

Quality Leadership Development, Improvement and The Management of Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This work deals with quality leadership development, improvement and effective management of secondary schools in Delta State. Quality education is transformative so also quality leadership of school administrators. It is seen that our educational system is performing poorly. On this basis, one of the characteristics of effective management in Nigerian schools is quality leadership development involving democratic values. Quality education is bedeviled in the country due to lack of quality leadership development and improvement, and since education is a basic instrument for social and overall development. The need to redeem the educational system from current decay, therefore, is through quality education and quality leadership. This is because by ensuring discipline, supply of infrastructure, ensuring sound moral standard among students and adequate use of human resources management or manpower planning.

Keywords: *Quality leadership, development, management of schools, Secondary Schools*

INTRODUCTION

The place of leadership in an organization such as the school in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. The school is a social system and a formal organization; and like every formal organization, elements of management must be used in running the system. Although, not everyone can be a leader in a given place at a particular time, there is always a leader saddled with the task at a particular time and there are those to be led (Nakpodia, 2012). Hence, school administrators who are leaders are saddled with the responsibility of managing the human, financial and material resources in the school, and they are usually

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appointed as a result of qualification and seniority. It is the duty of the school leader to oversee the proper running of the school in terms of school – community relations, provision of proper curriculum and instructions, staff and students’ welfare, discipline and proper keeping of school records among others. Nigeria like so many developing countries of the world, has strong faith in education as the key to economic progress and political stability which has to be well managed by competent educational leaders due to the fact that education constitutes the major engine for sustainable human development, as well as the fulcrum around which every activity revolves. Development leaders therefore posit that no nation can rise beyond its educational level. Indeed, nations that have achieved feats in the world heavily relied in the instrumentality of education and the quality of its leadership development and improvement.

Quality improvement in leadership development for secondary schools principals has been a source of grave concern for a long time. This is because secondary education occupies a strategic position in Nigeria because of the important role it plays in preparing the students for useful living in the society and for higher education. To ensure that secondary schools achieve what they are set to achieve there must be in environment that encourage students’ excellence. The provision of basic infrastructures, facilities and the existence of the right social atmosphere and environment are crucial for the building of a sound educational structure.

Leadership Development: Defined

Leadership is a chief tool and a part of management which deals and directs supervision of subordinates; and a way of mutual process of influence that obtain compliance. Effective leadership sometimes involves the use of power. Stogdill (1982) opines that leaders encourage cooperative behaviour, sensitivity to others plight, exercise initiative through quality leadership development and improvement, and have self-confidence and high concern for both people and production in line with management and leadership behaviour. The state of public secondary schools in the country, therefore, calls for an appraisal of leadership development of the school principals in terms of management of the schools. According to Peretomode (2012), management refer to a set of activities which has come to be classified as planning, organizing and leading in order to use



available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the most effective way. In other words, management is a process concerned with the foundation of strategies, plans, policies and programmes with a view to achieving set organizational goals through quality improvement in leadership development. Hence, the quality of any educational system depends to a great extent on the quality of teachers in terms of academic and professional qualification and experiences as well as their level of competency and dedication to their primary functions or assignments.

Anderson and Dyke (1972) assert that the cornerstone of good education is nay high school is its faculty (teachers), fine buildings and equipment, special services and all other factors which help to provide favourable environment for learning. In recent time, more concerned people, state government, government officials have come out openly to admit and lament the rot in the management in the educational system.

Leadership development is defined as the “expansion” of a person’s capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes (Nakpodia, 2012). This is because leadership has been described as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task by leaders. According to Peretomode (2012), leadership is of huge importance in management and educational administration because of its far reaching effects on the accomplishment of school programmes, objectives and the attainment of educational goals.

As a result of its key role in the success or failure of organizations, leadership has long been a focus of study by students, teachers, administrators and researchers in the past decades. In fact, leadership is part of management; it is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the organisation’s goals and objectives that bind different people as a group. The organisation objectives bring people together and motivate them towards attainment of its goals. Its key element is influence arising from two sources: formal individual power and informal individual power (Nakpodia, 2012).

