

The Influence of Coalition Building Political Strategy on Teachers' Commitment to Work in Selected Private Primary Schools in Namutumba Town Council

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Abstract

This research brings out the overview of the influence of Coalition Building Political Strategy on Teachers' Commitment to Work in Selected Private Primary Schools in Namutumba Town Council in Uganda.

It was revealed that head teachers' coalition building political strategy had a positive and strong significant influence on teachers' commitment to work ($\beta = 0.667$, $N = 162$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). It is thus being concluded that when administrative staff feel part of a coalition effort in school, they tend to do better for themselves and for the school. Although it is common practice that coalition building as a political strategy is meant for promoting interests of the head teachers, the other outcome is a feeling of being valued and involved in the general running of the school on the part of the administrative heads which improves their performance and capacity building. Generally, organizational politics accounts for 72.2% of teachers' commitment to work with the other remaining percentage being explained by other factors not part of this study. This makes Coalition Building Political Strategy a critical aspect of school management in private primary schools in Namutumba town council. Nevertheless, head teachers' coalition building in the model produced the most significant influence of variability of 43.8% on teachers' commitment to work. It is thus being concluded that much as head teachers engage a variety of organizational political strategies like information management and divide and rule, those who adhere to coalition building political strategy stand to benefit individually as the coalition's serve the head teachers' interests while the performance of administrative staff also gets to improve which trickles down to overall school performance.

Keywords: Coalition Building political strategy; Teachers' commitment to work; private primary schools in Namutumba Town Council.

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1. Introduction

Coalition Building involves the process of individuals bonding together to achieve common goals. Teachers often join forces to oppose a proposed policy, to resist a proposed change, or to initiate change. A change in the curriculum is often successful depending on which teacher coalitions support or oppose it. Individuals alone are much less effective at influencing than groups; and relatively powerless groups become stronger if they can act together in a coalition. Those teachers who are effective at organizing internal coalitions are often the political power players in a school [1].

According to [2], coalition is a union of people and organizations working to influence outcomes on a specific Problem. Coalitions are useful for accomplishing a broad range of goals that reach beyond the capacity of any individual member organization. These goals range from information sharing to coordination of services, from community education to advocacy for major environmental or policy (regulatory) changes.

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages of coalitions as explained below.

2. Steps taken to build a successful coalition.

Building a successful coalition involves a series of steps. The early steps center on the recognition of compatible interests. Sometimes this happens naturally and other times potential coalition members must be persuaded that forming a coalition would be to their benefit. To do this, one needs to demonstrate;

1. That your goals are similar and compatible,
2. That working together will enhance both groups' abilities to reach their goals, and
3. That the benefits of coalescing was greater than the costs.

This third point can be demonstrated in either of two ways: incentives can be offered to make the benefits of joining the coalition high, or sanctions can be threatened, making the costs of not joining even higher. For example, the United States offered a variety of financial aid and political benefits to countries that joined its coalition against Iraq in 2003; it also threatened negative repercussions for those who failed to join, and much worse for those who sided with Saddam Hussein. Another method that can make joining the coalition appealing is to eliminate alternatives to the coalition. Once most of one's allies or associates have joined a coalition, it is awkward...perhaps dangerous not to join oneself. Although people and organizations often prefer non-action to making a risky decision, if they find themselves choosing between getting on board a growing coalition or being left behind, getting on board is often more attractive.

Lastly, coalition builders may use precedence as a means of social influence. For example, in making decisions, people (or countries) generally want to remain consistent with prior commitments. That means that nations can pressure their allies to act with them in new endeavors. Failing to do so, it can be argued, would hurt their "long-standing alliance." This strategy is not always successful, especially if the self-interest of the other group seems to be harmed by the proposed action. (France, for instance, was not willing to join the U.S. coalition against Iraq in 2003, despite a long-term alliance between France and the U.S.)

3. Characteristics of collaborative organizations

Advisory Committees generally respond to organizations or programs by providing suggestions and technical assistance.

Commissions usually consist of citizens appointed by official bodies.

Consortia and Alliances tend to be semi-official, membership organizations.

They typically have broad policy-oriented goals and may span large geographic areas.

They usually consist of organizations and coalitions as opposed to individuals.

Networks are generally loose-knit groups formed primarily for the purpose of resource and information sharing.

Task Forces most often come together to accomplish a specific series of activities, often at the request of an overseeing body.

