

GSJ: Volume 8, Issue 9, September 2020, Online: ISSN 2320-9186

[www.globalscientificjournal.com](http://www.globalscientificjournal.com)

## EXPLORING PRINCIPALS' CAPACITY BUILDING AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGER, NIGERIA

BY

**Ombughim Salman Umar, Husaina Banu Kenayathulla\* and Kazi Enamul Hoque**

*Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy Faculty of Education,  
University of Malaya, Malaysia*

*[ombughim@gmail.com](mailto:ombughim@gmail.com), [husaina@um.edu.my](mailto:husaina@um.edu.my)\**

### Abstract

Principals' capacity building and school effectiveness are outlined by examining empirical studies in the past two decades. This paper adopts a qualitative study (focus group) approach to seek stakeholders' perceptions on principal capacity building and school effectiveness. A total of 9 respondents were systematically analysed and common themes were identified. This paper finds that the amalgam model of the conceptualization of principals' capacity building and school effectiveness has been neglected in Niger, Nigeria. Principals' capacity building and school effectiveness performed more indirect than direct leadership behaviour. A gap exists between the ideal principals' capacity building and school effectiveness with the truth. The development of the formal theory of principals' capacity building and school effectiveness is expected as various substantive theories and more data are accumulated. Preferred consequence of knowledge hastening, the direction of research efforts across scholars and organizations is a necessity. The findings suggest less effort spent by principals' on the teachers. Yet with principals' capacity building and school effectiveness, as well as cooperative and team learning in recent years, principals' capacity building and school effectiveness are expected to rise in terms of ensuring frequent capacity building and school effectiveness quality. This paper tends to accumulate knowledge about principals' capacity building and school effectiveness in Niger, Nigeria. It is a contribution to the survey of indigenous viewpoints, practices and the empathetic and building principals' capacity building and school effectiveness in Niger, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Niger, Nigeria, Principals' capacity building, School effectiveness.

## **Introduction**

Internationally, most nations compete for global influence in the areas of technology and science employing education as an instrument to achieve both their national and global agendas. As a result, a paradigm change in the sectors has been consistent across the globe. These changes are mainly in the form of policy reforms targeted at identifying the effective and efficient educational system that meets today's developmental needs (Oladipo, Adebakin & Iranloye, 2016). Formal Education is vital for the economic, political, social, and technological development of any nation, its relevance to individual and societal growth cannot be overemphasized. Thus, lack of efficient and quality education in a nation will weaken economic and technological growth, competitiveness, social cohesion and the ability to compete favourably in the global market. Hence, to achieve accelerated development, education should be well-positioned following best global practices.

Leadership capacity building is defined in general terms as a collective work in the leadership process, learning or development of advanced leadership skills, thus, narrows in the area of school management involving the acquisition of knowledge on sustainable improvement in the education system (Lambert, 1998). This process leads to a change without emphasis on building the capacity for proper adaptation to a constantly changing environment or trend, the chances of sustained leadership capacity will be lessened.

Consequently, those driving the sector especially policymakers, administrators and other stakeholders must be made to acquire relevant skills that will drive our education and provide quality teaching and learning. It is important to emphasize that school principals who are the instructional leaders are an important component of this drive, their knowledge, administrative style, and commitment will contribute to the learning environment of their schools, which will, in turn, have a negative or positive impact on their students' academic outcome and acquisition of relevant skills.

However, Statistics from available WAEC results and research findings show that students have been performing well in their external examinations and the objectives of secondary education are far from been realised (Ayandoja, Aina & Idowu, 2017; Oluwadare, 2011). This ill-starred change has been a great concern amongst parents, stakeholders and the public who usually put the blame on the ineffectiveness and increasing occurrence of students' drop out, indiscipline and

ruthless behaviours on lowly and unsatisfactory services condensed to students by the secondary school principals (Lambert, 1998).

With professional development, principals are equipped to improve the school system such as teachers, students, curriculum, and management which will eventually lead to a good standard of education in the country.

Moreover, it has been suggested by researchers that there is a strong relationship between principal professional development, instructional leadership, and educational reform. According to Marshal (1992), there should be a strong recommendation for principal training to extend beyond the managerial aspects of their jobs, "Beyond this [managerial skills], principals' need to be prepared to fill roles and functions of administrators and to face the fundamental dilemmas in administration". A focus on management tasks seems to alleviate opportunities for principals to acquire the needed skills associated with becoming instructional leaders (Faraj, 2015).

Thus, the development and performance of the schools are at stake when school principals are not equipped with new skills and knowledge and when required changes that will bring about quality learning do not occur in the school system. This will negatively impact on the performance of teachers and students. Given the foregoing, professional development needs, changes and continuous learning should be provided for the whole school system especially school principals. Hence the main objective of this study is to explore the extent of principals' capacity building for enhancing school effectiveness in Niger State secondary schools.

## **Capacity Building**

Capacity building entails introducing the right conditions, opportunities, experiences, cooperation and shared learning to encourage performance efficiency (Harris, 2015). It includes harnessing a reservoir of underutilized talent hidden among employees in the organization thereby, making the opportunity available to others, to mutually interact, exchange ideas, develop their talent and contribute to the growth of the organization (Lambert, 1998). Leaders who strive to implement capacity building practice, also promote leadership in others (Abrahamsen & Hellekjær, 2015). Thus, this agrees with the notion in the professional community that staff level of commitment to work depends on the leadership capacity building and behaviour. Today, in professional communities, staff are an integral part of the decision-making process, they involve in collaborative work accomplishment, and accept shared responsibility, shared sense of purpose for job

performance (Lambert, 1998). Putting these variables into practice can be referred to like building and distribution of internal capacity.

In this context, internal capacity is the teachers' ability to engage students and sustain continuous learning while enhancing student's ability to increase their academic success (Ehiane, 2014). In general, building school capacity implies that schools must encourage cooperation, enablement, and participatory teaching and learning environment. Internal capacity is concerned with making the most of teacher's pedagogical skills. It implies that individuals feel confident to function within the realm of their capacity and within their zone through collaboration and through the participatory decision-making process essentially to promote professional development attain improvement (Asan, 2015). As a result, building the capacity for school effectiveness requires a greater emphasis on how collaborative work accomplishment in schools can be promoted.