Leadership is a responsibility to be carried out. It is a work, a mission to be accomplished, a service to be rendered. This implies that one who knows that he or she is incapable of carrying out the task of leadership should not aspire to such a position. Also, if the group reckons that a particular person is fit for a leadership position; such a person should accept the challenge. Also,



Elechi (1982) opines that leadership always carries power with it. He goes further to state that the proper exercise of power always involves ethical considerations. In Nigeria educational institutions, the ethics of power and leadership that can best be in the interest of the people must be the necessary guide for whoever will be the leaders. This entails that ethics is such an indispensable tool for leadership development.

The necessity of leadership arises from the need to have one who can control and direct the activities of members so as to realize the goals of the group. Those being led are unavoidably important in the entire process of the attainment of goals. Success is the results of good leadership and the led working as a team in order to achieve good results. The people being led have a big role to play in any type of leadership: leadership involves followers, and in the absence of followers there can be no leader. It is in this sense some scholars maintain that the essence of leadership is followership. It is on this plane that Peretomode (2012) opines that leadership involves other people – followers or subordinates. They can be no leader without followers and it involves the use of influence.

Another essential element indicated in the definition of leadership is the goal to be realized. People who have no goal to achieve do not require a leader. Though individuals in the group may have their personal goals, there must nevertheless be a common goal that all have that will make them have the need for a leader to bring about realization of the goal. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Peretomode, 2012). Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills. Although, one's position as a manager, supervisor and so on gives one the authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organization; this power does not make one a leader. Leadership is not about bossing people around, but it influences followers to achieve set goals.

The Concept of Quality Education

Quality is perceived differently by various professionals who often use the term. It is something everyone considers good and wants to have it. It therefore, presupposes that there is a standard set. Quality control practices in Nigerian



education are based essentially on school inspection, monitoring and control. While such measures are appropriate for obtaining data on policy implementation and for strategic planning, they are of value when it comes to managing the schools. The worth of any management is based on its ability to produce quality products and satisfy clients and other stakeholders. Its' task therefore, include identifying and solving any problem that militates against quality delivery.

According to Cole (1996), quality has to do with whether something is good or bad. It is therefore, assumed that it is a standard set against which the outcome is compared. Quality could be viewed as degree, or level of excellence. It is synonymous with standard, efficiency, excellence, relevance and worthiness. When applied to education. Gordon and Partington (1993) view it as the success with which an institution provides educational environment which enable students to effectively achieve worthwhile learning goals including appropriate academic standard. It is generally agreed that the quality of any educational system is a function of quality of input via process. Adeogun (2001) emphasizes that the availability, relevance and adequacy of resources contribute to academic achievement. Thus, fund is crucial in facilities acquisition, staff recruitment (to care for the enrollment increase) and for policy implementation. In the face of acute shortage of funds, other inputs suffer set back, which in turn influence the level of quality obtainable. The general opinion of many Nigerians as regards the quality of education being provided by our educational system is that the standard is depreciating.

Quality is a process itself. It is the long term commitment to the continuous organization with the active participation of all members at all levels to meet and exceed customer's expectation (Gordon and Partington, 1993). Greenwood and Gount (1994) define quality management as continuously satisfying customer's requirements at a minimum cost to company or school. It is a system where input enlarges the process and involves both the internal and external environment. At this juncture, quality control and assurance are therefore directed at determining the extent to which a product meets that standard and it is a retroactive action used to determine the quality of a product or a system after processing and during which wastage could have occurred and what is left is to reject or battle with rectification. The state of public secondary schools in the country calls for an appraisal of the foundational level of

education. A close look at the primary system which is a stepping stone to the secondary school level reveal features such as low attendance rates, high dropout rate, low patronage, utter neglect by the government, a state of general disrepair, inadequate facilities, poor funding, a fall in the quality of education to mention but a few. Teacher at this level of education have been accused of lack of commitment and it has been alleged that their work output is not commensurate with the newly increased salary of teachers. Little wonder then that the attention of some parents have turned from these public to their private equivalent, while attendance in public schools have been observed to be dwindling, the private schools are having a field day, with more clients than they can possibly accommodate.

