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Staff management: A key tool to Organizational and National development

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Article Info

Abstract
The development of any society is closely linked to the educational standards of the people, for example, in Nigeria, it is believed that, the higher the level of educational attainment, the better the conditions of living and hence the overall development of the citizens. For this reason the Federal Republic of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument of National development. Staff management has been observed to have enormous consequences on the successful running of private primary schools in Nigeria, since good Staff management will bring about the realization of the educational and millennium developmental goals (MDGs). Heads of private primary schools and their subordinates therefore have the managerial responsibilities of planning, directing, controlling and organizing available resources (human and material) to achieving the necessary goals for national development.

1. Introduction

Education, it is said, is the bedrock of any meaningful development for any Nation. The development of any society is closely linked to the educational standards of the people, for example, in Nigeria, it is believed that, the higher the level of educational attainment, the better the condition of living and hence the overall development of the citizens. For this reason the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in her pursuit of meeting the millennium development goals (MDGs) has adopted education as an instrument of National development (FRN, 1977, revised 2004).

The numerous problems facing the nation of Nigeria at this present point in time, such as, poverty, corruption, examination malpractice, poor academic performance, moral decadence, militancy, political thuggery and banditry besides others, have been attributed to lack of proper and necessarily education (Iwu and Iwu 2013).

These societal problems, if identified early enough, can be adequately curbed in the various stages of schooling, especially during the primary school period, which are the formative years of the man or woman of today.

As these problems persist they continue to probe into the effectiveness and efficiency of our educational system. Therefore for the adequate handling of these societal problems, it is necessary to begin at the educational institutions, which is the bedrock of national development. And talking about educational institution, the primary schools are the most probable starting points.

One of the presumed reasons why performances of primary schools, especially in Nigeria, have been evidently low is attributable to poor school management (Iwu and Iwu, 2014); the belief is that, if schools are well managed, things will go on better and the educational objectives will be archived. Talking about management, personnel or staff management is cardinal and pivotal.

2.1 Management leadership grid

The managerial leadership grid was invented by Blake and Mouton (1964). According to the Managerial Leadership Grid, a team style is used by managers who have high interest for people and for production, thereby encouraging and supporting employees to work as a team, so as to attain optimal productivity. Managers who have high concern for employees but low concern for productivity use a country club style, where the work environment is friendly and supportive but not necessarily productive. Managers with high concern for productivity and low concern for people use a produce- or-perish–or task–style, in which the manager pressures employees and controls the environment, emphasizing rules and control over a supportive climate

in the workplace. The style used when man- agers have low concern for both people and productivity is referred to as impoverished, in which the manager works to avoid problems more than support employees or strive for innovative approaches toward productivity. And a moderate emphasis on people and productivity yields a middle-of-the-road approach, or compromise style, which provides some support and accomplishes some goals, but not at optimal levels of either.

According to Blake and Mouton (1964), who were the first to introduce the management leadership grid (Fig.1) in 1964, which has to a very large extent influenced the concept of managerial leadership and organizational development, 'when *people run a Company,'* (including a School*),'the manner in which*
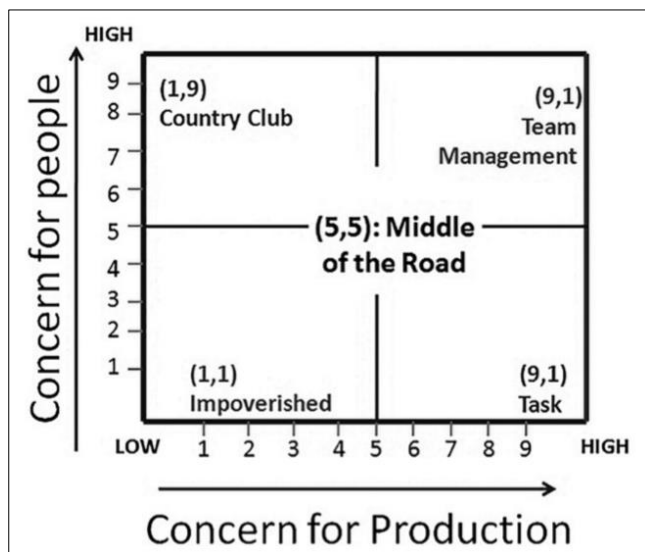

Fig 1: The management leadership grid (from Cai, *et al*. 2021)

They are led and managed contributes to or detracts from their readiness and capacity to make significant contributions' (to the company).

2.2 Scope of study
Because of the versatility of the subject matter, we limit the scope of this paper to the most basic and fundamental concepts of Staff or Personnel management. The paper begins by asking the question, what is Staff management, then proceeds to such basic concepts of Staff management, such as, functions of Staff management, Standards, Motivation, Need for Staff or personnel audit, Staff management and records, and finally a last word on Courage and motivation.
It was Aristotle the great Greek philosopher who lived in the period 384-322 BC, w
Who said, '*initio disputandi est definitonis nominis,'* a Latin statement that means, 'the beginning of every discussion is the definition of the terms'. This is to say that, the proper way to begin a discussion is to define the terms that constitute the subject matter.
Therefore we set out by defining the main terms in the topic:
2.3 Staff, According to the Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, is the group of workers who carry on a role or do the work of an organization. The word is synonymous to both Personnel and Employee and as such all three words could be used interchangeably. Staffing is the

