

**LEADERSHIP ROLES OF PRINCIPALS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSIFIED EDUCATION IN GRANT-AIDED SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA.**

BY

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Abstract

Effective leadership role is critical to the proper management of grant-aided secondary schools (GASS) in Kogi State, Nigeria. Diversification of education cannot be achieved without bringing to bear desired administrative leadership roles of principals. There is no good school curriculum that is static. It must change if it must keep pace with changing times. This paper examines the concept of education, the concept of diversification of education, various leadership roles of principals and challenges of leadership roles of principals. Some useful recommendations aimed at improving leadership roles were raised, and they include the principal should plan well and review his plan from time to time, adequate fund should be provided for use by the government, changes in government policies should not be too frequent among others.

Keywords: Leadership, Principals, Challenges, management, administration,
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Introduction

We know our problems and have identified education as the solution to them. But how do we get to educational Promised Land? How do we diversify education to achieve the needed result been sought for? Ifeta (2012) believes that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness and the adjustment of the individual activity. The basis of this social consciousness is the only method of social reconstruction. Aside from reforms in leadership style, diversification or educational reforms seem to be the best answer that can bring about positive changes on the attitude of African continent and Kogi State, Nigeria in particular. Wheeler (1980) explains that societies change, so must this kind of education change. Change merely for its own sake has little to recommend it, but when some parts of culture are already undergoing rapid

change, for instance, in the economic area, in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); and technical skills then inevitably change will occur in other parts.

It is more realized than ever before that transformation of a nation depends to a great extent on quality of education. Bua and Ada (2013) stated that success in the realization of educational goals depends largely on the quality of factors, inputs, process and outputs from stakeholders which is guaranteed by management effectiveness. The ability of school administrators to adapt to the organizational, structural and curriculum changes has attracted concern in the field of research. There seems to be controversy in the use of the tools necessary for the attainment of the needed diversification of education, and at the centre of it is the confusion over the roles of the principals of Grant-aided secondary schools.

Principals in attempt to carry out their leadership roles, most often face challenges ranging from environmental insecurity, staff problems, curriculum changes, and overloading, to incessant government policies. This paper aims at re-positioning the roles of principals in achieving diversification of education in grant-aided secondary schools.

The Concept of Education

Education has been described as all efforts, conscious and direct, incidental and indirect made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of the individual's own needs as well as the needs of the society where that education is based (Jimba and Agenyi, 2012).

In his own contribution, Jegede (2013) explained that education is the most important instrument of change in any society and that any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. In a vide to revolutionize education in Africa and in Nigeria in particular, many reforms, transformations and diversification of educational system have been undertaken. The first colonial policy on education was in 1925. This policy was formulated for Africa and touched on primary, secondary and adult education with some modifications of the policy in 1935 and 1945. The reform was centered on the production on literate nationals who were required to man positions which would strengthen the colonial administration. Ogboru (2008) opined that the educational sector was guided by the National Policy on Education and several coordinated mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the highest standards are maintained in curriculum, infrastructure and manpower development. Successful governments have tried to address the problem of educational development through many

educational reforms, policies and programmes but unfortunately, the greatest challenge of educational development all over the globe is that of roles, responsibility and control. In these aspects all the stakeholders of education are firmly involved. Idisi (2012) observed that at times there is unhealthy rivalry or competition, but the pattern of this rivalry or competition is often determined by the nature and problems of development itself. He further observed that the prevalence of multiple systems of education in Nigeria is another major problem. He stated that as of today there are thirty-seven systems of education in Nigeria, the Federal system and the thirty-six state systems. Each education system is unique, backed up by the federal or state education laws. Another problems borders on the budgetary allocations for the formal education system that have the shape of an inverted pyramid in which secondary and tertiary education receive more than four time as much public resources as primary education. In the light of the problems observed, it is difficult for any education reform, transformation and diversification to be effective. Because in many cases, the infrastructure in the secondary schools are grossly inadequate, most schools are starved of funds and that affects the provision of teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate qualified teachers to help principals implement educational policies.

