-leaders. Furthermore, behavioural theory stipulates how leaders behavior affect subordinates job performance

within the organization. Behavioral theories include: William Ouchi's theory Z, RensisLikert's system 1-4, Blake and Mountain managerial grid, Ohio State university studies, and university of Michigan studies.

William Ouchi's Theory Z

This theory examined the job practices in Japanese organizations and found that what exists in Japanese organizations is different from theory X and Y including other organizations. The kind of job characteristics and leadership styles in Japanese organizations led to the formation of theory Z. Ordinarily, theory Z focuses on specific conditions that constitute organizations in Japan. The common practices in Japanese organization are collective responsibilities, collective decision making, job security, non-specialized career paths, slow promotion and evaluation and human treatment of workers.

Rensis Likert's System 1-4

Rensis Likert formulated system 1-4 theory in 1967. The theory investigated the differences between effective managers and ineffective managers. This theory assumes that effective managers are those that adopt human oriented approach while the ineffective managers practice classical approach or task oriented. Likert noted that system 1 represents task-oriented system. The system 2 is autocratic leadership whereas system 3 signifies the consultative managers and the acceptable approach that creates effective managers is the system 4 which is known as participative or democratic leadership.

Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid

This leadership style was developed by two American management experts called Robert Blake and Jane Mouton in 1964. The theory examined the behaviours of leaders or managers and the effect on employees and the output level. Indeed, Blake and Mouton illustrated two basic dimensions of leadership which comprise concern for people and concern for production. Concern for people is also known as employee centered which relates to the degree to which the leader favours the employees by giving attention to their needs, promote staff welfare so that the employees may experience satisfaction in accomplishing a task. Concern for production is the production centered that entails a leader emphasizing on work target and high productivity. This theory demonstrated five styles of leadership that are common in the organizations which include:

- a. Country club management (1,9)
- b. Impoverished management (1,1)
- c. Middle of the road management (5,5)
- d. Task management (9,1)
- e. Team management (9,9)

Figure 1

Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid.
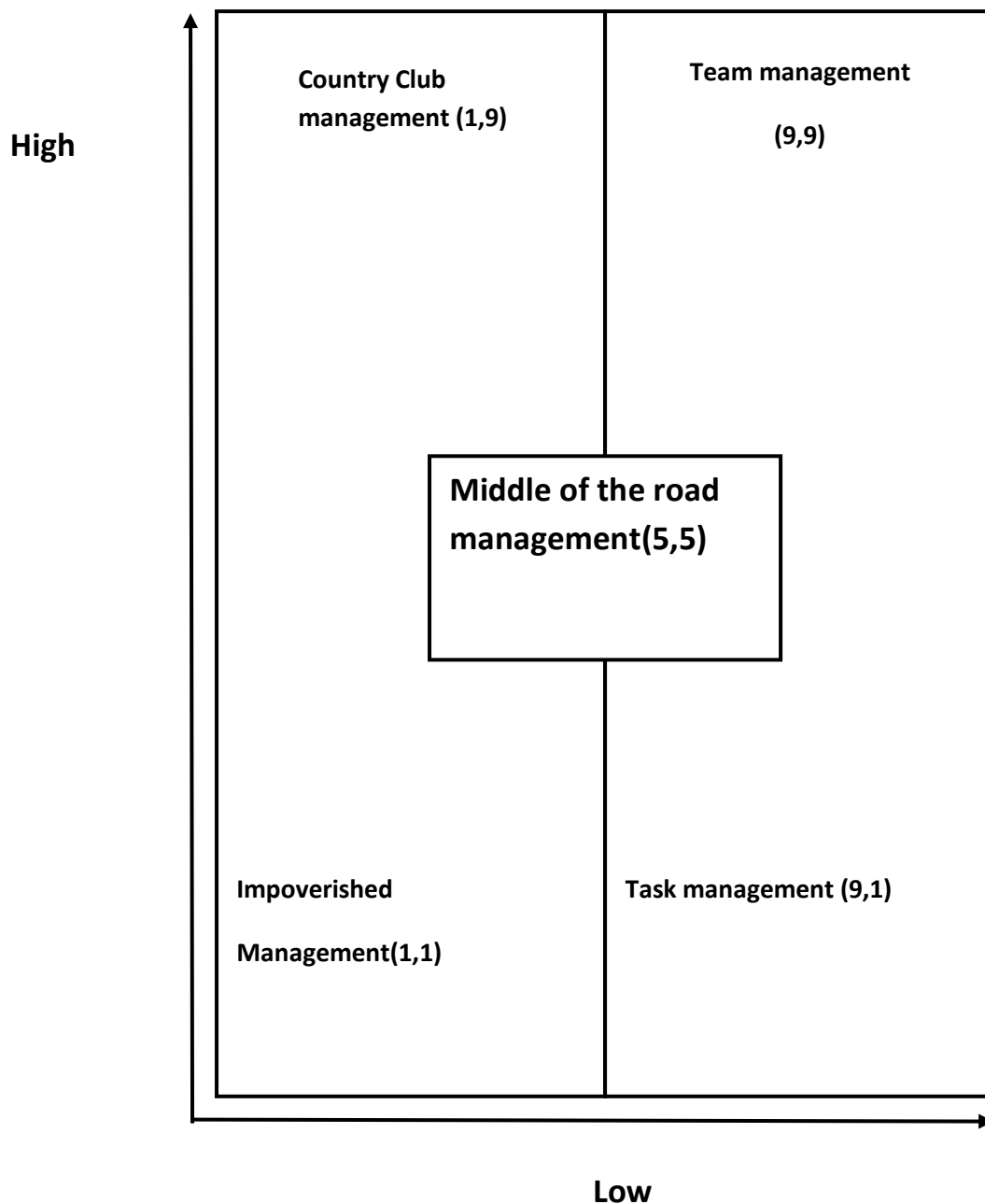
Concern for production