### **Principal Capacity Building and School Effectiveness**

Principals' capacity building is crucial for introducing positive change in the school's environment and also important for attaining school effectiveness (Ross & Gray, 2006). According to the duo, principals' capacity building comprises of three important skills principals should possess, they include conceptual skill which entails, the ability to identify and sustain a vision.

Principals should be able to express the ability of technical and interpersonal skills, and the ability to conceptualize such skills to reflect on the overall growth of the school. This entails using the intellectual capacity to stimulate the school, host community, stakeholders and influence them to accept transformative change. Generally, this skill is instrumental in laying the right foundation upon which a change can be introduced. Thirdly, this skill can simply be referred to as individual consideration for others, this includes, the ability to listen, accept or address varying opinions, sympathise or show empathy to others, the ability to accept criticisms and understand the concern or need of others and address them properly. The skill is also important for building and strengthening leader-subordinate trust and relationship which plays an important role in attracting the loyalty of members (Barnett & McCormick, 2004). The tenets of these skills can be extensively explored to introduce change not just in the context of the school environment but across all facets of life. For example, in South Carolina, the United States of America, Kochamba and Murray (2003) carried out a study on critical leadership skills principals need to advance their skills for attaining school effectiveness. They found that technical and interpersonal skills, human relations, conceptual and transformative leadership skills are critical for attaining effective management in private business

organisations or NGOs are equally effective for the management of secondary schools, thus principals' capacity building, training should also be directed towards this areas. In another study carried out in Hong Kong by Pang and Pisapia (2012) found a link between strategic thinking skills and practical procedures for attaining school effectiveness. Bolanle (2013) and Barnett and McCormick (2004) found transformational, managerial and behaviour management skills to be essential ingredients that principals can add to their skill archives in pursuit of school effectiveness. In a related study, Hoppey and Mcleskey (2013) revealed that principals, particularly those in developing countries who possess interpersonal skills; believe that this skill is limited to playing supportive roles to teachers. This show that, while they possess such important skill, they perhaps lack the knowledge on its extent of application and usage. The study was centred on the path-goal theory of leadership by House (1996). The path-goal theory of leadership which proposes that a leader can define a clear path to successful attainment of goals for followers and to overcome obstacles on the process determines an effective leader. Thus, it is imperative to further educate principals on the extent to which the skills they already possess can be applied, explored or utilised. To clarify the path and direction to which school development takes place, principals must be trained on procedures and processes involved in the application of their skills. To overcome obstacles on the process of attaining school goals and objectives, principals should be able to identify problems or obstacles ahead of time, using the tenets of the skills they possess, they should be able to identify solution and be able to instruct his/her subordinate on what to do and how to do it (Barnett & McCormick, 2004). As highlighted in the pages above, principals' capacity building skills development has a bearing on student's high academic results or successes. However, the case is different in Niger state, as evidence shows that there is a widespread of relatively low academic success recorded among students in public secondary schools (Ayandoja et al., 2017). This further increases doubts that principals in those schools possess the right skills to introduce transformational change. The problem can be attributed to less emphasis on the side of the government on initiating professional training for secondary school principals particularly on capacity building and establishing an evaluation and monitoring systems to checkmate their performances as well as creating incentive packages to influence and motivate them.

Another activity cumulating school effectiveness is the managing and controlling of the school environment, previous studies investigated the principal's role in managing and controlling the school environment. Bush and Glover (2014) carried out a conceptual study in this area, they noted

that the important aspect of school leadership aimed to develop a new type of school improvement mechanism. Managing and controlling the school environment means providing guidelines, establishing the norm and culture that can positively influence the generality of the school community, shaping it towards practice desirable moral values, character, and behaviour that governs the school environment. Adejumobi and Ojikutu (2013) studied the connection between school climate and attitudes of teachers towards a job in secondary schools and tested the relationship of the students and their teachers through a questionnaire. Their findings showed that there is an interaction between the teachers’ attitude towards the job and the school climate. A study conducted in Lebanon by Harb (2014) explored the concept of effective school leadership among local principals and teachers. The author selected principals and teachers from private and public schools and used a qualitative research method for the study. His findings show that efficient managing and controlling of the school environment have a significant effect on teachers’ performance

**Theoretical Model of Capacity-Building**

The theory underlying this study is latent capacity-building theory model introduced by Beazley, Griggs, and Smith (2004) to extend the traditional theory of capacity building. It helps to redefine the traditional approach of capacity building in a different approach with the addition of community engagement and involvement. Furthermore, the latent capacity-building model focuses on the community as an important instrument of developing capacity needs for school principals from the open system (Smith & Beazley, 2000). In this model, the effort was made to incorporate the community in the school’s system based on the assumption that skills and knowledge spread across the host community can harness to grow and improve the performance quality of school administrators. Therefore, the model proposed a progressive method of community engagement (Beazley *et al.*, 2004).

**Table 1: Axiom of Latent Model for Capacity Building “Alternative Approaches to Capacity Building”**

Variables	Deficit Model	Latent Capacity Model
Assumptions	Communities lack skills	Communities possess skills
Tasks	Teach skills	Release skills
Method of Capacity Building	Passive	Active
Method of Community Engagement	Traditional	Progressive

Flow of Communication	One- way	Two-Way (Top-down & Down-top approach)
“Credibility and Trust”	Low	High
“Effect on the System”	Facilitative	New ways of thinking

Source: Beazley *et al.* (2004)

Citing the illustration in Table 1, the model proposes that the latent model takes cognizance of the community as an essential aspect of development. The model adopts the active method as a way of building capacity. It uses progressive measures in ensuring community engagement. It acknowledges that the community can add value to the school system. Also, this model ensures a two-way communication flow. Information moves from up to down, then, from down to up as a form of effective communication. Furthermore, it depicts a high level of trust and credibility. Specifically, trust is taken seriously in the model. Mutual trust and understanding exist between the school and the community. Based on this trust, they can work together harmoniously without harming each other. The effect of this model on the school system is that it leads to a new way of thinking which influences school principals, teachers, and members of the community to think deeply and come up with means of improving school effectiveness system that meets 21<sup>st</sup> century rapid and constant change and needs of the society.