Nigerian government can no longer single handedly cater effectively for the educational needs of the country because education is a social service whose provisional body has for a long time rested on the shoulder of the government. The emerging realities have no doubt revealed that government alone cannot single handedly bear the cost of education by way of management. The development of public education in the state in recent years has witnessed the participation of some few private sectors, NGOs and communities.

In spite of the commendable efforts by the government, it has been obvious for some time that the funds allocated to education are no longer adequate. Today, the system is bedeviled with a lot of problems ranging from poor funding to inadequate supply of resources to cope with the ever increasing demand for educational provision which have lead to inadequate provision of facilities for effective teaching and learning and thus hindered fulfillment of the educational objective at the secondary level. It has become obvious that government alone cannot provide all the necessary facilities and resources needed in the public school. Where they are provided, they are neither inadequate nor substandard. In most rural areas and some urban centers some of the buildings are dilapidated, desks and benches are inadequate. There are no standard libraries and science laboratories and computers.

In recent time, there are records of supportive roles of private sectors and local communities in education in forms of provision of learning facilities and building of classrooms. This is a welcome development, only that such provision is limited to some selected areas in terms of its distribution. The pursuit of quality assurance in the management of schools should not only be



the concern of the private sector, but also of the parents, the students, the employee of labour, the government and the international community. The private sector could give the nation's educational sector a face lift, by providing the right infrastructure and environment conducive enough for learning as governments cannot alone solve the seemingly intractable problem facing the education sector. Ezekwesili (2007) opines that governments need to create avenue for private sector to render meaningful financial support to secondary schools. The private sector can contribute in providing necessary facilities for academic and extra – curricular activities required to develop the intellectual abilities of the students.

It is clear that government can no longer single handedly fund and manage educational institutions. The researcher is of the opinion that there is over reliance on government to provide solution to problems facing secondary education in Nigeria. Government, the major source of fund for financing education has over the years failed to live up to its responsibility of sufficiently funding education. The need has risen for the private sector and philanthropic organization that may be interested in education to assist in equipment, books and capital projects for the educational institutions. Ayeni and Atanda (2003) believe that one of the best ways the private sector can contribute to nation building is by giving quality education to children so that they too can play great roles in national development. The private sector should take it as a special responsibility to provide the type of physical and social environments that are ideal and supportive of learning. It is hoped that with the effort of the private sector and other donors to the schools, education would be repositioned to be able to perform its roles of agent of lasting transformation of the society.

One major problem facing management of schools in Nigeria is that of quality control and quality assurance by way of management. Educational management ensures effective monitoring of schools to avoid unnecessary increment of tuition fees as encouraged in a school system. Schools must be managed affectively and if need be, sanction any school that fall below standard both in academic, physical structure and moral standard. According to Peretomode (2012) management refers to a set of activities which has come to be classified as planning, organizing and leading in order to use available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the most efficient way. In order words, management is a process concerned with the formation of strategies,

plans, policies and programmes with a view to achieving set organizational goals through quality assurance in the management of schools.

Problems of Staff and Personnel

Problems of staff and personnel in secondary school system in enhancing quality leadership for effective school management are numerous because qualities and characteristics of a good leader in the school organization is guided by some variables such as being God fearing, well dressed, disciplined and must be punctual. A good leader must have these competency and developing students for working and learning using new technologies and managing its professional development. Among the problem are:

- 1. Poor Development Programmes of Staff:** This implies lack of professional ability due to lack of professional training, because staff development programmes in education are measures designed to increase the knowledge, skill, experience, attitude and probably release employees latent potentials, so that their potential could be increased to meet its objectives. However, Adesina and Fagbemiye (1988) see it as ways to improve the qualitative contributions of human resources to the overall goals of the system. They add that it enables the individuals to be more efficient in performing their work or at preparing individuals for greater responsibility.
- 2. Lack of Funding:** The government through the Ministry of Education, provides fund to the school principal for the day to day running of the school and procurement of material resources for working staff, building of infrastructure, maintenance and repairs of wears and tears. But in the present day Nigerian school system, the government does not provide funds rather principals have to source for funds and assistance from individuals, students, the immediate communities, companies and the church.
- 3. Inadequate Working Materials:** The teaching and non teaching staff need appropriate materials to carry out their various tasks. These include chalks, chalkboard, tables and office chairs, cutlasses, sporting



equipment, textbooks and many others. All these are needed by staff strength of the school to enhance their performance. Various secondary schools in Nigeria lack these working materials and these constitute problem to personnel efficiency.