Country Club Management

Country club management arises when a manager protects the interest of subordinates who are loyal to him and cooperate with employees that belong to the same group or society. This concept in visible in most organizations that compel the team members to gossip, antagonize and fight those nonmembers who do not have the same belief. The plight, safety, and welfare of the members are major priority for the manager. He will ensure that the loyalist is satisfied before non-members. For instance, during appraisal, reward, promotion and training

managers give preferences to country club members. This leadership style is inhuman in the circumstances where mediocre or incompetent employees benefit more than the skillful workers. Leaders or managers that embraced this approach assume that employees express satisfaction when they receive reward from the workplace with the intention that their happiness shall be transferred into high job commitment. However, the limitation of this leadership style is that it leads to lack of control and low productivity. It permits favoritism, sentiments, and nepotism within the workforce. In country club management, the concern for people is high signifying (9) and the concern for production is low representing (1).

Impoverished Management

Impoverished management symbolizes indifferent manager or a lazy manager that is ineffective with less concern in motivating employees and nonchalant in accomplishing high production (Blake &Mounton, 1964). The manager attitude creates poverty in the workplace and low productivity. It is a style where the managers have low concern for both employees and production. This approach allows the manager to use delegates and disappear from duty since he is not committed to either task accomplishment or staff welfare. Managers are not worried if employees are complaining of poor condition of service including poor work behavior but interested in personal gains leaving the employees in hardship, stress, workload, hunger and dissatisfaction. Employees working in impoverished management system are underemployed because they are maintaining their current employment with anger at the same time searching for new jobs. Although, most managers apply this style to protect their position and prevent subsequent competitions from the employees. This approach causes conflict, dissatisfaction and inefficiency. Workers are not comfortable with this type of style they exhibit dissatisfaction through turnover and absenteeism. Impoverished management creates the opportunity for power struggles among the employees because of the weakness of the leader.

Middle of the Road Management

Middle of the road theory connotes a balanced and compromised style where the manager tolerates the behaviours of employees to accomplish organizational goals and the needs of the employees. Managers give consideration to production and employee satisfaction. The manager maintains status quo to balance results and people encouraging consultation, interpersonal relationship with the subordinates to achieve acceptable performance. Consequently, when productivity is low managers ought to compromise with the needs of workers so that employees may improve their performance to achieve efficiency. The essence of providing equal attention to production and employee wellness is to minimize conflict between management and employees. This strategy may not be effective without difficulties, one fundamental limitation is that the subsisting compromise may prevent the organization from achieving high production.

Task Management

Task management represents Produce management or authority compliance where managers believe in productivity not for the needs of workers. The manager is task oriented with low

concern for employee satisfaction. This type of manager is autocratic who adopts strict work rules, policies and use queries or unfair treatment as alternative means of achieving motivation and productivity. Task management at the first instance may result in high production but the impact on the employees may lead to high employee turnover and insecurity material such that the workers expose the negative activities and failures of the organization. There is low relationship between the manager and the subordinates. Managers are interested in high output which affects the team morale, motivation and retention. This approach promotes abusive supervision, lack of cooperation and creativity.

Team Management

Team management is the most effective leadership style that brings out the positive feelings of a manager and the subordinates on their jobs. It symbolizes workplace friendship which induces managers to be committed to organizational goals and motivation of employees. The best style of leadership is team work or management which attracts high productivity and job satisfaction. Indeed, if there is cooperation or co-worker relationship the employees may have sense of belonging, feel respected, work hard and become indebted to organizational needs. Managers that put team work into action deliver maximum results through prioritizing both the organization's production and the needs of employees. Team management enables employees to attain their highest potential. Team managers focus on high production and high employee needs.The corollary of team management is that it generates job satisfaction and low employee turnover.