### **Conceptual Framework.**

The conceptual framework was adopted from previous theories and models. The basic framework employed for this study was used for explaining distributed leadership, the effectiveness of secondary schools. The models explain how the school can be improved. The use of these models is rationalised on the premise that distributed leadership on the effectiveness of secondary schools is hinged on values, attitudes, disposition to trust, sharing of responsibility, accountability, strategies, and trustworthiness. While on the other hand, researchers concerned with the effectiveness of schools justify this framework on the epistemological advantage that identifies many attributes involving the quality and effectiveness of schools and the premise that educational system standards could be negatively affected in absence of distributed leadership practice.

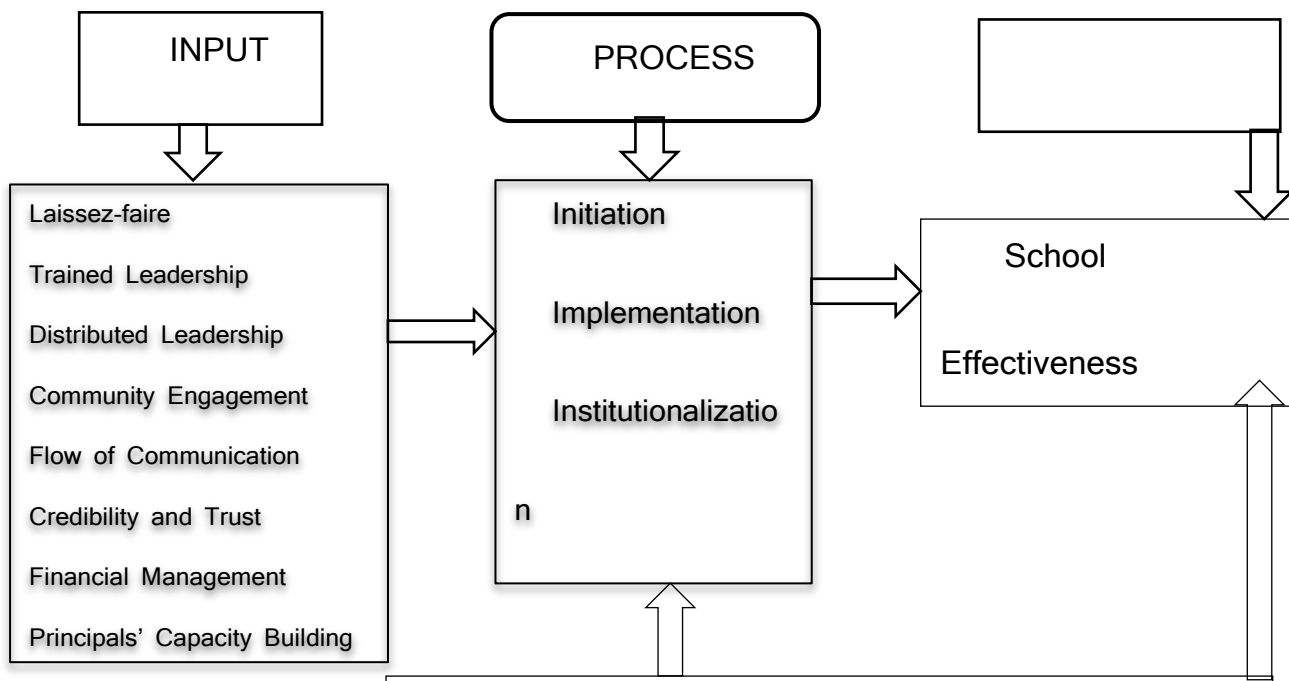


Figure 1: Research Conceptual framework. Sources: (Beazley *et al.*, 2004; Ghani, Siraj; Radzi & Elham, 2011; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Lambert, 2000; Stoll & Fink, 1992, Yukl 2011).

## Methods

### Research design

Qualitative (Focus group) was used. Qualitative research design focuses on words, perceptions, and observations to express reality, it attempts to describe individual and research phenomena in common circumstances (Amaratunga, Baldry; Sarshar & Newton, 2002). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2002) aspects of qualitative research are multi-pragmatic in focus. Nine (9) respondents from three (3) educational zones (Minna, Suleja, and Bida) participated in this study, which means each zone was represented by One (1) Secondary School Principal, one (1) Secondary School Education Board Official, and one Head of Department. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents from the three zones (Minna, Suleja, and Bida).

The instrument used for the qualitative part of this study consists of Semi-Structured Interview Protocol. The interview protocol contains central questions that were validated by three experts in qualitative research. The focus group method was employed to interview respondents, following the interview protocol to conduct semi-structured and open-ended focus interviews.

The interview session took one hour and thirty minutes on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2018. The meeting time was arranged based on participants' scheduled timeframe; the interview was conducted by the researcher and was recorded using a video recorder and photographs were taken using the camera. The interview was fully recorded and played back to ensure clarity.

Two procedures were adopted to determine the reliability of the qualitative instrument and results. The procedures include member checking and peer debriefing. Member checking was carried out by revealing analysed interview transcripts to the informants for checking and to



ensure that results were interpreted correctly; they checked the analyses against bias and conformity to the report in terms of reporting exactly their presentations that were generated.

Peer debriefing was carried out by presenting raw data to colleagues who have vast experience in qualitative studies. The participants were selected based on trust and level of experience in qualitative research studies as well as their ability to offer constructive criticisms on various important factors such as the research methodology used for obtaining results from the interviews, the transcription, coding, categorization, and generation of themes.

### ***Setting***

This study took place in government secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. Niger state is one of the 36 states that make up Nigeria and it is located in the northern region of the country. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of the country is called Abuja as shown in Figure 3.1a. Nigeria is located in West African Sub-region and bordering the Niger Republic in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east and the Republic of Benin in the west. It is the fourth largest country in Africa (FRN, 2012) and 32nd in the world, situated between latitudes 4°16' and 13°53' to the north of the equator and longitudes 2°40' and 14°41' to the east of the Greenwich Meridian. To the south, Nigeria is bordered by approximately 800 kilometres of the Atlantic Ocean with a total land area of 923,768 square kilometres.

The reason for the chosen Niger state as the research location was due to easy access to collect data for the research. The reason for chosen Niger State government-owned secondary schools is based on the researchers' vast understanding of the research location, although, research is scarce in this area, and as such, the study tends to highlight the ineffectiveness of principal' capacity building and school effectiveness. (Creswell, 2017). Second because, most public secondary schools in Nigeria are facing similar challenges in areas of administration, leadership and community engagement activities but Niger state is probably the most affected education system in Nigeria in terms of lack of professional skill and capacity building amongst principals as well as the ineffectiveness of secondary schools. Thus, findings can be used as a benchmark to similar challenges in secondary schools in other states.

