THE NEED AND CONCERN FOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW PRINCIPALS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the need and concern for leadership and management training and staff development for new principals. The aim of the study is threefold. Firstly, to unearth the needs for leadership and management training and staff development for new principals. Secondly, to identify major concerns of new principals concerning their new roles and responsibilities, especially in facilitating a change effort in their schools. Thirdly, to uncover their suggestions to the Ministry of Education regarding training and development courses in order to meet their needs and concerns.

The sample of this study comprised twenty new principals of less than five years service who are currently serving in and heading government secondary schools in Petaling District, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

These new principals' needs and concerns were identified using semi-structured interview questions. The researcher personally went to each school and interviewed each principal for approximately two and a half hours. Their responses were recorded and reported as the findings for this study. The results were divided into three categories i.e. background information, first year's experiences and suggestions. A descriptive analysis, a comparative analysis and an interpretative analysis were conducted to satisfy the aim of the study.

The present study showed that new principals were in need of an on-going leadership and management training and staff development program. Seven areas of major concerns were identified: the image of the school in the wider community, communication within the school community, administrative structure and financial management, policy and curriculum development, student discipline, and time management. Their suggestions were in line with the above needs and concerns held.
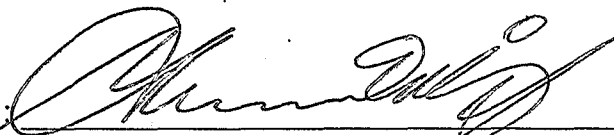
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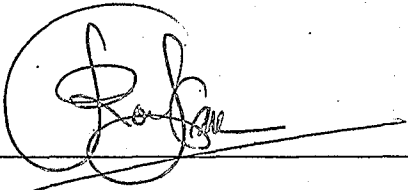
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project paper is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and a bibliography is appended.

Signature   :   Date : 30th November 2000

Name   : ROS BINTI LIZAN

Dedicated to

My late father, Lizan bin Lassim

My beloved husband, Mazlan bin Shariff

All my five children,

Norshafiqah,

Norsaadah,

Muhammad Firdaus,

Nurul Najihah,

and Muhammad Fauzan.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

There is an evolving role of the principal in the organizational and management structure of a secondary school. This demands that the effective principal is able to act as an agent of change, and further, is able to do so with due care for the people, processes, and structures affected by such innovation or change. As the key leader in the school, each principal must have a better understanding of the processes involved in management of change and of the various styles of leadership that can be adopted to ensure changes are on-going and productive. Being new in the office, this principal realizes that his role as an agent of change will face an even greater challenge.

Greenfield (1991) in his analysis of the school as a work setting suggested five interrelated types of role-demands which characterize the principal's world of work; they include managerial, instructional, political, social and moral aspects. According to Greenfield, these five dimensions are constitutive of the character of the principal's world of work; they might be attended to ineffectively, or only to a limited degree, but they cannot be ignored.

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It is clear that the principal:

1-   is responsible for managing the daily school operations necessary to sustain the organization;

2-   is organizationally and professionally responsible for supporting and improving the school's instructional goals and related activities;

3-   has to work through direct and indirect personal interactions with others in the school;

4-   has to develop and utilize power to influence the allocation of resources and the conflicting and competing special interests of school participants; and

5-   is required to make normative judgments regarding the moral values and obligations shaping the fabric of school life since the school is a highly normative organization.

This notion emphasizes the multi-dimensionality of the principal's world of works and underlines the need for well-elaborated and long-term training and staff development programs for the principals. Thus, any training and development efforts should be planned to cater such needs.

1.2   Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to unearth the needs and concerns for leadership and management training and staff development for the new principals to develop effective schools. This can be done by identifying challenges faced by the new principals in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, and comparing them with their knowledge. This study is able to offer relevant findings and suggestions for the Ministry of Education to enhance the effectiveness of various training programs to best prepare the new principals for their new posts. Any leadership and management training as well as staff development should assist the principals in their endeavors to develop effective and sustainable school improvement.

1.3   Significance of the Study

Dale S. Beach (1984) viewed training as an organized procedure, that it is pre-planned for people to gain knowledge and skills for definite purpose. Nadler (1984) defined training as a learning process related to the present job, while staff development is a learning process not specifically related to a present or future job.

William M. Mantante (1996) wrote about Six-step Training Chain. The six steps that ensure the success of a training program are as follows:

a- Pinpointing training needs

b- Setting training objectives

c- Deciding on how to best meet the specific objectives

d- Securing / developing program

e- Conducting the training

f- Evaluating the training

Weaknesses or breaks can occur at any step of the training chain, but most often, they occur at the beginning and at the end, that is during preparation and follow-through. Since this study attempts to discover the needs and concerns for leadership and management training and staff development for the new principal, the researcher hopes that such breaks can be minimized if not eliminated. By identifying their actual needs and concerns, the Ministry of Education and its departments are able to enhance the effectiveness of such programs for school administrators so that they are well-prepared and motivated to improve their schools' performances.