Ohio State University Studies

The investigators or researchers in Ohio state university and university of Michigan conducted separate studies to find out the two leadership styles that may lead to high job performance (Likerts, 1967; Blake & Mouton, 1964)). According to the scholars, the Ohio state studies is classified into two forms namely initiating structure and consideration. The initiating structure represents task-oriented leadership. It was found that organizations where the leaders or managers adopted initiating structure created dissatisfaction among the employees which eventually led to high employee turnover. Consideration relates to employee oriented or employee empowerment leadership where the workers express satisfaction with leadership styles of the manager or leaders and the employees are capable of increasing their retention. The researchers found that where the leader or manager applies consideration employee satisfaction increases and the rate of turnover reduces. Similarly, when a leader behaviour is characterized by low consideration is more dangerous than behaviour characterized by high initiating structure.

Criticism of Ohio State Studies

i. This approach neglected the influence of situational factors on leaders or managers performance.

ii. It did not provide the holistic solutions on how these leadership styles affect work group performance.

iii. Ohio state studies used two variables such as subordinates and leaders as structured questionnaire which cannot be generalized.

University of Michigan Studies

This style of leadership examined the differences between production centered and employee centered. The employee centered denotes caring for employees, advancement, staff welfare and motivating them to achieve the predetermined goals. The managers who embrace employee centered encourages subordinates' participation in decision making and other job functions. Production centered focuses on task-oriented leadership where the manager influences the employees with pressure to meet work target in the event of fulfilling high productivity. In Production centered, managers determine the work methods for employees to implement with relative harsh supervision also emphasizing the use of rules and give directives to workers to ensure that organizational goals are accomplished. Furthermore, when managers apply Production centered style it leads to increase in production, employee dissatisfaction and turnover but consideration minimizes turnover which eventually creates employee satisfaction.

Criticism of Michigan Studies

i. There is no best pattern of leadership because the behavior of leaders changes from situation to situation.

ii. University of Michigan studies used two variables such as subordinates and leaders as structured questionnaire which cannot be generalized.

iii. The application of production centered and employee centered as measures of leadership are mere assumption.

Situational Approach

This theory assumes that several factors influence managers in the choice of styles of leadership. The situation or environment controls the action of the leader in decision making. It is the situation that makes the leadership styles or the behaviour of the leader to be effective or ineffective. Situational approach provides the style that is appropriate at a particular environment or situation. For example, the leadership style that is needed in the private secondary school may not be necessary in private companies. Ordinarily, the behaviour of a teacher or manager is affected by numerous situational forces namely organization structure, group, subordinates, nature of tasks, manager characteristics and environment. Situational approach is also called contingency theory comprising Fiedler's contingency theory, best fit approach, path-goal theory, transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Fiedler's Contingency Theory

Fiedlercontingency theory specifies that the performance of a leader or group depends on the styles of leadership and the situation which control the behaviour of the leader. Leadership effectiveness is contingent upon three situations namely favourable situation, intermediate

favourability and unfavourable situation. Fiedler (1967) asserted that leadership situation is favourable when the leader member relationship is very good, the task structure is properly defined and the position power of the leader is high and recognized. However, if the three variables are poor it represents unfavourable situation. Where the leadership situation appears to be half and half it is recognized as intermediate favourability.

Situational Factors that Determine Leadership Effectiveness

a. **Leader member relations:** This signifies where the followers and subordinates trust and liked the leader or manager. If employees do not like the leadership styles of the manager, they will express dissatisfaction and transfer their anger into low output, absenteeism and employee turnover. It connotes the recognition of the power or office of the leader.

b. **Task structure.** The extent to which the job tasks or responsibilities are appropriately defined and structured. These assignments must have procedures to prevent double interpretations. Thus, if the task is non routine, it is regarded as highly unstructured.

c. **Position power:** Position power denotes the level of power that the leader exercises over the subordinates. It involves the leader or manager having the power to employ, promote, redeploy, reward, increase the salary of employees and discipline workers that violate organizational rules and policies.

Best Fit Approach

Tannenbaum and Schmidt formulated best fit theory. This theory proposes that there is no best method of leading employees in the organization but leadership is effective when the leader, subordinates, task, and environment fit and work together. The cooperation among the four situational variables enhances job performance and organizational efficiency. Characteristics of the four situational variables include leader, subordinates, task, and environment.

