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NAVIGATING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT FOR STRATEGIC NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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ABSTRACT

The development in educational management for strategic national development has become a fundamental process in education. This is due to the complexities of today's education as a result of high increase in demand for formal education at all levels, but most importantly, the technological advancement and globalization has brought lots of innovations in the ways of doing things in all spheres of human society; be it political, social or education etc. These changes have indeed posed great challenges on management of educational institutions that must endeavour to produce quality graduates who can meet the global competitiveness. In other to cope with these demands, managers, administrators or principals of schools, should be pro-active, foresighted, have knowledge and technological skills to be able to systematically and objectively plan to realize the policies and programs of education in Nigeria; organize, coordinate and integrate the human and material resources of an organization towards goal attainment. It is for these reasons that the paper attempted to look into the task development procedures for effective educational management. Educational management involves the process of forecasting, planning, decision making, supervision, implementation and evaluation of educational policies with the sole aim of attaining set educational goals. Conclusively, developing task procedure in education is key that creates the road map for the employer, manger, and the employee in the business of educational management. They should seasoned educationist who are pro-active, intelligent and willing to adopt the participatory and transformational management techniques, as well as care for the social and psychological welfare of the workers.

Keywords: National Development, Education, Educational Management,

INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria is seen as a tool or instrument for excellence for national development. Education determines the pace of development and growth all over the world. It is important for political, Social, scientific, technological and economic advancement of a nation (Akpan, 2021).Skills, knowledge, abilities and competences for self-development and societal growth are acquired through education.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2023:2) the specific goals of education in Nigeria are to:

- To maintain and ensure unhindered access and equity to education
- To maintain quality of education delivery at all levels
- To promote functional education for skills acquisition, job creation and poverty eradication or reduction.
- To ensure periodic review, effectiveness and relevance of the curriculum at all levels in other to meet societal needs and the world at work.
- To collaborate with development partners, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and local communities to assist and find education.
- To promote information technology capabilities to all level.

The goals stated are desirable but the challenge is in implementation. In order to realize the objectives of the educational institution, or any other organization, there is need for effective management, pro-active and dynamic manager who should do the right things. Austin (2019) cited in Nwanakezie (2020) confirmed that managers are people who do things right, while leaders do the right things. The cultural focus of institutional or organizational management is the ability to harness both the human, material and other resources available towards the realization of the desired objectives. The manager has to understand and apply the best technique in the development, co-ordination and effective application of the various tasks to be carried out in the organization. This indeed calls for creativity, ingenuity, resourcefulness, critical thinking, objectivity and prudence on the part of the educational or organizational manager at various levels. The educational manager or administrator must exercise the ability and the necessary skills, to carefully manage the limited available educational resources for the successful accomplishment of the national educational objectives (Akpan, 2012).

Management of education in recent times in Nigeria has become more complex. The reason

is because of the rapid increase in demand for formal education right from the kindergarten to tertiary level. Again, technological advancement and globalization has brought a lot of changes in the society, and in the ways of doing things. This has brought great tension on the managers of educational institutions who are on their toes not only to be able to produce the best graduates who can compete with their peers globally, but also to lay emphasis on quality of education. Quality education in Nigeria that can meet the global competitiveness may not be realized if we lack managers who have skills, knowledge, exposure and the technological know-how on how to plan objectively, organize and coordinate the human resources or teams to their specialized areas of tasks, monitor, encourage and motivate them to work with unity of mind and purpose.

MANAGEMENT

In this paper, the term management and administration will be used interchangeably. The central focus of administration is the coordination of both human and material resources towards realizing some predetermined goal. It is a process of achieving formal goals through the use of human efforts. Administration is the practices of executive directives like policy implementation and decisions to fulfill organizational purpose, as a result of everyday controlling and running of the organization **(**Igwe, 2016). Management on the other hand involves a set of activities which can be grouped as planning, organizing, controlling, staffing, directing and coordinating. Management is an act of getting things done through people. It is a process that is sequentially coordinated. Sherkeler (2024) cited in Igwe (2016) explained management as guidance, leadership and control of efforts of people towards some common objective. It is a social integrators and economic process that involves a systematic and coordinated event like planning, organizing, controlling and leading in a way that the scarce resources available is applied judiciously and effectively to achieve the desired outcome in the best and most efficient way (Igwe, 2016). According to Akpan (2017), every organization or institution has a person or a group that look after the running of affairs of the organizations. These persons could be called the managers, leaders, administrators who carry out the organizational tasks through planning, organizing, controlling and coordinating human activities for goal attainment. Efficiency and effectiveness is their watchword as they focus on achieving standard and the objectives of the institution. No wonder the saying that the growth, efficiency and effectiveness of any organization, is dependent upon the management.