1.4   Research Questions

There has been a large number of studies on effective schools and school effectiveness. However, in the Malaysian context, the number of studies on the needs and concerns for professional development of the new principals in pursuing school effectiveness is limited. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

1. What are the needs and concerns of the new principals concerning their new responsibilities?

2. What are their suggestions to the Ministry of Education in meeting those needs and concerns through more effective leadership and management training and staff development?

1.5   Definitions of Terms

These are the definitions of the various concepts used throughout the paper.

The Needs and Concerns

These refer to actual challenges compared with the knowledge and experience of the new principals in their ambition to develop an effective school through a process of change.

Leadership and Management Training

It refers to all the planned and scheduled programs or courses held by the Ministry of Education through its departments in pursuing the efforts of best preparing the new principals before and after assuming their new positions.

Staff Development

It refers to other efforts aimed at enhancing the knowledge and experience of new principals to cater to the uniqueness of their schools.

New Principals

These are the principals who are new in the office, with less than five years service in a particular school.

1.6   Summary

The following are included in this chapter (1) the background of the study, (2) the objectives of the study, (3) the significance of the study, (4) the research questions, and (5) the definitions of terms used in this study. The researcher attempts to unearth the needs and concerns for leadership and management training and staff development for new principals. The next chapter will review some literature related to such needs and concerns.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to P. Block (1987), leadership is the process of translating intentions into reality. The Ministry of Education has continuously tried its best in upgrading our educational system so as to satisfy the needs of our future generation. Thus, many efforts for school systematic change are scheduled for this purpose. However, successful change of individuals' knowledge and practices in classrooms and schools appears to be accompanied by on-going support and assistance to the ministry as they are implementing the changes. Therefore, this assistance may come in various forms and from various sources. One of the most important sources identified was the school principal. He/ She can exercise effective leadership in facilitating any change process.

2.1 Leadership vs. Management

The school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. It is his leadership and management that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. If a school is vibrant, innovative, children-centered place, if it has the reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost always point to the principal's leadership and management as the key to the success.

The attention to leadership has been unprecedented in business, and government, as well as education. What is the leadership function? One aspect of the leadership discussion for the past several years has focused on the distinction between management - which educational administrators typically do with reasonable success, and leadership - which educational administrators allegedly do not do, but should. Although these concepts are frequently confused, several researchers have made a clear distinction.

For example, Gardner (1990, p. 1) suggested that leadership is "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers". Further, he reserved the term "managers" for individuals who "hold a directive post in an organization presiding over the resources by which the organization functions. allocating resources prudently, and making the best possible use of people" (Gardner, 1990, p. 3). In agreement, Tosi (1982, p. 233) suggested that "leading is an influence process; managing may be seen as the act of making choices about the form and structure of those factors that fall within the boundaries of managerial discretion".

As early as 1978, Burns distinguished between the roles of manager, who negotiates with employees to obtain balanced transactions of rewards for employee efforts, and the roles of leader, who targets efforts to change, improve, and transform the organization. Tichy and Devanna (1986) expanded on Burns's ideas, asserting that managers engage in very little change but manage what is present and leave things much as they found them when they depart. Transformational leadership, they declared, focuses

on change, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The leader changes and transforms the organization according to a vision of a preferred status. Leaders, then, are change makers and transformers, guiding the organization to a new and more compelling vision; a demanding role expectation. Transactional and transformational leadership are "often viewed as complementary," with transactional practices needed to get the day-to-day routines carried out (Leithwood, 1992b, p. 9). Leithwood, however, maintained that these "practices do not stimulate improvement, transformational leadership provides the incentive".

Who are the leaders who stimulate improvement? Murphy (1991c, p. 32) stated that "there is no single key actor". Leadership, as noted above, is defined by function. It is not restricted to people occupying particular positions. Any person who can deliver the leadership function is a leader. Besides the principal, teachers, parents, and community members can be significant educational leaders, as can central office consultants or specialists, external agency staff, and state department personnel. Students can act as leaders. Anyone who provides leadership can be a leader. Thus, all principals must be aware of this function to best run an effective school, especially those who are new in the office.