Leadership Roles of Principals in the Diversification of Education

An effective leadership role of a leader in any organization is critical to the realization of its pre-determined objectives. A leader initiates, organizes, motivates and directs actions of the members of a group in a particular direction towards the achievement of objectives of group.

Renald (2000) observed that administrative roles must be concerned with the quality of instruction as well as the students' welfare, the moral and spiritual tone of the school and the maintaining of discipline. Principals of grant-aided secondary schools are expected to have the leadership skills and knowledge to exercise the following roles to achieve the needed aims for diversification of education; planning, teachers' evaluation, programmes evaluation, school business administration, personnel administration, curriculum developer and implementer, and parent and community relations to mention but a few.

Planning

Effective planning is critical to the success of any organization. Planning is considered to be the most important role of a secondary school principal. Planning involves the development of strategy and procedure for effective realization of the whole lot of plan. Planning is important in

order to avoid waste of money, time and scarce resources. At the secondary school level, Planning involves the strategy to implement policies of government and the ones initiated by the school administrator. The successes of any bid to diversify education at the secondary school level lies squarely on the ability of the principal to plan effectively and the strategy he employs to evaluate the teachers.

Teachers' Evaluation

Principals are responsible for evaluating their teachers' performance based on programme blue prints given to them by either Ministry of Education or School Board. An effective principal is expected to strategize evaluation process for the teachers to ascertain if stated teaching objectives of the school are being achieved. Evaluation must be fair and well documented and must point out strengths; weaknesses; opportunities and threats (SWOT) to the teachers' performances. The principal is expected to offer suggestions for improvement of those expectations, especially the school programmes that have not been met.

Programmes Evaluation

Developing, implementing and evaluating programmes in grant-aided secondary schools are part of principals' roles. Principals are expected to look for ways of improving students' experience. Developing effective programmes that covers a variety of areas is one sure way to achieve this. Programmes in the school are to be evaluated at the end of every school session in order to enable you improve the quality of the programme. The principal is expected to provide a conducive climate, service and stimulation within the school programme to meet the needs of the students. The principal is to synchronize all the services and activities such as efficient schedules, workloads for teachers and supportive staff, and the best utilization of available professional and material resources. All these expectations cannot be met without the principal harness properly the internally generated revenue (IGR)

School Business Administration

School business administration is one of the most vital roles of the secondary school principal. Although many principals have limited control over the source of funds for schools, many of them generate and influence the supply of money and provision of facilities by being pro-active in budget planning, implementation and effective resource mobilization. The principal generates

money from school fees, Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) levy, statutory allocation from state government, donations, and school commercial activities such as bookshop, canteen, cultural outfits and rented halls. The principal do not generate money for its sake, but the funds must be expended on the items considered to be of important to the smooth running of the school.

According to Hornby (1999), Expenditure is the act of spending or using money in providing goods and services. Principals carry out expenditures in form of recurrent and capital expenditures. To attain the stated diversification of education project, he must be prudent and also exercise strict control on the available scarce funds in order to meet the needs of workers under him.

Personnel Administration

A vital part of any school administration job is to recruit and develop personnel to meet the need of the organization. Recruiting wrong persons with poor attitude to work can cause the administrator headaches down the line, while recruiting the right person on the job makes the job easier. The principal collaborates with the Ministry of Education and School Board in making decisions related to the personnel. He is not only concerned with the educational development of the staff but also concerned with their personal problems. Proper orientation is usually given to new entrants to familiarize them with the way of doing things in the school. The principal is expected to recruit those who have the zeal for the teaching job, capable of developing and implementing school curriculum with him.

Curriculum Developer and Implementer

The principal is believed to have the knowledge and ability to develop, moderate, adjust and implement the school curriculum. Curriculum is a record of a plan of what will happen or take place in the school programme. It is concerned with the learning outcome intended to be achieved through the experiences the learner is expected to be exposed, that can cause a change in his behaviour and attitude.