Terry (2023) agreed that management is a distinct process that consists of planning, organizing and cording activities by the use of people and resources to achieve the goals. These also shows that management has a progressive method or process of doing things; functional concept that involves the task of planning, controlling and directing the movement and efforts of people toward realizing the organizational goals. Management involve interaction amongst people because of their involvement in getting tasks done. Therefore, for management or a manager to be successful, both the human element and the material resources of the organization must be effectively applied and managed to realize the general aim. Both the execution of the work and the arrangement of the resources must be carefully done.

Thus, management is not a one-man function or an activity done haphazardly. The manager has to employ the skill of collaboration by cooperating with other members of the team for progress to be made. The manager needs to establish an organizational climate where subordinates can willingly and cooperatively out in their efforts toward realizing the goals set by the institution. Management could be explained as a set of tasks or activities grouped as planning, organizing, controlling, staffing, directing and coordinating the human and maternal resources of an organization to realize their predetermined goals. It has various definition based on the contexts and perspectives of the author. Some authors opined that management could be viewed as the force or engine that moves an organization which could be responsible for its success or failure. However, others claimed that management is the act that deals with the realization of the desired goals by the use of human resources (Olulube, 2017). Additionally, Ololube (2017) in Ololube(2019) explained that management is a systematic process applied to accomplish a pre-known objective by the use of human and material resources.

Concept of Educational Management

The concept of educational management explains almost the same thing with management except that it is channeled toward the management of education as a system. Educational management deals with the planning and formulation of educational policies and programs aimed at realizing educational goals. Management can be conceptualized as the use of human, financial and material resources made available for educational programs in a systematic and stated laid down rules and policies to realize educational objective (Igwe, 2006). From the analytical definition, it is evident that educational managers are those that

carry out the task of planning educational policies and programs at macro levels. It is also recognized that administrators in one way or the other could be engaged in such function as well but on a micro level; as educational administrators equally engage in planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and evaluation. They even assist in the policy formulation in the process of implementing policies (Igwe, 2006).

In the words of Akpan (2011), educational management involves the process of forecasting, planning, decision-making and formulating of educational policies with the aim of attaining set-educational goals". It follows the process of a whole lot of tasks like planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, supervising and evaluating of human and material resources with the main purpose of achieving organizational goals. Babalola (2006) cited in Akpan (2011) asserted that educational management is a concept that agrees with the quest to align the formal educational system under control, regulation and supervision. Idoko, (2015)viewed educational management as a process which uses educational institution for the promotion of human personality.

- **Collaboration:** According to Nwanekezie (2020), collaboration plays a fundamental role in upholding and driving the organization forward. The manager's ability to discuss with others, and share ideas of common interest with others is key to organizational growth. Brain storming with others will make them fill accepted and open to put in their best willingly towards the realization of the planned goals.

- **Good Budgetary Strategy:** For organizational effectiveness to be achieved, the manager should be able to adopt this tool effectively in planning and controlling the financial resources for future plans of action which are always expressed in financial terms over time (Akpan, 2011).

- **Accountability:** this forms the distinguishing mark of a manager in an organization. An administrator or manager should be ready to account to the greatest details, the running cost of an organization. Ogbu, (2019) cited in Nwanekezie, (2020) explained that accountability is the wiliness of an individual to accept his or her actions, accept responsibility for them and disclose the result in a transparent way and asking for help where necessary. From the above, Ninalowo in Ogbu (2019) cited in Nwanekezie, (2020) advised that government functionaries should adopt the character of accountability in their dealings to the public to justify their actions at the level of

moral and ethical standard. Managers of Educational institutions should therefore keep clean records of their transactions within and outside, and to be ready to give account when called upon.

- **Transparency/Honesty:** these should be the watch words of all managers as they attract Godly rewards. The manager should be ready and willing to attest to the truth on any issue concerning the organization that needs clarification. It does not matter if the truth goes against the leader or manager. The best attitude is for the manager to stand on the grounds of truth. These may save the organization instead of compromising with lies that may put the organization to bad light if discovered later. Ololube cited in Igwe (2019) said that a leader's capacity for honesty can help personnel work constructively on solving issues and problems.