Niger State has 25 local governments grouped into seven districts that constitute the educational zones. The zones include Minna, Suleja, Bida, Kutigi, Borgu, Rijau and Kontagora. However, the study was limited to secondary schools in Minna, Suleja and Bida.

### ***Data Collection***

Following the interview protocol, the researcher used purposively techniques to choose respondents from each of the three zones respectively. The purpose of using purposively

sampling was to avoid respondent bias. One SSP was purposively selected from Minna, Suleja, and Bida, and in a similarly, three HODs and three SSEBOs. The list of public secondary schools located in Minna, Suleja, and Bida was obtained from (Niger State Ministry of Education, Minna, 2018). The appointment was scheduled to meet respective SSPs, HODs, and SSEBOs who have up to five years' working experience.

The focus group method was employed to interview respondents, following the interview protocol to conduct semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Seidman (2006) argued that interviews provide access for researchers to examine and understand people's behaviour and thereby allowing them to set the context and approach.

Johnson and Christensen (2004) defined a focus group as an interview conducted among a small group of respondents where a moderator oversight the procedures, in which discussions are examined in detail to understand what members of the group think or feel about a topic. The duo stressed that of qualitative data collection can be done through a focus group, the aim is to capture data in the words of participants.

Kitzinger (1994) explained that a focus group provides information to the inner thought of participants and could be useful for exploring new or existing ideas and concepts. In this way, detailed statistics can be obtained, especially on how participants react to each other in manners such as probing, tapping, and quick turnaround are examined. After consulting with the SSPs, HODs, and SSEBOs and booking an appointment, the researcher organized the interview session. The focus group of this study consists of 9 participants, and the interview session took one hour and thirty minutes on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2018.

The meeting time was arranged based on participants' scheduled timeframe; the interview was conducted by the researcher and was recorded using a video recorder and photographs were taken using the camera. The interview was fully recorded and played back to ensure clarity.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data was collected from focus group interviews as mentioned earlier. The audio data from interviews were transcribed and was analysed inductively which involves coding, categorization, and themes development from the collected data (Östlund, Kidd, Wengström & Rowa-Dewar, 2011). An important question that was kept in mind during the analysis was what are the characteristics of each excerpt? What are the common characteristics of some excerpts and the relationship between the excerpts among others? The manual approach was used for analysing qualitative interviews. It was designed to aid the arrangement, analyse and to find insights in unstructured or qualitative data like interviews and open-ended survey responses. Manual was used to transcribing all the interviews, encode both the transcripts and the audio files. The manual approach was employed to meet the requirements of this study (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes from emerging views to address the research questions. This agrees with the view of Clarke and Braun (2013) that encoding and summarising data into a good thematic analysis and interpretation make sense of a sound result. Typically, this reflects the fact that data has been summarised, organised and analyzed.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Community Engagement*

The responses of participants reveal that community engagement is necessary and important to have an effective secondary school education. The data reveals that there are a series of community engagement that involves Parent Teacher Association (PTA), host community, development agencies/partners, Community Based Organization (CBO), and Philanthropist.

Concerning the PTA, one of the participants noted that:

*“Nowadays secondary schools depend on PTA in the face of no more school fees, schools depend on the PTA because; parents are asked to pay a certain amount of money per term for each child. In some activities like the speech and prize-giving day, parents donate prizes for the best students in some subjects like mathematics, English and so on. Actually, without the PTA many schools would have crumbled (SSEBO1)”.*

The above response from participants shows that secondary schools in Niger state receive less or no grants from responsible government agencies to enable school managers to run the activities of the schools effectively. Thus, this is likely the reason why that the schools nowadays hang on PTA for some financial support through the fees paid by parents per term. Besides that, the data further shows that school management has to seek assistance from PTA through in the event of some emerging activities like the speech and prize-giving day. This assistance received from parents is very important in running the school activities. In fact, without the donation from parents for prizes, and other important support many schools would have crushed. Thus, from the above response of the participant, PTA is crucial for the effective development of the school system.

However, it needs to note that, PTA in rural areas is stricter than in urban communities. This is because; in the rural areas, if they contribute their money, they have to see what the money they have contributed is used for or else they begin to ask questions and if they are not satisfied with the answers they get, they might not contribute again.

On the issue, the roles played by host communities towards the effective development of secondary school education in Niger state.

One participant opines:

*“Ahhh! Some of the host communities especially in the rural areas usually acquire a large land and for farming and planting crops. The community used to check-out the land agriculturally during the rainy season, at the end of the rainy season, they sell the harvested product and the money realized from such agricultural activities and transactions are kept in the school purse for running the school. This may likely*

*differ from community to community or place to place, because; this is possibly different in the urban areas (SSEBO2)”.*

The above response clearly shows that the host communities are playing a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of secondary schools. The data from the above response shows that host communities situated in rural dwellings resort to using lands for farming to support the schools from their production outcome. This might not be unconnected with the farming orientation of the people in the state, especially in rural areas. Thus, host communities that are agriculturally wise support the school activities through their harvest for running the school.

Another important way of community engagement for the effectiveness of the secondary schools is the School-Based Management Committee (SBMC), which is more powerful than the PTA.

In this regard, one of the participants offers:

*“This committee is playing a pivotal role in various ways, such as academics, financing, and supervision (they can go to the classes to check whether lessons are going on or not). In boarding schools, they go to the dining hall to check the kind of food the students are being served, they check materials being supplied to the school. They have the power to disqualify an agent that supplies food or other items to the school (SSEBO3)”.*

The above response from the participant shows that there is an initiative of the School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) in secondary schools in Niger state. Data shows that the committee has the power to oversee academic activities, ensure the quality of facilities being supplied by the contractors, ensures the quality and welfare of students (in terms of food, water, and electricity). The idea of SBMC is not limited to rural schools. The schools established in rural areas are the only link the community has with the government. There are no hospitals or clinics. The school is all they know from the government and this makes the rural dwellers see the school differently from how the urban settlers see the school. The school compound becomes an avenue for meetings, ceremonies and community gathering for the rural dwellers.

Therefore, the above responses that emerged from participants' shows that, there exist certain engagements by parents, host community, and SBMC towards effective secondary school system. These community engagement activities towards the school effectiveness system cover teaching and learning situations, welfare, supervision, and control of secondary schools.