engagement of personnel to work in an organization; in the case of primary schools, it has to primarily do with the engagement of teachers for the schools. Nel *et al.* (2008) has described staffing as 'a technique employed by organizations in placing the right persons in the right positions. It has been described as the process of ensuring that the best available person are appointed into vacant positions (Steyn and Niekerk, 2007).
2.4 Management, simply put is the art of controlling and directing people towards archiving set goals. It could be technically defined as, the co-ordination of all resources of an organization, through the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling in order to attain organizational objectives. Onifade (2004) as in Flippo (1980), defines it as the process of making use of human and non-human resources to archiving organizational goals. Management involves seven major aspects of organizational resources, which are planning, controlling, organizing, staffing, leading, coordinating and directing.
Staff or personnel management, therefore is that aspect of management that is concerned with people at work and their relation with the organizational. According to Flippo (1980), Staff management comprises of management functions as well as operative functions. His Management functions include; planning, directing, controlling and organizing, while his operative functions include, procurement, development, compensation, maintenance, integration and separation.
Summarily therefore, Staff management can be defined as, the planning, directing, controlling and organizing, of the procurement, development, compensation, maintenance, integration and separation of human resources, to the end that individual, organizational and societal objectives are accomplished (Flippo, 1980; Nwachukwu, 1888).

3.1 Implications on private primary schools
Staff management, from the foregoing has enormous consequences on the successful running of private primary schools in Nigeria. As good Staff management will bring about the realization of the educational goals at this level of education. These goals according to the National policy on Education include the, preparation of individuals for: (1) useful living, within society, and **(2)** Secondary education (FRN 1977, revised 2004).
Heads of private primary schools and their subordinates therefore have the managerial responsibilities of planning, directing, controlling and organizing available resources (human and material) to achieving the afore mentioned goals and much more.
Specifically, they are expected to perform the following managerial duties:
1. Programme planning and policy making.
2. Provision and maintenance of funds and facilities.
3. Obtaining and development of personnel.
4. Regular improvement of instructional prorammes.
5. Student-Personnel services, and
6. Maintenance of effective relationships with the community and other external agencies. (Nwankwo, 1982 as in Nwachukwu, 1988).

3.2 Standards: A very important role of Staff management in primary Schools is the establishment and maintenance of standards by which performance can be judged. A standard is an established criterion or model against which actual results

can be compared, by use of the 'performance standards' four variables of establishing standards can be distinguished. These are Quantity, Quality, Time and Cost. These variables constitutes what is called 'operating results'. It is therefore the responsibility of Management to provide and ensure that standards are maintained.

4.1 Need for staff/personnel policy: One major function of Staff management as has been highlighted above, is aimed at making staff deliver their best to the organization. A vital to assisting the Staff manager, is staff or personnel policy. This is a statement of an organization's goals and intentions concerning matters that affect the people in the organization. According to M.W. Conning (as cited in Ubeku, 1985), there are three main principles upon which staff policy are based, these are:

1. All employees should be treated with justice, there should be a code of fair play, which means having regard for equity. No favouritism nor antagonism should be shown towards any individual, and there should be consistency in treatment between all employees and over periods of time.
2. The needs of employees must be recognized, particularly their desires for job satisfaction, for knowledge of what is going within the organization and for consultations before changes affecting them take place.
3. A business will function better democratically, rather than autocratically. Success is much more likely to occur if the co-operation of the employee is sought in archiving, than by trying to coerce to task to these ends by the use of authority[4].

4.2 Motivation
To make a man excel in a given task, make him love that task, making a man love his task is what in Management parlance is popularly known as *Motivation*. Motivation is one of the major challenges faced by Staff management. The motivation of staff members to performing assigned roles and functions is a very intriguing one, as it covers the physiological, psychological, physical and sometimes even spiritual aspects of the staff. Motivation plays a very important role in having staff give off their best in realization of organizational goals and aspirations. Since people are the pivots on which any organization revolves, the success of Schools therefore depends largely on the effective mobilization of efforts of all the staff members of the school.

Social scientists, as a product of research, have shown that most people are easily made to be at their best in the delivery of organizational goals, when their needs are satisfied.

4.3 The place of courage
The task of administering a school is a very onerous one, as such much courage is required to set organizational goals to fruition. It takes courage to live from day – to – day, no great achievement has ever been obtained in life, without courage. Staff management can sometimes be very disgusting and frustrating, however only courage can keep you on track on the way to archiving your set goals.

Peter Drucker, a very renowned Management scholar, has opined that Courage, rather than analysis, dictates the truly important rules for identifying priorities:
1. Pick the future as against the past.
2. Focus on opportunities rather than the problems
3. Choose your own direction, rather than climb on the

bandwagon.
4. Aim high! Aim for something that will make a difference, rather than for something that is save and easy to do.

Even God had to challenge Joshua, when he was to undertake that great task of leading the children of Isreal across Jordan into the promised land, after the death of Mosses, saying…be strong and very courageous (Joshua 1:6,9).

Remember there is no one straight path to success, no shortcuts will do. The path to success is always full of detours and drudgeries; however the drudgeries of today can become the glories of your tomorrow. Therefore dare to be courageous all the way, and you shall make it, on your way to realizing both your organizational as well as your personal goals.

5.1 Conclusion
Having considered and highlighted the basic concepts of staff management in this paper, we believe it shall serve as a vital basis for all engaged in private School Management, or those who intend to venture into it to make good success in it.

We recommend that qualified staff be engaged by proprietors of both public and private primary schools, in order to improve pupils performance and thereby bring about national development.

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