- **Responsibilities/Integrity:** responsibility should be one of good qualities needed foreducational managers. A manager should be ready to face challenges, acceptresponsibilities and not shy away from his jobs by delegating authority. These lapses areseen when a manager lacks the competence and knowledge of the job (Nwanekezie,2020). Also, Ololube in Igwe (2019) cited in Nwanekezie (2020) expressed integrity asbeing consistence in words and deeds" which is seen in leaders that have deepcommitments to do the right thing irrespective of circumstances. Managers must befirmly equipped for the job both in managerial approach, skills, planning, organizing andcoordinating of human and material elements in an organization towards the realizationof pre determine goals. By getting involved, managers take charge and lead the youngergeneration by doing. This supports the slogan that says "do as I do, and not as I say".committed managers go extra miles to make things better in the organization. Thecontributions of such a manager could be measured in the achievements of goals,motivating and satisfying the needs of workers. He also enhances free flow ofcommunication, achieves harmony in decision making process and by adopting thetransformational management approach.

- **Humility:** this is another great virtue that could help a manager to excel and build lovearound him as he builds empathy and understands others.

- **Justice:** The manager works on the rule of equity by giving all people equal treatmentand upholding the truth at all times. There is no perversion of justice,

nepotism, tribalismor undue favouritism to any worker.

- **Courage**:Thisshowsthe abilityofthe manageror administratortomaketoughdecisionsthat counter others and pushes it through.
- **Temperance:**Leader'sabilitytotakecalculatedandrationalrisks.
- **Transcendence:** this shows the managers sense of purpose, steadfastness and optimism(Nwanekezie, 2020:770-771).
- **Good Research Knowledge:**A manager should be ICT compliance. This will exposehim to acquire numerous skills needed in the day-to-day managerial duties.

Thewriteraffirmsthattheabovelistedattributesifexhibitedbyeducationalmangersintheirdayto day running of schools, the whole educational system will be transformed and someunnecessary challenges surmounted. Therefore, educational managers should endevour to makeaccountability, transparency, humility etc. their key which wouldbring the much-expected lightinto the management of schools in Nigeria.

FactorsThatBringAboutIneffectivenessof EducationalManagers

Most managers in educational institutions do not operate maximally due to some factors thatbring about inefficiency in management.These factors include among others:

- **Challenges of skills development of educational managers:** most educationalmanagers lack the competence required for effective school management and this couldconstitute huge problem in coping with the new techniques and knowledge needed foreffective administration.
- **Poor funding:** funding of education in Nigeria has always been a problem.Funds arenotmadeavailableforthetrainingprogramsforeducationalmanagers.Thishasnegativee ffect in the development of the skills of educational managers. Development of capacitybuilding program for managers in organizations will need huge funding, and it is throughsuch programs that managers acquire the right knowledge, skills and competences toeffectively management schools.
- **Poor incentives:** educational managers are inadequately motivated to develop interest tolearn new skills. There is no reward for achievements to spur them to action.
- **Traditional and belief system:** most educational mangers lack the will power

toembrace change and innovation in the management of schools. They should better stickwith the old method of management using transaction and coercive approaches they areused to. They resist change and forget that the only constant thing in life is change(Nwanekezie,2020).Thisbeliefsystemofstickingtothetraditionalorreactiveapproach,affects the adoption of innovation in the management of schools.

- **Lethargy:** laziness of some educational mangers hinders them from engaging in self-professional development to update their knowledge and skills in school management.They do not attend conferences, workshops and seminars to update and get newmanagerialskills. In the higherinstitutions,suchmanagersareboundtoperishforlackofpublication as they will neither be promoted to the next level nor have the will power topublish and move on.
- **Lack of research knowledge**: most managers lack the zeal to discover new areas ofskills brought about through research findings to improve their competences.
- **The dynamics of management**: change is constant. As changes come, they affecteverything in the society which includes management of work or activities inorganizations.Skills and strategiesadopted in the past arenowobsolete and can no morebe applied in the contemporary management of education. Discovering of newknowledge through research has posed big problem to organizations; and therefore,education mangers of this era will need to adjust to the use of new discoveries in other tomeet up with the demands of the advancing society.
- **Appointmentofunqualifiedpersonnel**.Agreatnumberofpeopleappointedasmangerseitherineducationalcircleorotherwisehavelittle ornobasicqualificationineducationalmanagement. Some have no certificate in education and therefore, are not professionallyand intellectually endowed to handle school management job (Akpan, 2011).
- **Lack of ICT training:** Nowadays, the knowledge of ICT has become an indispensabletool which all organizational managers should run with in other to meet with the globalstandard.Some educational mangers haveno knowledgeof ICT. This could act as barriertoeffectivemanagementofschoolsinNigeria.Mostmanagershavecomputerphobia andtherefore are afraid to work with the computer (Nwanekezie, 2020:772).

- **Managers lacking Knowledge:** This shows in the wrong decision making by themanager who could carelessly delay matters that needs prompt attention. This situationcould easily create problems in an organization.