Collaboration in organizations is associated with various positive outcomes and some of these include;

- Enlarges your base of support, networks and connections; gives strength in numbers: you can achieve more together than you can alone.
- Provides safety for advocacy efforts and protection for members who may not be able to take action alone, particularly when operating in a hostile or difficult environment.
- Magnifies existing financial and human resources by pooling them together and by delegating work to others in the coalition.
- Reduces duplication of effort and resources.
- Enhances the credibility and influence of an advocacy campaign, as well as that of individual coalition members.
- Helps develop new leadership skills amongst members.
- Assists in individual and organizational networking.
- Facilitates exchange of information, skills, experience, materials, opportunities for collaboration etc.
- Brings together a diverse range of people and organizations. Diversity can strengthen a campaign by broadening perspective and understanding of the issue. It can also assist outreach by appealing to a wider population base with differing priorities and interests.
- Provides peer support, encouragement, motivation and professional recognition.

Nevertheless, organizations incur a number of difficulties as a result of coalitions and among these are;

- Can lack clear objectives, or be difficult to agree common objectives.
- Forming and managing a coalition can be a very time-consuming and bureaucratic process that can take away time from working directly on campaign issues and organizational tasks.

- May be dominated by one powerful organization. Power is not always distributed equally among members; larger or richer organizations can have more say in decisions.
- May require you to compromise your position on issues or tactics.
- Shared decision-making can be slow and may paralyze progress.
- Can often be constrained by a lack of resources.
- Potential for donor interference (e.g. a donor is interested in funding certain activities but there is a danger of planning activities only because you know you can get the funds).
- You may not always get credit for your work. Sometimes the coalition as a whole gets recognition rather than individual members. Or certain members get or claim more recognition than others, causing conflict and resentment.
- If the coalition process breaks down it can harm everyone's advocacy by damaging members' credibility.
- Coalition activities can be difficult to monitor and evaluate.
- Member groups can get distracted from other work. If that happens, non-coalition efforts may become less effective and the organization may be weakened overall.
- A coalition may only be as strong as its weakest link. Each member organization will have different levels of resources and experience as well as different internal problems. Organizations that provide a lot of resources and leadership may get frustrated with other members' shortcomings.
- To keep a coalition together, it is often necessary to cater to one side more than another, especially when negotiating tactics. If a member prefers high-profile confrontational tactics, they might dislike subdued tactics, thinking they are not exciting enough to mobilize support. At the same time, the low profile, conciliatory members might be alarmed by the confrontation advocates, fearing they will escalate the conflict and make eventual victory more difficult to obtain.
- The democratic principle of one group-one vote may not always be acceptable to members with a lot of power and resources. The coalition must carefully define the

Individual organizations may not get credit for their contributions to a coalition. Members that contribute a lot may think they did not receive enough credit.

In conclusion, all these problems can be overcome and are not reasons to not get more involved in coalitions - they are just things to be wary of.

Deciding whether to join a coalition is both a rational and an emotional decision.

Rationally, one must consider whether one's effectiveness and ability to attain one's own goals which would be enhanced or harmed by participation in a coalition.

This implies that, emotionally one must consider whether one likes the other people or groups, and whether cooperating with them would be easy, or more trouble than it is worth. Usually when two people, groups, or organizations' goals are compatible, forming a coalition is to both groups' benefit. But organizational styles, cultures, and relationships must be considered as well before any choices are made.

4. Methodology

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design because the researcher intends to study a specific subset of the study population, collect and analyze data on the Influence of Information Management and Teachers' commitment to work in selected private primary schools Namutumba District. This design was appropriate because it involved collecting data from a relatively large number of respondents in its natural setting (selected schools), cheaply and in a short time [3].

This survey design was chosen because of its flexibility in data collection as it allows collection of both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time [4]. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted as a means of triangulation with the intention of getting quality and un-biased findings. According to [5], triangulation is the process of mixing up methodologies to exploit the synergies offered by the different methodologies. Being academic research therefore, it was suitable to apply the mixed methods approach because it minimizes on the inadequacies of single methods in the two methods complement and verify each other thus reducing biasness and provide more comprehensive information. The quantitative approach will however take center stage in the study.

The target population for the area of study was attained from the selected schools. 4 Private primary schools were selected out of a total of 18, because they have a moderately sizeable work force that will provide a sample size large enough to give a confidence interval of desired width [6].

