

Abstract

Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to examine the role expectations for and role behaviour of vice principals in new secondary schools in Jamaica. For the purpose of investigation "vice principal" is defined as the professional person in a school next in authority to the principal.

Procedure:

To determine the role expectations for and role behaviour of the vice principal the researcher employed a questionnaire and gathered data from education officers, principals, vice principals and teachers. Educational background, professional experience, training, sex, age, location and enrolment of the school were examined to see the extent to which they influenced the respondents' views.

The specific duties of the vice principals were grouped into two major categories - General Administration and Personnel Guidance. Administration was sub-divided into areas of supervision, evaluation and curriculum planning.

The data were analysed by:

- 1) The computation of Grand Means to discover the importance that the various groups of respondents place on the two functions.

2) "t" tests to obtain:-

- (a) significant differences among the reference groups in the means on the role expectations for Vice Principals.
- (b) significant differences if any between the Vice Principal's Views and his level of Actual Involvement in the two major Functions.

Major Findings:

The major findings of the study are as follows:-

- 1) The Vice Principal is expected to be involved in every aspect of school administration - supervision, evaluation and guidance - in addition to some amount of teaching.
- 2) Of the two functions investigated General Administration was viewed more highly than Personnel Guidance as a function of the Vice Principal by the four groups of respondents - Education Officers, Principals, Vice Principals and Teachers.
- 3) While there are no significant differences between Education Officers and Principals in their views on the various roles in the general administrative function, there are differences among the other interest groups with regard to their perceived roles for the Vice Principals' responsibilities in both General Administration and Personnel Guidance.
- 4) There are differences between the Vice Principals' perceived role and their level of Actual Involvement.
- 5) The major obstacles to the Vice Principals' performance are:- "the multiplicity of roles they have to perform," "unclear job description," "inadequate preparation," and "lack of cooperation from their subordinates."
- 6) It is generally felt that Vice Principals should be more involved in decision making within the system.

Conclusion

From the investigation carried out it can be concluded that vice principals in New Secondary schools are expected to be involved in all aspects of the administrative process. These include tasks such as evaluation, supervision, guidance and teaching. Their assignments however, are dependent mainly on ad-hoc delegation by the principal and this varies in scope and intensity from school to school, leading very often to confusion and role conflict.

If the Vice Principal is to function effectively he needs to have a clear picture of his duties and responsibilities. In the absence of clear and specific description of the role the incumbent often finds himself in problematic situations with which he cannot cope, a situation further complicated since most Vice Principals have had no professional preparation for the job.

Recommendations:

Arising out of the research the following recommendations are made:-

- 1) A consensus on the role expectations for Vice Principals in New Secondary schools needs to be established.
2. Clearly defined and up to date job description covering the duties and responsibilities of Vice Principals needs to be devised by Principals so that aspirants to the post can approach their job with certainty and confidence. This will eliminate or minimize the diverse expectations which are held for the Vice Principals in New Secondary schools.

- 3) Some of the duties being performed by Vice Principals at present could possibly be delegated to heads of departments or the clerical staff.
- 4) The schools have become so large that a career path must be established whereby teachers get inservice training in positions of responsibility. This will develop a cadre of middle managers within the school system.