2.2   The Need for and Concern to be Leaders

Deal (1990, p. 4) maintained that "nothing will happen without leadership. From someone or someplace, energy needs to be created, released, channeled, or mobilized to get the ball rolling in the right direction". "Research on schools in the last couple of decades led to the interpretation that schools can develop as places for excellent teaching and learning, but left to their own devices many of them will not" (Wimpelberg, 1987, p. 100). As Glatter (1987, p.61) pointed out, "there has too often been an assumption that you only need to introduce an innovation for it to be effectively absorbed by the institution". As Block maintained, leaders are needed to translate intentions into reality.

Cawelti (1987, p. 3) noted that "research has documented what common sense has long dictated: that school leaders do determine whether or not schools are successful". This growing knowledge base points to the importance of effective principals to student success in schools. Beginning with the effective schools studies, which were conducted largely in low socio-economic settings, for example by Edmonds (1979), Lezotte and Bancroft (1985), Venezky and Winfield (1979), and others, the more effective schools were found administered by strong educational leaders.

2.3 An Effective Principal as the Key Leader

Thomas, as early as 1978, studying the role of principals in managing diverse programs, concluded that many factors affect implementation, but none so much as the leadership of the campus principal. More recently, the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth (1983) identified the primary determining factor of excellence in public schools as the skillful leadership of the individual principal. The Task Force report further noted that on campuses where principals had leadership skills and were highly motivated, the effects have been startling, regardless of the unique ethnic or socio-economic factors of the school community and the nature of the population the school serves. Therefore, there is no doubt that all the principals must be well prepared with leadership and management skills.

Research and "exemplary practice" have documented that the principal is a central element in improving instructional programs within the school (Fullan, 1991; Hansen & Smith, 1989). Andrews maintained in an interview with Brandt (1987) that "gains and losses in students' test scores are directly related to teachers' perceptions of their principal's leadership" (Brandt, 1987, p. 9). Lieberman and Miller (1981) noted that the principal is critical in making changes happen in schools. Reinhard *et al.*, (1980) determined that, at each stage of the change process, contributions by the principal were extremely important to the project's overall success.

Targeting the principal as a leader of change, studies have focused on what effective principals do. Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) found that "effective" principals were proactive in nature and took steps to secure support for change efforts on behalf of their students. Stallings and Mohlman (1981) indicated that principals who were particularly effective in program implementation went out of their way to be helpful to teachers and staff, were constructive in criticism they provided, and explained their reasons for suggesting behavior changes. They shared new ideas, set good examples by being on time or staying late when necessary, were well prepared, and cared for the personal welfare of their teachers (Rutherford *et al.*, 1983).

Little (1981, p. 97) found that effective change facilitation occurred in schools that were administered by principals who "communicate particular expectations to teachers. They modeled the norms they support and sanction teachers who perform well by using and allocating available resources; and protect teachers from outside interferences by acting as a 'buffer' between the district and the needs of the teachers". In a description of principals' behaviors relating to successful change facilitation, Rutherford and colleagues (1983) found the following factors:

- They have a clear vision of short and long-range goals for the school, and they work intensely with brute persistence to attain their vision;

- The achievement and happiness of students is their first priority; and they have high expectations for students, teachers, and themselves;

- They are actively involved in decision-making relative to instructional and administrative affairs, and they attend to instructional objectives as well as instructional strategies;

- They collect information that keeps them well informed about the performance of their teachers; they involve teachers in decision-making but within the framework of established goals and expectations; and directly or indirectly they provide for the development of teachers' knowledge and skills, and they protect the school and its family from unnecessary intrusions;

- They seek policy changes at the district level for the benefit of the school, and they give enthusiastic support to a change;

- They provide for the personal welfare of teachers, and also model the norms they want teachers to support; and

- They aggressively seek support for resources within and outside the school to foster the goals of the school.

2.4   A Conceptual Framework

Once a principal is appointed to become one, he must be aware that there is no turning back in his decision. They must try their very best because everybody expect them to make a 'difference'. From a longitudinal study that focused specifically on identifying the actions or interventions of principals on behalf of teachers' implementation of change, a classification of interventions resulted (Hord and Huling

Austin, 1986). Eight functional classifications of interventions were used to organize the actions of principals as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Classifications of Interventions

Developing supportive organizational arrangements	Planning, managing, providing materials, resources, and space
Training	Teaching, reviewing and clarifying new knowledge and skills
Monitoring and evaluation	Collecting, analyzing, reporting, and transferring data
Providing consultation and reinforcement	Promoting innovation use through problem solving and technical assistance to individual users
External communication	Informing outsiders
Dissemination	Gaining support of outsiders and promoting use of the innovation by outsiders
Impeding	Discouraging or interrupting use
Expressing and responding to concerns	Complimenting, praising, acknowledging, complaining, and reprimanding

Of these eight functions, four are represented most frequently in the study of school change: providing logistical and organizational arrangements; training; monitoring and evaluation; and providing consultation/ problem solving and reinforcement. In

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