The target population consists of 236 respondents who included; Head teachers, Deputies, Director of Studies, Heads of departments, and Teachers. Head teachers are the overall managers of school affairs, deputies play supervisory role, directors of studies are custodians of teacher performance records, heads of departments conduct direct interaction with teachers while teachers are the implementers of school programs and processes and these are viable informers due to their respective connection to private schools in Namutumba Town Council.

The sample size constituted of 180 respondents and it was determined using [7] table and it will include employees in the categories of, 4 Head teachers, 4 Deputies, 4 Director of studies, 76 Heads of departments and 92 Teachers.

The sample shall be selected via the following sampling techniques: Simple Random Sampling, Purposive Sampling and Census Inquiry.

There were different methods used for data collection which are; survey, interview, publications etc. The studies made use of secondary data in collecting the required data from the sources. Secondary data was achieved through the use of structured survey questionnaires.

Therefore, the survey questionnaires were given to respondents from various selected private primary schools and later was picked up by the researcher. Furthermore, Quantitative research procedure was used for the completion of this study in order to provide in-depth data analysis of the research problem from various sources.

5. Conclusion

The researcher also drew on descriptive findings for coalition building political strategy before running a regression analysis to bring out the influence. To ease the interpretation of findings, the results in the descriptive analysis were combined as strongly disagree and disagree (disagreement) as well as agree and strongly agree responses (agreement). Also, responses closer to 1 and 2 indicate a coalition building political strategy which is less practiced while responses closer to 3 and 4 reflect a practice which is well handled in a school. As far as coalition building political strategy in selected schools is concerned, findings are presented in table below:

Table 1: Responses on Coalition Building Political Strategy in Selected Schools (N=143).

ITEM	SD		D		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
My head teacher is effective at encouraging teachers to form teams along common interests	16	11.2	20	14.0	58	40.6	49	34.3
My head teacher uses strong teams/coalitions to promote school interests	12	8.4	25	17.5	60	42.0	46	32.2
My head teacher uses strong teams/coalitions to promote his own interests	8	5.6	28	19.6	71	49.7	36	25.2
My head teacher endeavors to understand the interests of different categories of staff	14	9.8	26	18.2	58	40.6	45	31.5
My head teacher uses group of individuals/committees to reach decisions	6	4.2	23	16.1	38	26.6	76	53.1

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Table above presents findings about objective three which set to determine the influence of Coalition building political strategy on teachers' commitment to work in selected private primary schools in Namutumba town council. The set questions about the objective are hereby presented as follows; when the respondents were asked whether head teachers are effective at encouraging teachers to form teams along common interests, it was revealed that 36 (25.2%) disagreed while 107 (74.8%) agreed. This indicates that teachers are encouraged to create groups with those who share similar interests. Such groups work closely hence promoting job performance. [1] argue that those who are effective at organizing internal coalitions are often the political power players in a school. In ascertaining whether head teachers use strong teams to promote school interests, it was revealed that 37 (25.9%) disagreed and 106 (74.1%) agreed. Results indicate that head teachers use strong teams to promote school interests. Creating teams with similar interests helps to build stronger connections and this ends up working to the advantage of the headteachers as they create competition and the head teachers have a reference point whenever they are guiding other teachers. [8] had already stated that organizational politics is reflected in behavior to influence individuals or groups in an organization.

When respondents were asked whether head teachers use strong coalitions to promote their own interests, it was revealed that 37 (25.9%) disagreed while 107 (74.8%) agreed. The implication is that head teachers use the coalitions to promote their own interests although some disagreed. Team work is viewed as the best way to achieve great organizational performance but the headteachers can use this to benefit themselves by owning the ideas and any innovations done by the teams. [8] contend that when a leader tries to influence individuals or

groups in an organization, it becomes a political game. In understanding whether head teachers try to understand the interests of different categories of staff, it was revealed that 40 (28.0%) disagreed and 103 (72.0%) agreed. This implies that many head teachers endeavor to understand the wants and interests of different categories of staff. Understanding people is the best way of knowing how to manage them or manipulate them in case of need. [9] believe that this calls for work-place learning which takes place in many settings and in different ways, resulting in knowledge and skills of different kinds. With this, the head teacher can know how to deal with different categories of staff.