## ***The necessity for Community Engagement***

The responses from participants reveal that it is necessary and important to have community engagement for the effective secondary education system in Niger state, Nigeria. Results from participants show that traditional mayors, chiefs, and ward heads are committed to providing security for the schools. This shows the extent of security commitment by these traditional institutions is relatively high. In this regard, one of the participants noted that:

*“There was an incident of hooligans coming to a certain school to harass the students; the case was reported by the school to the “Mai Anguwa” otherwise known as “ward head”. The chief assured the school community that he will put a stop to the case; he then provided and assigned some security members of the vigilante group to guard the boundaries between the school and the community to curb the existing menace of these thugs coming to disturb the school (HOD3)”.*

On the other hand, the responses from participants further indicated that the Old Boys Association and Old Girls Association are other important aspects of community engagement for the effectiveness of secondary schools.

Participants responded:

*“The Old Boys or Old girls’ associations have a great impact on secondary schools in Niger State. We have influential people who are members of these associations and they make a prominent contribution, on the other hand, some of these influential men living around schools specialize in taking away “school ground” (plots of land for the school) for their personal use and it is worrisome (HOD2)”.*

Diversely, another participant focuses his attention on the assistance that usually comes from the financial institutions that are situated within or near the school environment. These financial institutions are mainly banks that provide infrastructures such as building classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. In this respect, one of the participants mentioned the banks’ commitment to schools as community engagement and testified that:

*“A bank erected and furnished a library in my school environment. If more of these companies can continue to assist, it will go a long way because; the issue of development agencies coming to assist the government is nothing to write about. They can assist by giving out materials, providing facilities that are lacking in schools instead of giving money. However, on many occasions, these financial institutions and other agencies prefer to give cash. This sometimes makes it difficult for the principal to give an account of how the cash was used (HOD1)”.*

Similarly, some of the participants argued that it is the responsibility of school management to ensure the maintenance of structures, facilities and all other materials provided

by external donors or non-governmental organizations. In view of that, these participants noted that:

*“When these development agencies build structures like a library, classrooms, or laboratories and it is not effectively utilized, these agencies or companies may end up being discouraged and disengage themselves from assisting the schools. The school head must, therefore, made to understand that, the responsibility to maintain the school facilities must be borne by them. As teachers and principals, we have to shoulder the responsibility to utilize the donations that we got from groups/agencies (SSP2, HOD1, and SSP3)”.*

From the above results that emerged from the responses of the respondents, the outcome shows that it is necessary and important to have community engagement for the effective secondary school system in the state. Participants pointed out that, the involvement of traditional mayors, chiefs and ward heads is very important and necessary especially in providing security and financial support for schools. Data from the responses of participants further designate that Old Boys Association and Old Girls Association have an impact on community engagement for the effective secondary school system. The data reveals that influential people among the members of these associations were known for their remarkable contribution to the effective development of a school system in the state. However, the data further informed that some of the influential men living around the school community usually usurp the “school ground” (plots of land for the school) into their personal possession, which is very worrisome.

In addition to that, data from responses of participants reveals that financial institutions e.g. banks and other private companies around the school community uses financial and infrastructural development such as cash, building classrooms, libraries, and laboratories to support the school's overall growth and development. This shows that the banks' are also committed to school engagement efforts.

In the same way, the result from responses of participants charges school management and staff alike to shoulder responsibility of school maintenance such as maintenance of structures, facilities, and several others infrastructure, including those received from internal and external donors (non-governmental organizations', private companies, politicians, and old boys/girls associations.

From the above results that emerged from the responses of the respondents, the outcome shows that it is necessary and important to have community engagement for the effective secondary school system in Niger state, Nigeria. Results from participants show that the

involvement of traditional mayors, chiefs and ward heads are very important and necessary especially in providing security and financial support for schools. Data analysis of responses of the participants further designates that the Old Boys Association and Old Girls Association have an impact on community engagement for the effective secondary schools' system. The data reveals that influential people among the members of these associations are known for contributing to the effective development of the education system. However, the data further informed that, some of the influential men living around the school community usually usurp the "school ground" (plots of land for the school) into their possession, which is very unfortunate and worrisome.

Thus, the level of community engagement in Nigeria influences principals' and teachers' behaviour toward achieving the effectiveness of secondary schools. Zhu (2011); McCloskey, McDonald, and Cook (2013) and Beazley *et al.* (2004) support the contribution of the community to improve the effectiveness of schools. Beazley *et al.* (2004) explain that community engagement has a positive effect on the effectiveness of schools whereby parents and the school community take part in the decision-making process, engages a high level of relationship between the community and school principals, between the school and host community. The study agrees a relatively high level of school and community engagement is tantamount to the attainment of the effectiveness of secondary schools. This further shows that there is a significant relationship between community engagement and school effectiveness.

### ***Flow of Communication, Credibility and Trust***

Concerning the flow of communication, the participants expose various ways in which they do communicate in school academics planning towards achieving school effectiveness and community goals. In this respect, one of the participants among the principals noted that:

*"There is actually the flow of communication; we do hold meetings with the staff especially after resuming from holidays, before the end of term examinations, and likely urgent issues. However, sometimes we do meet with the staff when there is an important message from the state ministry of education that requires immediate attention. These series of meetings helps in the easy flow of communication, and prepare a good background for the academic excellence of the term. We give free hand to head of departments of the school to conduct regular meetings and report their resolutions to the school management for further actions where possible and necessary (SSP2)".*

Another participant responded that:

*“As the HOD Art and social science education, in my school, we hold meetings regularly especially at the beginning of the term, I hold meetings with members of staff in my department. Thus, departments are given free hands to hold meetings with their members of staff to plan the academic activities more especially at the beginning of the term. We do give suggestions, recommendations, requests, and resolutions of the minutes of meetings to the school authority for further action (HOD2)”.*

However, one of the participants lamented that:

*“Sometimes, some number of heads tend to abuse office by allocating classes to teachers anyhow without due consideration to professionalism, experience, and expertise, this is either because of the personal relationship or inclination they have with those teachers. Everything has been politicized, in some cases, some staff is not willing to receive directives from their heads due to lack of order of seniority in the appointment in some schools. Similarly, some HODs are usually denied the freedom to run his or her department due to personal reasons likely from the top management positions. These problems, I say it from the experience as a principal, if we need to achieve the effective flow of communication for the effectiveness of school academic programs, we must avoid politics and personal whims (SSP1)”.*