- **BeingReactive:**The managerseeshimselfintheorganizationasbeall‟and„knowall. ‟Heclaims to beright all thetimeand can nevermakeanymistake. Such managers feartotake responsibility but finds it comfortable to blame others. All mistakes and blames areshifted to the teachers, students or other subordinates. This attitude leads to ineffectivemanagement of the educational system.

- **Compromise:** Managers that compromise standards or the truth attract low qualityaccreditation or assessment externally from the supervisors whom theymay wish to offerinducement in other to cover their loop holes. Such managers cut corners and usuallybribe their positions through. On a serious note, they usually end up in self-destructionwith very poor reputation to themselves and to the organization at large.

- Lack of humility, lack of courage, inability to take risk, lack of self-confidence, lack ofmodernization and many more are some of the factors that hinder effective management.

Simply put, fear must be addressed for development to take over. There is no gain saying thattechnology and modernization have come to stay. Educational mangers should embrace the newapproaches and trends that came with modernization so that they can be at par with theircounterparts in the developed nations.They should be able to equip themselves with the currenttechnologies by being ICT compliant, visionary, proactive and intellectually ready to be able tomove the educational system forward in Nigeria.

MeasuresforImprovingManagerialSkillsofEducationalManagers

- **Encouragement and Reward:** Educational managers should be adequately encouragedand rewarded so as to motivate them to seek and develop interest in acquiring new skillsforeffectivemanagementofeducationalinstitutions.Thiscouldbeachievedthroughrecognition and commendation of those who performed well. The recognition couldattract promotion; salary increase and by issuing certificate of recognition.

- **In-service training:** Government should provide in-service programs, seminars andworkshops for educational managers. Such training should involve the use of modernmanagerial techniques in school management. They could be sponsored to attendconferences or workshops outside Nigeria for exposure and interaction. In these ways,new knowledge,skills and abilities are acquired for effective management of schools.

- **Training in ICT:** This could be made to be a requirement for promotion to educationmanager. Provision should be made for ICT training for school managers. This will helpthem acquire new skills needed for improvement in their managerial work.

- **Encouragement for self-development**: Educational managers should be encouraged toshow interest in self-professional development through reading of management textbooks, journals dealing with management skills and other technical reports.

- **Appointing qualified people as educational managers:** Here, government shouldappoint people who are specialized in educational management to serve as educationalmangers and not the other way round.

- **Proper funding of education:** The education sector of the Nigeria economy should getthe adequate funding needed from the government.Money is needed to carter for thecost of research, in-service training, workshop and conferences meant for thedevelopment of educational managers. The budgetary allocation that has never gotten toexpected percentage is never enough for the management of educational system. Thegovernment therefore needs to increase budgetary allocation to take good care of alleducational needs in Nigeria (Akpan, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed educational management strategies for effective educational management.Among others, educational management was categorized into internal and external educationalmanagement.The concept of educational management and the roles of educational managerswere extensively discussed.The qualities needed for effective management of schools by themanagers or principals were listed thus, being foresighted, being proactive, intelligent,knowledgeable in ICT technology and adopting the democratic and transformational leadershipapproach in the management of the school system.

The functions of the manager which includes among others: policy implementation,planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising and evaluating of educational programmes andactivities in schools were x-rayed.Other functions include the manager's ability to care for thepsychological wellbeing of both the subordinate, teachers, non-academic staff and the students,for the progress of the schoolsin particular and the realization of the broad educational goals ingeneral.Managers should be firm in making sure that the programmes of the school areachieved as planned so that the stakeholders of the school and the society will feel the impact ofthe school successes in the lives of the graduates who have acquired the right skill through theirtraining, and can now contribute positively to the development of the society.

Suggestions

In the course of writing this paper, the writer made quite a number of observations andbased onthat, would like to make the following suggestions:

- Most of the people appointed as managers in educational circle or otherwise have little orno basic qualification for the managerial position. Some do not even have certificates. Itis therefore advised that government should appoint people who are specialized in thearea to serve in that capacity to ensure quality performance.
- It is seriously suggested that the knowledge of ICT be a condition for promotion orappointment to the post of educational manager. This may spur those who are computerphobia to brace for self-professional development not onlybybeing computer compliant,but also to help managers develop the culture of reading magazine and text books,journals, etc. that treat managerial skills.
- Government should provide in service training centers, seminars, and workshops thatwould treat managerial technics in school management.
- Government should be determined to properly fund education in Nigeria. If thegovernment would comply with appropriation of the 26% of the national budgetrecommended by the UN for education, much of the problems such as procurement offunds needed for research, in-service training, workshops and conferences for mangerscould easily be sponsored.
- The 21stcentury educational mangers should learn to adopt democratic

andtransformational leadershipapproach in the course of their management, so as to carrytheir subordinates along for unity, cooperation, that leads to high productivity andrealization of educational goals.

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