

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE HUMAN RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

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Abstract

This paper is an innovation in the use of good human relations and community participation in secondary school management through the application of Transformational Leadership Behaviours. It identified the need for effective human relations and community involvement in school administration and management in this era of technology and globalization. It also presented a training package in Transformational Leadership Behaviours for school administrators and managers that would improve their human relations in involving their communities in effective participation in school management. Six transformational leadership behaviours were involved in this training package. Studies show that failing organizations that had applied these behaviors have miraculously improved. The paper, therefore, posits that the ailing Nigerian schools will no doubt be positively transformed if school heads/managers apply the leadership behaviours presented in this training package.

Introduction

Man is a social animal. This implies that he must interact with others to achieve certain goals. This is more apparent in organizations, such as schools. Human Relations (HR), used interchangeably with Public Relations (PR) in this paper, refers to the ability to work with other people to enhance success through the achievement of organizational goals. Human relation skills can be developed (Wary, Luft and Highland, 2009).

Osuji (2001) aptly remarked that it was due to lobbying and PR that America, through her Ministers (Ambassadors), who went to lobby France, were able to secure independence in 1775. He concluded that in all human activities, howsoever described, elements of human relations or public relations must be part of it. According to Black (1989), public relations are deliberate planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain mutual understanding between any organization and its public (community). Therefore, school managers should make definite plans towards public or human relations by budgeting for it.

The above definition underscores the importance of human, public and community relations in school management. Caution should, therefore, be applied in mistaking effective human, public or community relations with bribery. This paper is an attempt to develop human relation skills of school managers in community participation through the application of Transformational Leadership Behaviours (TLBs).

Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to produce a training package that will prepare school administrators/managers in the application of Transformational Leadership Behaviours for good human relations and effective community participation in school management.

Objectives of the Training Package

At the end, readers will be able to:

1. Apply the 6 Transformational Leadership Behaviours for effective human relations and community participation;
2. Relate better with their school communities while involving them highly in school management without much conflict;
3. Transform their school to a much higher standard.

Definition of terms

A community is a group of people in the neighborhood. It could be the micro (immediate) or macro (larger) community. In the school system, the micro community includes the teachers, other staff and students. The macro community includes the villagers, church members, and other businesses or establishments surrounding the school. It also involves the whole town, state, country or the world at large.

Management is the arrangement of human and material resources available for the achievement of objectives. Certo (2000) referred to it as the process of reaching organizational goal by working with and through people and organizational resources. The main issue about management is that it involves the use of people and material resources for achievement of goals. There is no management without people and goal achievement.

Literature Review

Human Relations Movement started between 1955 and 1972. The initial approach to management started with the classical approach, which was criticized for its failure to emphasize human variables. It was observed that variables, like conflict communications, leadership, and motivation, were shortchanged in the classical approach. This led to the development of the Behavioural Approach, which later gave rise to the Human Relations Movement that fueled the Hawthorne study and the bank wriing experiments. Other contributors were Abraham

Maslow, (Theory of Needs), Douglas McGregor (Theory X & Theory Y). Since then, human/public relations and community participation have been applied in management of organizations.

Modern managers prefer the term 'leadership behaviours' to 'leadership style'. The failure to identify predicative leadership traits led researchers to turn to other variables, resulting to 'leadership behaviours'. Rather than look at what good leaders do (Certo, 2000: 134), transformational leadership behaviours (TLBs) transform followers, inspire people to perform beyond expectation and to succeed highly. According to Certo (2000), it is a leadership that inspires organizations to succeed by their values, such as justice and integrity. It is leadership that "seeks to arouse and stir higher needs to engage the whole person by asking followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organization or team" (Baldwin, Bommer & Rubin, 2008: 241). This great leadership style was compounded by McGregor Burns and developed by Bass (Podsakoff, 1996), who identified a model of TLBs that synthesized all other transformational leadership models.

Transformational leadership was once thought to be performed by only the gifted in top management positions, but studies have shown that it can be learnt and applied by others. TLBs have been very helpful to many organizations, churches, multinational corporations and even educational systems. Methodist ministers, rated high in TLBs, had greater Sunday church attendance and membership growth (Onnen 1987). Multiple banks, financial performance and commitment increased, for 20 managers trained in TLB versus the performance of another group that did not receive the training (Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996). Also, a German bank unit performance was higher in banks led by transformational leaders (Geyer & Steyrer, 1998), while sales managers, who used TLBs had sales representatives that had increased sales performance (Podsakoff, Mackenzie & Bommer, 1996). With TLBs, employees are more satisfied, more optimistic about the future, less likely to leave their jobs, more likely to trust their leaders and perform higher than employees who work for

leaders without these behaviours (Baldwin, Bommer & Rubin, 2008: 242).