Another participant pronounces that:

*“Initially, the schools take part in academic planning, such as academic calendars, every school sends its plan through their principals. After due scrutiny by the ministry, we do take a sample of some schools making considerations of national holidays, and come-up with propose academic calendar for schools, which is likely to be adjusted. This is also what the former state commissioner for education allowed every school to do, they should state their calendar, stating the mission, goals, and objectives they want to achieve. This is what made the schools feel being carried along in academic planning and communication. It is very unfortunate that it is a minus now because; it is no longer happening (SSEBO3)”.*

In another response, one participant stressed that:

*“The state’s ministry of education determines and dictates the academic calendar, when exams should begin, and weeks of lessons. The issues of who teaches “what” is determined by the administration and not the school calendar. Principals should give their staff the freedom to exercise their duties effectively. The reality is that appointments are given to people who do not worth it, I am sorry to say that, considerations to merit on the basis of the appointment are now limited, and many vice-principals are put there by their godfathers. Possibly, that is the reason for the certain changes in school academic excellence (SSEBO1, and SSEBO3)”.*



From the above responses of the participants, the evidence of the data shows that the flow of communication in schools depends on general school meetings, departmental staff meetings after recommencing new term, before examinations period, and likely urgent issues with a view to achieving academic excellence.

Participants stressed that the process of appointing heads of school is systematically flawed consideration the politicisation of the process whereby appointments are based on nepotism rather than qualification, level of experience and expertise. The researcher observed that this is one of the major challenges hindering progress and improvement of the education system in the state. Data further reveals that currently, schools are no longer part of the academic planning and designing of academic calendars, etc. these responsibilities have been assigned to the discretion of the ministry of education. Empirical evidence observed by the researcher suggests that this may have attributed to poor communication between school heads and the government in terms of academic management efficiency and planning.

Furthermore, the study observed that the state ministry of education determines and dictates the job functions of the principals. The data shows that the principal receives directives from the ministry to resume or vacate their position in the school. The data further explains that there is no due process and considerations in the appointments of school ranks by the school management and ministry of education.

According to the participants, the presence of such political interferences in running the affairs of the education system in the state is likely to have adverse effects in the effort to develop the education system.

Regarding, credibility and trust, responses of the participants indicate that credibility and trust have helped school effectiveness, leadership styles, an increase in an administrator-staff relationship for school effectiveness. In this regard, one of the participants reveals that:

*“Credibility and trust are some of the best sources that could help school effectiveness. Leaders need to be credible in terms of being trustworthy personality, bold in executing the affairs of schools, honesty, transparent, and be accommodating to staff, students, visitors, and supervisors (SSP1)”.*

Similarly, one of the participants explains that:

*“Credibility and trust are some of the factors that assist your leadership style and school effectiveness. It brings cooperation and respect between the leader and the whole school. A principal needs to be charismatic, and should leave a legacy for those who are coming behind (SSEBO2)”.*

In addition to that, one of the participants believes that:

*“Credibility and trust improve the administrator-staff relationship and school effectiveness. This is because; once a leader is credible, anything he wants his subordinate to do, due to respect it will be done well. When a school is run without problem or hitches that means the school leader is trustworthy and credible (SSEBO3)”.*

Galdames and Gonzalez (2016) support that communicating the achievement or developmental needs of secondary schools through PTA communication channels is an important role principal should regularly perform if they must sustain the relationship between the school and the host community. On the other hand, De Jong, Grundmeyer and Yankey (2017) added that the host community must be carried along consistently in the schools' development process, and should be recognised as a critical link in advancing school reform, effectiveness, and efforts.

The above outcomes are reflected in the views of Asan (2015) that, principals' effort to ensure the effectiveness of the school goes beyond the school environment and involves the promotion of collaboration with the host community. Also, building school capacity deals with maximizing teacher's professionalism, students' outcome and building confidence in people, improving school leadership and quality teaching under a conducive learning environment through which school actualise its objectives. Thus, principals' capacity building for school effectiveness necessitates paying careful attention to the relationship with the community, and collaborative processes in schools to foster school effectiveness.

Relating to the flow of communication, the participants expose various ways in which they communicate in school academics planning towards achieving school effectiveness and community goals. From the responses of participants, the evidence from data analysis shows that the flow of communication in schools depends on the level of general school meetings, departmental staff meetings after recommencing new term, before examinations period, and likely urgent issues to achieve the academic excellence. The data further demonstrate that there is a fault in the appointment of heads in schools due to lack of consideration to working experience, and expertise, and the emergence of politics in schools affects the effective flow of communication for the effectiveness of school academic programs.

### ***Financial Management***

With reference to financial management, responses that emerged from the participants show that school management sometimes receives financial aids or grants offered from the government, private agencies, PTA levies, and support from old boys/girls associations for school effectiveness and leadership capacity building. In this respect, the sources of financial aid and support usually received by the school administration include aids from old boys' association, State Ministry of Education, PTA levies, and some occasional donations from the private companies/agencies. One of the participants highlights that:

*“We usually received financial support from the old boys’ association. We also received imprest from the State Ministry of Education, however, the amount is very meagre. The PTA levies are also there; we do generate and depend on these PTA to run the activities of the school. Sometimes, we do receive certain financial aids from the agencies or politicians to solve the problems on the ground (SSP1)”.*

Similarly, some of the participants argued that there is no motivation in terms of financial aids and supports from the government for school effectiveness. In this respect, one of the participants expresses that:

*“Actually, if we look at the situation at hand in schools, I can categorically say that there is no motivation at hand. In fact, motivation does not exist, but I have to acknowledge that, P.T.A plays a pivotal role in solving the pressing issues; it actually helps to fund the school system, but not everything (SSP2)”.*

However, one of the participants acknowledged that they do receive some stipend from the government annually. The participant reports that:

*“The imp rest comes once or twice in a year and the amount is just ten thousand Naira, ₦10.000 (approximately 28 dollars); such financial aids or grants offered by the government for schools are very minimal, it does not come as frequent as it should. The money is not enough to even buy chalk let alone solve other problems. You have to also account for any money given to you as the leader, the auditors are coming for audits (SSP3)”.*

Data from responses of participants reveals financial institutions and other private companies around the school community used financial and infrastructural support such as cash, building classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. This shows the extent of banks' commitment to schools as community engagement. In the same way, the result from the responses of the participants charge the school management and staff alike to shoulder the responsibility of school maintenance such as (initiation, implementation, and institutionalization) as maintenance of the structures, facilities, and several others, including those received from the internal and external donors such as (non-governmental organizations', private companies, politicians, and old boys/girls associations.