4. **Poor Conditions of Service:** Staff are not paid when due, bringing about poor motivation and low morale as a consequence of poor salaries and lack of promotion.
5. **Unconducive Working Environment:** Teaching and non-teaching staff are not provided with accommodation and staff offices. Where it exists, they are ill equipped. Sometimes staff offices are stuffy and uncomfortable because over ten staff are jam-packed in a small space called office.
6. **Under Staffing:** Most secondary schools are under staffed. This leads to a situation where a staff has to carry out the duties of two or more staff. For example, a typist including his duties carries out clerical work and at the same time a messenger. A teacher would teach three or four subjects and as many as ten to twelve classes with a population of over thirty students in each class; while some principals act as executive head of their schools and at the same time classroom teachers and school bursars. On the other hand, there is a problem of feminization of the school resulting from problem of glut and shortage of personnel in the sciences and vocational disciplines. There is also glut in the arts.
7. **Induction and Orientation:** Most of the personnel in secondary school system are deficient because there are often not given orientation/induction count. Induction or orientation is systematic efforts minimize problems confronting personnel so that they can contribute maximally to the work of the school. No recruitment and selection process is complete without orienting the new recruited staff to the climate of the school system by school administrator. The newly employed staff can only be productive in his job only if he is well informed about the work to be performed and the environment in which it is to be performed. In



fact, it is not enough for any school to recruit and select teachers; they must be harmonized to the assigned work, the environment and with other members of the school unit. However, in carrying out the induction processes, some problems may also occur because practice may be conflicting with theories. There could also be problem of inability to take all that is being put to the inductee who finds himself in a new or different environment, culture, beliefs and practices.

8. **Human Resources Problem:** Human resources in secondary schools as already pointed out comprise: the principals, teachers, school bursars, drivers, security men, laboratory and library attendants, house masters, matrons and a host of others. However, these human resources in the school system are deficient which invariably constitute problems in personnel administration. From the identified human resources, the ones that are deficient in our present day schools are clerks, cleaners, drivers, cooks, house masters and matrons. The role and functions of the above mentioned cannot be over emphasized. In our present day school system, the principal together with his vice principal do work of a clerk to the neglect of a junior staff clerk, overall development of Nigeria due to lack of leadership development and improvement.
9. **Manpower Planning Problem:** Manpower planning also constitutes a problem in leadership development. Leaders assess the need of the system in terms of the expected enrolment of pupils and the number of teachers needed to staff the school. This information is use in planning for the recruitment of professional and non-professional personnel. For this purpose, a national teacher-student ratio is employed in determining the number of teachers to be needed at any given time is the number of vacancies to be filled; the number of staff required to replace unqualified employees should be included in the demand estimate. In determining the demand for staff, factor such as the rate of turnover, the recommended workload, the number of students in the schools, co-curricular and administrative responsibilities to be performed and type of staff organization should be considered.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The desire for better quality of education is a generally shared feeling in Nigeria as many other countries. Though, quality production is the responsibility of all stakeholders, the schools in particular, play key role in the quality process. The traditional practices of quality control through leadership development and improvement are mere retroactive actions taken after possible damage had been made. As a result, total quality is suggested as better alternative for quality assurance in leadership development and improvement because it focuses on which stage of prevention rather than correction.

In fact, there is no doubt that leadership is the major source and the central nerve of secondary school management vested with various responsibilities and current issues encompassed with problems as enumerated in the educational arena. In fact, education is the key to national and individual development, and to attain quality leadership and education there must be good qualities at all levels such as leadership, infrastructure, human resources management, staff-students ratio, discipline and ensuring that students behave well in the school.

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