However, other studies show that Nigerian primary school teachers and technical college administrators do not apply these behaviors to a large extent (Onwurah & Chiaha, 2007; Onwurah, Ogbuaya & Chiaha, 2007). Probably, this is the reason our schools are in deplorable states. However, it is interesting that school managers can now lean the application of this heroic leadership behavior.

Need for community participation in School Management

School management today have become very complex and requires school managers to employ the assistance of others for a more effective management. The complexities of modern management, especially in this era of globalization and technology, have made it imperative that school management should not be left alone in the responsibility of heading the schools. In addition, Nigerians have become more literate and knowledgeable in matters that concern them, especially education, such that many people in the community have a lot to offer for effective school management. Some are top managers in various fields of endeavors, while others are experts in different professions and can contribute positively to the school management. Furthermore, government needs assistance in the management of schools in Nigeria, especially in the areas of funding and provision of facilities. It is, therefore, the duty of every school manager to take due advantage of his community and ensure that they participate in relevant areas of management.

Some school managers would not want communities to participate in school management probably because they want to avoid conflict and/or power sharing. Others may not want to be monitored in anyway by anybody outside the designated government officials. It is important for school managers to note that with the application of Transformational Leadership Behaviours, they will be able to manage

any conflict as well as maintain their authorities in the school, such that there will be no power tussle. Instead, there will be cooperation and partnership in the school management, with the school manager still very much in charge.

Application of TLBs for Effective School management

The 6 TLBs identified by Padsakoff (1996) are articulation of vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering acceptance of group goals, communicating high performance expectations, providing individualized support and providing intellectual stimulation.

Articulating Vision

Vision aims at identifying new opportunities for the school and developing, articulating and inspiring others. It captures people's hearts and minds. It provides a guide for the school manager and the community. In articulating vision, it is essential that the school manager *repeats the vision often, explains the significance of the vision to the community, appeals to higher community values, uses metaphors; uses emotional appeals, speaks in positive terms, and uses the term 'We' instead of 'I'.*

Vision should also be very clear and understandable, in line with that of the employer or superior. It should be futuristic and short (one sentence). It should create a mental image in the minds of people that will further enthusiasm and assist in directing the day-to-day action of the school community. In other words, vision should create a positive picture of the future for the school; it has to be what is important; adjust plans and actions as necessary in concert with the overall strategic appeals; speak in positive terms; use the term 'we' instead of 'I'.

The vision should be very clear and understandable to the community. It must be in line with, and involve the right people in developing, the strategy for the school. Always remember that you can only lead, where you are willing to go (Lachlan Mclean).

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Most, if not all Nigerian schools, have not yet articulated their visions and missions. Where this is done, the vision is not made public.

Providing an appropriate model

It is very important that school managers show good example. Role modeling is so powerful because it sets a cue that the behaviour is important. Thus, it is expected that the school manager should show, through his/her behavior, that the vision is not just a lip-service, but very important to the management.

Remember that nothing is as potent as the silent influences of a good example (James Kent in Certo, 2000). Action, they say, speaks more than words. So, the school manager must be clear of his values, must put them into practice and act towards them. In other words, he must be clear about his expectations of other people, hold himself to the same standard of the expectations to which he holds others; be consistent in his display of desired behavior; and remember that small indiscretions can have major consequences. For instance, if he encourages cost saving to Total Quality Management (TQM), staying in expensive hotel or not insisting on quality of output in school could undermine credibility. Perform desirable behaviours, where observable. If no one sees you doing something positive or knows about it, that behaviour cannot serve as a model. A school manager who shows good example is more likely to get support from his/her community.

Fostering the Acceptance of Group Goals

The manager's behaviours should lead to cooperation among community members and getting them to work together towards achieving the school super ordinate goal – the goal of all members of the community. Group goal is very essential because it gets all concerned committed to its achievement. It also provides a sense of purpose, a rallying point and common objectives of the community. This is why it is essential to get both micro and macro communities

involved in the transformation of the school. To foster a group goal, you have to: set a super ordinate goal and make the goal “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound). To achieve this, you need to encourage people that everyone is ‘in it together’ and that success for each person depends upon the group success. “Together we will succeed” should be the slogan.