In ascertaining whether head teachers use groups of individuals to reach decisions, it was realized that 29 (20.3%) disagreed while 114 (79.7%) agreed. It implies that indeed head teachers use discussions from the teams to come up with decisions for the good of the schools. It is important to note that the way a group of individuals is used may be positive or negative depending on each head teacher. [10] believes that organizational politics is about capability to influence the responsibilities and sources of power. This influence though has a variety of directions to contend with. When asked about coalition building political strategy in schools, the head teacher school A indicated that coalitions are basically in academics where teachers and administrators set targets together and set out to achieve them. The head teacher school B pointed to giving special assignments to some groups so that they get to work together. The head teacher school C shared a more comprehensive view regarding coalitions in schools by saying this;

“It comes in form of team teaching such that one who has the knowledge of History can come in one day from the geography department and do it as a group and they do it together. Coalitions in fact majorly in our school if we can talk about coalitions are in form of departments”.

The interviewees also demonstrated that coalitions become possible when you associate with people you have found in school and create confidence in them that you have come to work for one goal not to fight one another because a school is a system. The head teacher school D also gave a familiar direction of coalitions in the school by alluding to the following statements.

“We have external coalition building and internal coalition building. External coalition building we look at how you do you collaborate with the nearby school. We have that good coalition building as neighboring schools. We always come together on different many occasions; when it comes to functions, we invite them, when it comes to strategies to uplift the standards of our school we come together”.

He also added that if there is a coalition with a neighboring school, whereby they share information it can be helpful. He believes that a student who is going to come to Victoria is going to come to Victoria, a student who is going to a neighboring school is also going to go there. There is no need to sabotaging their programs. Instead, it is even more advantageous working together. The same is true for the internal school system.

The researcher ran a simple regression analysis to determine the influence of head teachers' coalition building political strategy and teachers' commitment to work. The essence was to determine how much of teachers' commitment to work can be explained by head teachers' coalition building political strategy. The results are

accordingly presented in table below.

Table 2: Model Summary for Head Teachers' Coalition Building Political Strategy and Teachers' commitment to work.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.667 ^a	0.444	0.441	.45335

a. Predictors: (Constant), Head Teachers' Coalition Building Political Strategy

Table above represents a model summary for head teachers' coalition building political strategy and teachers' commitment to work. Results indicate that R = 0.667, R square = 0.444 and adjusted R square = 0.441. In the model, the head teachers' coalition building political strategy determines 44.4% of the variation in teachers' commitment to work. The R value of 0.667 indicates a high correlation between the two.

In order to determine the significance of the regression model in explaining the influence of head teachers' coalition building political strategy on teachers' commitment to work, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted as reflected in table below.

Table 3: ANOVA Results for Head Teachers' Coalition Building Political Strategy and Teachers' commitment to work

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	26.302	1	26.302	127.971	.000 ^b
1	Residual	32.884	160	0.206		
	Total	59.186	161			

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' commitment to work

b. Predictors: (Constant), Head Teachers' Coalition Building Political Strategy

When the researcher analysed the significance of the regression model presented in table above, the F-statistic was found to be 127.971 and the p value of .000 was found to be less than 5% significant level which shows that head teachers' coalition building political strategy significantly influences teachers' commitment to work. Meanwhile, the regression analysis coefficients for head teachers' coalition building political strategy and teachers' commitment to work is reflected in table below:

Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Head Teachers' Coalition Building Political Strategy and Teachers' commitment to work.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	0.991	0.187		5.308	.000
	Head Teachers' Coalition Building Political Strategy	0.693	0.061	0.667	11.312	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' commitment to work

Results in table above revealed that head teachers' coalition building political strategy had a positive and strong significant influence on teachers' commitment to work ($\beta = .667$, $N = 162$, $p = .000 < 0.05$) meaning there is a statistically significant influence. [11] believe that Beta values below 0.3 are weak, those between 0.3 and 0.6 are moderate while those at 0.6 and above are strong. The beta score implies that a 47.2% improvement in teachers' commitment to work in private primary schools in Namutumba town council can be explained by effective head teachers' coalition political strategy. Meanwhile, it is also safe to say that the 0.000 significance is a strong indicator that coalition building political strategy is well handled by head teachers in the schools studied. The implication here is that when head teachers' build coalitions in the school system, he or she creates a good ground for improvement of the teachers' commitment to work as cohesion and collaboration become a central theme in the school.

Having obtained this score, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis earlier set in the study that there is no statistically significant influence of head teachers' coalition building political strategy on teachers' commitment to work in selected private primary schools in Namutumba town council and accepts the alternative hypothesis in the process. The finding corroborates the view of [12] which highlights the key technical area of expertise needed to effectively influence performance as coalition building.