This outcome from the responses of the participants concurred with the view of Radzi, Ghani and Siraj (2015) express that, financial support is the bedrock and a key aspect of management of school affairs. Financial management involves planning, budgeting, allocation of funds for the project. Thus, school administrators must strive to receive training in financial management. Another importance of effective financial management is that there will be physical evidence of judicious use of financial resources, such evidence engages the robust relationships between school administrators and the host community thus, engaging more financial contributions from stakeholders (Mogire, 2013).

This approach towards garnering financial support similarly coincided with the views of Mogire (2013) that, school's financial support is connected with the attainment of effectiveness in the management of schools. There is a mutual connection between the school management and financial contribution to the development of the school, (Mogire, 2013). Ehiane (2014) also explains that principals are required to supervise financial and physical resources of their schools in terms of purchasing, requisitioning, supplies, accounting for school monies, and maintaining the school inventories and facilities. However, Radzi *et al.* (2015) observe that the fundamental factor in managing the school finances is not how money goes into the system, but how well the available funds are effectively utilised.

The result from the above responses of the participants reveals that the sources of financial aids or grants are from the government, private agencies, PTA levies, and support from old boys/girls associations for school effectiveness. The outcome further indicates that there is no motivation in terms of finance from the government coffers for school effectiveness. Although schools do receive some meagre amount of money from the government annually, the money is not enough to even buy chalk let alone solve other problems. This means that the state government is doing less to support the effective running of schools in Niger state.

Thus, PTA has remained an important source of generating resources Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) for the development of secondary schools in Niger state. Beazley *et al.* (2004) associated PTA funds with Epstein's model of six types for parental and community involvement that provide a framework for parental involvement in the activities of schools. He pointed out, the model can be used to increase and improve parental involvement in the area of positive influence on the students, from parental involvement in homework to involvement in the school policy decision-making process. Similarly, Akdemir and Ayik (2017) opine that parental involvement in school activities is determined by the level of relationship that exists between school principals and parents and also determines the level of parental participation in school activities. A high level of relationship between school principals and parents has a positive impact on students' learning and performance outcomes.

### ***Limitations***

As highlighted above, this study investigates principals' capacity building and effectiveness of secondary schools in Niger State. The focus of the research is limited to school effectiveness, poor principal leadership, lack of community engagement, lack of financial management skills, poor communication flow, distributed leadership, trained leadership, laissez-faire, level of secondary school effectiveness activities, credibility and trust. However, the existing studies are not without theoretical, methodological, and conceptual limitations. These limitations opened a gap for subsequent researchers to fill.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, this research explored principals' capacity building in secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. This study has bid to ascertain the concerns of a secondary school principals' (SSPs), Secondary School Education Board Officials (SSEBOs), and Heads of Department

(HODs) to design a leadership development program catering for their professional growths. This qualitative study, it demonstrates that certain local and contextual situations apply substantial effects on the work of these Secondary School Principals' (SSPs), Secondary School Education Board (SSEBOs), and Heads of Department (HODs). Relevant structures of their professional development famous through in-depth interviews compared with findings and recommendations from the stakeholders' opinions could provide the investigators as well as the program provider with more constructive ideas that were merged into the design of the principals' capacity building and school effectiveness.

However, in a qualitative sense, the findings from the responses of participants reveal that there is community engagement support through PTA, agricultural assistance, some engagement by parents, host community, and School-based Management Committee towards the effective education system. Similarly, on the flow of communication, the data shows that there is actually the flow of communication such as holding meetings with the staff mostly three times per term. On credibility and trust, the qualitative result indicated that credibility and trust have a significant influence on school effectiveness, leadership styles, and increases the administrator-staff relationship for school effectiveness. On financial management, data shows that the sources of financial aids or grants are government, private agencies, PTA levies, and support from old boys/girls associations for school effectiveness, in which they emphasized that there is no motivation in terms of finance from the government confers for school effectiveness.

Although schools do receive some meagre amount of money from the government annually, the money is not enough to even buy chalks *let alone* solve other problems. This means that the state government is doing less to support the effective management of secondary schools in Niger state.

Finally, the investigators also need to conduct further investigation of the same cohort of principals' capacity building and school effectiveness in Niger, Nigeria to determine how they are transformed as a result of the leadership capacity building.

## References

Abrahamsen, H., Aas, M., & Hellekjær, G. O. (2015). How do principals make sense of school leadership in Norwegian reorganised leadership teams? *School Leadership & Management*, 35, 1-17. doi:10.1080/13632434.2014.992775

- Ajayi, I. A., Ekundayo, H. T., & Osalusi, F. M. (2010). Learning environment and secondary school effectiveness in Nigeria. *Studies on Home and Community Science*, 4(3), 137-142.
- Akdemir, Ö. A., & Ayik, A. (2017). The impact of distributed leadership behaviors of school principals on the organizational commitment of teachers. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(n12B), 18-26. doi: 10.13189/ujer.2017.051402
- Amaratunga, D., Baldry, D., Sarshar, M., & Newton, R. (2002). Quantitative and qualitative research in the built environment: application of “mixed” research approach. *Work Study*, 51(1), 17-31.
- Asan. (2015). Leadership Style: School Perspective in Cameroon. *Education Research International*, 2015, 1-9. doi:10.1155/2015/439345
- Barnett, K., & McCormick, J. (2004). Leadership and individual principal-teacher relationships in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(3), 406-434.
- Beazley, Griggs, & Smith. (2004). Rethinking Approaches to Community Capacity Building. *EG Magazine*, 10(6), 11-13 p.
- Bolanle, A. O. (2013). Principals' Leadership Skills and School Effectiveness: The Case of South Western Nigeria. *World Journal of Education*, 3(5), 26-33.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, 26, 120-123.
- De Jong, D., Grundmeyer, T., & Yankey, J. (2017). Identifying and addressing themes of job dissatisfaction for secondary principals. *School Leadership & Management*, 37(4), 354-371.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2002). *The qualitative inquiry reader*. London: Sage,: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Ehiane, O. S. (2014). Discipline and academic performance (A study of selected secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria). *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 3(1), 181-194. Eisend, M. (2006). Source credibility dimensions in marketing communication—A generalized solution. *Journal of Empirical Generalisation in Marketing Science*, 10(2).
- Faraj, A. K. A. (2015). Effective Strategies for Turning Receptive Vocabulary into Productive Vocabulary in EFL Context. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(27), 10-19.
- Galdames, S., & Gonzalez, A. (2016). The relationship between leadership preparation and the level of teachers' interest in assuming a principalship in Chile. *School Leadership & Management*, 36(4), 435-451.