Communicating High Performance Expectations

The school manager’s behaviors should aim at co-operation and demonstration of expectations for excellence, quality and high performance on the part of the community. There should be no room for incompetence. Let the community people believe they can make it. Let the manager’s behaviour show that there is no room for failure. According to Baldwin, Bommer and Rubin (2008), communicating High Performance Expectations works partly because of the Pygmalion effect, based on the premise that “if you form certain expectations of people and communicate them through behavioural cues, people will respond by adjusting their behaviours, resulting in the original expectation coming true.”

To communicate high performance expectation, set high standards for the community, communicate the high standards and confidence in their ability to achieve those standards, let people know you are there to help them accomplish the high performance, and encourage your community to seek help from you whenever they feel it would be helpful. Remember that if you treat a man as he is, he will remain as he is, but if you treat a man as he can be and should be, he will become as he can and should be.

Providing Individualized Support

To achieve this, the school manager should exhibit behaviours that indicate that he/she respects all members of the community and is concerned about their personal feelings and needs. It makes the followers feel valued, capable and liked. You cannot be a good

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manager unless you generally like people. That is how to bring out the best in them.

This implies that being attentive to the community members' needs paying attention to what they are saying and doing. It is necessary that the manager make interpersonal connections with employees. He can discuss family affairs or interesting issues (not really official matters) with subordinates, genuinely caring and showing compassion in action, encouraging continuous development and growth of staff, and sending messages which say, "I care about you and am looking out for your best interest. You have the potentials and I trust you, I count on you."

Studies have shown that providing individualized support serves as a buffer to workers stress, increases job satisfaction, enhances organizational commitment and improves performance. The manager should exhibit behaviours that challenge the subordinates and make them rethink on how work can be performed better. Such managers should not be involved in, "the way it has always been done" or "it is not my job". To provide intellectual stimulation, the school manager should encourage the imagination of the community members, challenge old ways of doing things, look for better ways of doing things, encourage the community members not to think like himself, be willing to take risk for potential gains, make it acceptable to fail if learning form failure takes place. Others include sending staff shopping for new ideas and innovations, putting idea gathering on agenda, making it safe for others to experiment, and eliminating fire housing (dismissing good ideas with reasons that they will not work). Also, honour the risk-takers because they are great innovators, encourage positive thinking and be innovative. Remember that, innovation comes from someone who thinks he has figured out the coolest new thing ever and who wants to know what others feel about it.

Activities

Activity 1

1. *List the things your community can do to participate in school management.*
2. *Identify areas in which each group can participate in the school management*

Activity 2:

1. *List your point against community participation in school management.*
2. *Compare them with your points in Activity 1.*
3. *Give strong reasons for any strong points you still have against community participation in school management.*

Activity 3

1. *Try and articulate a vision for your school following the above guide.*
2. *use all members of your community*
3. *Articulate your mission and indicate how to achieve your vision.*

Activity 4

1. *List our activities that our school communities have functioned effectively*
2. *What in your opinion contribution to the success of the activities?*
3. *List what could be the hindering factors.*
4. *Form some committees and let members indicate their goals.*
5. *Merge the goals in item 4 and with help of the committee members and come up with the super ordinate goal.*

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Activity 5

1. *Go through the vision and mission several times.*
2. *What are your expectations of your micro community?*
3. *List ways by which you will communicate the vision to your communities.*
4. *List things you will do to convince your community that the vision and mission will work.*

Activity 6

1. *Form committees using members of the micro and macro communities and charge them with the responsibility of ensuring that the vision and mission actualized.*
2. *Map out strategies to actualize the vision that you have articulated.*
3. *Give them a time period to present proposal, mapping out specific periods to accomplish each mission.*
4. *Give to them all necessary assistance and facilities.*
5. *Meet with them occasionally.*
6. *Give them no room for failure. Let them know the they must succeed.*

Conclusion

It is high time the school managers of today made significant change. A lot has been said and written about the low standard of education in this country. It is time to change to transform the schools through the PR and HR of the school managers as well as the participation of the school communities. All hands must be on deck to make a difference in our schools to bring them up to the international standard. Other countries have done so, and we can do better.

Recommendations:

1. It should be made mandatory that all school managers should articulate visions and missions about their schools and place

- them publicly at strategic positions and in all classes and places where the community can see.
2. School managers should involve their communities in school management.
 3. Funds should be allocated to school managers for Public Relations.
 4. Communities should be informed of the new reform and asked to cooperate with the school management.

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