Leader: The leadership styles of a manager or leader is influenced by his upbringing, the values, personal character, experience, age and educational qualification. The level of confidence a manager has on the subordinates also determines his work behavior or cooperation with the employees.

Subordinates: Loyalty or commitment from the subordinates is derived from the degree of tolerance, intelligence, background, experience and level of satisfaction. Thus, if the subordinates are satisfied and happy with the leadership styles of the manager they may exhibit retention, high production and low turnover.

Task: The nature and complexity of the task, the time required for completion of the job determine the leadership styles of the leader. Managers who understand the tedious nature of the job may decide to apply the human oriented styles in the interest of accomplishing work target. It is the responsibility of the managers to ensure that the employees perform their jobs effectively and correct the subordinates from mistakes.

Environment: Managers are expected to understand the environment where the organization operates. The manager must have the knowledge of those factors that contribute to success or failures of business. Specifically, he should have the basic ideas of the internal and external environmental factors that influence business and adapt to it. Apparently, if the manager is insensitive to the environment, he may take bad decision.

Path- Goal Model or Theory

House(1971)states that a manager should clarify the paths for the subordinates to achieve a set goal. Path – goal theory was formulated by Robert House. On the other hand, path – goal theory assumes that the leader or manager should teach the subordinates the job to enable them achieve efficiency. In law, ignorance of offence is no excuse but this principle is contrary to path – goal theory in management. This theory provides that the lecturers are obliged to teach the students effectively to enable them achieve high grades or scores in the examinations. When the students did not understand what the lecturer is teaching, the students may use it as a reason or contributing defense for their poor scores and fail grade because the lecturer is weak in knowledge. It is the responsibility of the teacher to guide and assist the students through quality teaching so that the students could do well in their studies. Similarly, if the path to achieve high performance is made easy by the lecturers or managers the students and subordinates may improve their performances. Path – goal theory is essential for the leader to influence the path between behaviour and goals through group cohesiveness, supporting subordinates, reducing difficulties to performances and satisfaction. Furthermore, path – goal theory occurs when a father teaches or shows the child the methods of selling and distribution of goods to create wealth.This theory categorized leader behaviour into four areas namely supportive leadership, participative leadership, instrumental leadership and achievement-oriented leadership.

Supportive Leadership: This refers to leadership behaviour that gives attention to the needs of the employees. It motivates employees and promotes staff welfare. The leader primary aim is to ensure that subordinates are satisfied and willing to enhance productivity.

Participative Leadership: A leadership style that permits subordinates to contribute in decision making. It creates cooperation between the management and the employees.

Instrumental Leadership: This approach guides subordinates on specific tasks and states how these jobs are to be performed. It entails planning, organizing, directing, employing the right persons with the right placement and controlling.

Transactional leadership

James MacGregor Burns developed the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership in 1978. Transactional leadership represents a leadership style where the leader focuses on tasks and the reward of the followers is based on their commitment. Followers who work less are likely to gain less but those that are dedicated and committed to job are capable of high reward and advancement. Indeed, transactional leadership signifies the

traditional model of leadership which is thoughtful with power, position, politics and bonuses. The exchange between the leader and the follower is political which involves bargaining. This implies that the efforts of the followers determine their level of satisfaction.

Transformational leadership

This arises when the leader develops feelings for follower's condition of service also to know the state of mind of employees before assigning daily responsibilities. The leader is concerned with motivation of followers to ensure that the subordinates are happy and satisfied in their workplace. Transformational leadership is workers friendly that promotes co-worker relationship. The leader or manager is interested in elevating the employees or followers in accordance with the rules of the organization. This aspect of leadership increases the confidence of followers, encourages behavioural change and motivate employees to higher levels of personal achievement. Ordinarily, transformational leadership is concerned with strategies, developing new skills, values, ethics and goals. It creates auspicious organizational change that aligns internal structures and systems to reinforce predominant values and goals. The transformational leaders are proactive in optimizing development and improving the well-being of the followers.

Conclusion

Leaders are the individuals who occupy a superior position and demonstratea high degree of control or influence over others to accomplish a goal. Manager is the person who uses the subordinates to accomplish a set objective. All managers are leaders because they perform the same management functions such as planning, organizing, directing, staffing, and controlling.Participative leadership and team management are essential in shaping the success and effectiveness of private secondary schools in Rivers State. Most teachers are willing to express loyalty and commitment to their duties when the behavior of director or principal is favourable.Leadership theories like trait, Ohio State studies, transformational, transactional, situational, and managerial grid provideunderstandings into how school leaders could influence staff performance, academic excellence, standard, and overall school development. Private school owners should adopt transformational leadership and team management to improve the standard of learning.

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