When the interviewees were asked about the influence of coalition building political strategy on teachers' commitment to work, the head teacher school A indicated that the influence is seen in terms of getting a different perspective from the staff that aids performance. Meanwhile head teachers school B gave a more detailed analysis thus;

"I believe it has influence because in most cases, it makes them support the administration even when at first felt they are the other side, you finally find them joining and enhancing performance and sometimes finally coming but of course you cannot have all, still others remain the other side".

The head teacher school C was more emphatic when describing the influence and had this to say;

"Coalitions can influence teachers' commitment to work majorly if you allow them to exist in an institution, they influence negatively because each click in a school you have to work as a team. Because these coalitions are parallel, you cannot move in the same direction and at the end of it all the performance of the institution becomes poor. And automatically if the performance of the school becomes poor, it is an indicator that the performance of the administrator is poor".

This means that coalition building as a political strategy is not only known but actually practiced in varying ways and magnitude.

6. Review of Related Studies

A coalition is a temporary alliance or partnering of teachers in order to achieve a common purpose or to engage in joint activity [13]. The authors stated that Coalition building is the process by which parties (individuals, organizations, or nations) come together to form a coalition. Forming coalitions with other teachers of similar

values, commitment to work, and goals allows teachers to combine their resources and become more powerful than when they each acted alone [14]. The authors stated that the "ability to build coalitions is a basic skill for those who wish to attain and maintain power and influence. "Through coalitions, weaker parties to a conflict can increase their power. Coalition building is the "primary mechanism through which disempowered parties can develop their power base and thereby better defend their commitment to work. "Coalitions may be built around any issue and at any scale of society, from neighborhood issues to international conflict [15]. The author stated that the formation of a coalition can shift the balance of power in a conflict situation and alter the future course of the conflict [16]. The author stated that teachers who pool their resources and work together are generally more powerful and more able to advance their commitment to work, than those who do not. Coalition teachers may be able to resist certain threats or even begin to make counter threats [17].

The authors stated that generally, low-power teachers are much more successful in defending their commitment to work against the dominant group if they work together as a coalition. This is certainly more effective than fighting among themselves and/or fighting the dominant group alone. Teachers in the Namutumba Town Council have long understood the power of coalitions. Rather than taking on powerful decisions on their own, leading teachers have often formed coalitions to challenge other competitors in the district [18].

The author stated that building a successful coalition involves a series of steps. The early steps center on the recognition of compatible commitment to work. Sometimes this happens naturally. Other times potential coalition teachers must be persuaded that forming a coalition would be to their benefit. To do this one needs to demonstrate; that your goals are similar and compatible, that working together will enhance both teachers' abilities to reach their goals, and that the benefits of coalescing will be greater than the costs.

This third point can be demonstrated in either of two ways: incentives can be offered to make the benefits of joining the coalition high, or sanctions can be threatened, making the costs of not joining even higher. For example, the Namutumba Town Council offered a variety of financial aid and political benefits to countries that joined its coalition against Iraq in 2003; it also threatened negative repercussions for those who failed to join, and much worse for those who sided with Saddam Hussein. Another method that can make joining the coalition appealing is to eliminate alternatives to the coalition. Once most of one's allies or associates have joined a coalition, it is awkward...perhaps dangerous not to join oneself. Although teachers and organizations often prefer non-action to making a risky decision, if they find themselves choosing between getting on board a growing coalition or being left behind, getting on board is often more attractive [19].

The author stated that lastly, coalition builders may use precedence as a means of social influence. For example, in making decisions, teachers (or countries) generally want to remain consistent with prior commitments. That means that nations can pressure their allies to act with them in new endeavors. Failing to do so, it can be argued, would hurt their "long-standing alliance [20]." The authors stated that This strategy is not always successful, especially if the self-interest of the other group seems to be harmed by the proposed action. (France, for instance, was not willing to join the U.S. coalition against Iraq in 2003, despite a long-term alliance between France and the U.S.)

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Head teachers should endeavor to understand the interests of staff groups or teams before bringing them on board in terms of matters relating to organizational politics. Once groups are just brought on board, they may come with a negative vibe that could be detrimental to school management and performance.

Head teachers should also use committees in a way that does not communicate exploitation of the said groups. Being a political strategy, it should be done covertly to avoid any suspense or complaints from the groups.

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