- Ghani, M. F. A., Siraj, S., Radzi, N. M., & Elham, F. (2011). School effectiveness and improvement practices in excellent schools in Malaysia and Brunei. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 15, 1705-1712.
- Harris, A. (2015). Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: heresy, fantasy or possibility? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 23(3), 313-324.
- Hoppey, D., & McLeskey, J. (2013). A case study of principal leadership in an effective inclusive school. *Journal of Special Education*, 46(4), 245-256.
- Hoy, W., & Miskel, C. (2008). *Theory, research and practice in educational administration*. Urmia: Urmia University pub.
- Kochamba, D. M., & Murray, R. K. . (2003). Principals' and teachers' perceptions of critical leadership skills. . *In National Forum of Educational and Supervision Journal*, 20(4).
- Ayandoja, A. C, Aina, B. C., & Idowu A. F. (2017). Academic supervision as a correlate of students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review*, 4(1), 8-13
- Lambert, L. (1998). *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Alexandria: VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Lambert, L. (2000). Framing Reform for the New Millennium: Leadership Capacity in Schools and Districts. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 63(1), 16-22.
- McCloskey, D. J., McDonald, M. A., & Cook, J. (2013). *Community engagement: definitions and organizing concepts from the literature* (C. f. D. C. a. Prevention(CDC) Ed. 2nd ed ed.). Bethesda: National Institutes of Health.
- Mogire, R. (2013). *Financial strategies used by secondary school principals in addressing budgetary deficit in Nakuru District, Nakuru County, Kenya*. ( Unpublished MED thesis), University of Nairobi,
- Oladipo, S. A., Adebakin, A. B., & Iranloye, O. F. (2016). Mentoring and succession of administrators: Critical issues in public and private secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy*, 10(1), 19.
- Oluwadare, A. (2011). Principals' competency needs for effective schools' administration in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2(4), 15-23.
- Marshal, C. (1992). *The assistant principal: Leadership process and challenges*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.



- Östlund, U., Kidd, L., Wengström, Y., & Rowa-Dewar, N. (2011). Combining qualitative and quantitative research within mixed method research designs: a methodological review. *International journal of nursing studies*, 48(3), 369-383.
- Pang, N. S.-K., & Pisapia, J. (2012). The strategic thinking skills of Hong Kong school leaders: Usage and effectiveness. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 40(3), 343-361.
- Radzi, N. M., Ghani, M. F. A., & Siraj, S. (2015). Development of an effective school-based financial management profile in Malaysia: The Delphi method application. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 10(12), 1679-1694.
- Ross, J. A., & Gray, P. (2006). School leadership and student achievement: The mediating effects of teacher beliefs. *19(2)*, 798-822.
- Seidman. (2006). Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences: [Press release]
- Smith, M., & Beazley, M. J. P. A. (2000). Progrssive Regrimes, Partnerships and the Involvement of Local Communities: A Framework for Evaluation. *Public Administration*, 78(4), 855-878.
- Stoll, L., & Fink, D. (1992). *Changing our schools: Linking school effectiveness and school improvement*. Bristol: Open University Press.
- Yukl, G. (2011). Contingency theories of effective leadership. *The SAGA Handbook of Leadership*, 24(1), 286-298.
- Zhu, C. (2011). Community engagement: A summary of theoretical concepts. In (Vol. 2, pp. 274). Alberta, Canada: Alberta Health Services. .

### Appendix 1. Interview Protocols

Variables	Focus group	Observation
Community Engagement	<p>a) In your own opinion can you explain how community engagement impacts on school effectiveness regarding secondary schools in Niger State with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PTA</li> <li>• Host community</li> <li>• Development agencies/partners</li> <li>• Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)</li> <li>• Philanthropists</li> </ul> <p>b) Why do you think that community engagement is necessary or important to have an effective secondary school?</p>	To express clearly the purpose of community engagement

	<p>c) What are your efforts towards community engagement for effective secondary schools in your community?</p> <p>d) In your own view describe your community engagement activities towards effective teaching and learning and effective secondary schools in the community.</p>	
Flow of communication	<p>a) Based on your experience how do you communicate with the various units involved in school and academic planning of the school towards achieving school and community goals?</p> <p>b) How do you engage in communication with the various units in the school for the overall development of the school?</p> <p>c) Out of the different methods of communication you have used, which one did you find more effective for the professional growth of both staff and school development?</p> <p>d) What role would you say communication plays in school effectiveness?</p>	Convey opinions succinctly and appropriately when communicating
Credibility and Trust	<p>a) How would you say your credibility and trust have helped school effectiveness?</p> <p>b) In your opinion explain those credibility and trust factors that assist your leadership style and school effectiveness.</p> <p>c) How would you say your credibility and trust factors have increased administrator – staff relationship and school effectiveness?</p> <p>d) What role would you say credibility and trust play in school effectiveness?</p>	To understand how credibility and trust influence their leadership
Financial Management	<p>a) Could you explain the type of financial aid and staff/administrative support that you have received so far and source(s) of such aids and support?</p> <p>b) How effective would you say such financial aids and supports have helped to motivate school effectiveness and in building leadership capacity at the secondary school level?</p> <p>c) In terms of aids or grants; can you explain how much</p>	To have an understanding of effective school financial management

	<p>government assistance or support you have gotten and how you think these aids or grants and other financial assistance have helped in school effectiveness and in building the leadership capacity in the secondary schools?</p> <p>d) Based on your experience how constant are such financial aids or grants offered by the government?</p> <p>e) How does such financial aids or grants offered by government impacts on school effectiveness and leadership capacity building?</p> <p>f) How do those in leadership position normally account for the funding or financial aids or grants that are offered the school to promote additional funding, school effectiveness in building leadership capacity?</p>	
--	---	--