Principals influence the curriculum because they design it in a manner that it will meet some identified needs. It is believed that the needs of a particular community will inform what role education can perform in that community. Curriculum cannot remain static because the need of a particular society changes from time to time. This fact explains the dynamic nature of curriculum that most of the time calls for the diversification of education. Proper implementation of curriculum promotes the values and culture of the people in the immediate community.

Parent and Community Relations

The principal is expected to know very well the community where the school is located. He is to be familiar with the educational agencies in the school environment. Having a good relation with the community and the parents will make the principal to reap benefits in a variety of ways. For instance, it makes discipline matters easier, any change will be readily accepted; the members can make donations in cash and in form of material support for the development of the school. Good knowledge of the area can afford the principal the opportunity for knowing the needs and desired values of the community. Diversification of education cannot succeed without the involvement of the agents that will benefit from the change.

Concept of Diversification of Secondary Education

During the 1970s and 1980s, international agencies encouraged developing countries to adopt educational policies and practices based on human capital models and neo-liberal approaches. According to International Bureau of Education (2006), these policies included: the expansion, restructuring and diversification of secondary education, greater curricular emphasis on practical education; an upgrading of teacher training and qualification; encouragement of non-public finance of post secondary institutions and the introduction of new technologies and pedagogical approaches to mention but a few.

In Latin America, the educational standards of former imperial powers last long shadows over the curricular contents and requirements of secondary education. IBE (2006) reiterated that due to the politicization of education and historical emphasis on higher education (both public and private), Latin America flourished, secondary schools mainly served as highly institutional channels for university entrance and elite status. Rama reaffirmed that the parties representing middle classes called for an extension of classes of secondary education and greater access to higher education, even though inequalities in secondary education were rampant.

In their own contribution Withrock, Wayner and Hollman (1991) stated that transformation of secondary education occurred in Western Europe particularly during the ascension of democratic socialist parties led by cadres of political leaders imbued with a strong sense of solidarity and modernizing visions, many European governments launched large scale educational reforms to establish and expand more inclusive secondary schools.

In Nigeria, several coordinated mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in curriculum, infrastructure and manpower development. Idisi (2012) opined that successive governments have tried to address the issue of educational development through some educational related programmes and policies, which include; The 6-3-3-4 system, the structure of the Nigeria education system was six years in primary school, three years in Junior Secondary School, three years in Senior Secondary School and Four years in tertiary education.

Education for all policy which include: Universal Primary Education (UPE), and Universal Basic Education (UBE). Basic education comprises both the range of formal schooling as well as a wide variety of non-formal education activities offered to meet the learning needs of groups of people of all ages.

There are many phases of diversification of education which include: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels; curriculum content of the various levels of education; educational funds; Adult Education and others. A diversified educational system aims at producing a critical mass of human resources including creative thinkers and philosophers; researchers and innovators; engineers and scientists; technocrats and managers; investors and entrepreneurs and patriotism community and social mobilizers. Diversification of education also involves the control of education by the government and private individuals in terms of funding and supervising. Benefits to be derived from this aspect of diversification of education include: Attraction of private individuals to establish qualitative secondary schools, delegation of responsibility will be achieved through closer supervision by various stakeholders. Private companies will be willing to provide funds, logistics and supports for research since they are stakeholders. More qualified teachers will be attracted into teaching career and will put in their bests. It will also create more avenues for under-taking research work in secondary schools, to ensure that secondary schools are run and coordinated according to the established world standards.

A major area of concern is the type of education made available in Nigerian secondary schools. Do the principals possess the needed competencies to grapple with all these enormous challenges facing secondary education in Nigeria?

Challenges Ahead of Leadership Roles of Principals

There are many factors posing challenges to leadership roles of principals in grant-aided secondary schools. Some of these challenges as severally noted are insecurity, provision of

exemplary leadership, curriculum changes and overloading, parental problems, inadequate funding, and proprietors' interference.

The present insecurity in the country especially in the North-East and South-South zone affects principals' leadership roles. Many principals, teachers and students are either killed or abducted by Boko Haram in the North-East of Nigeria in the last three years. As a result, almost all the secondary schools in the area are closed down. In the South – South, the activities of the Niger Delta militants and kidnappers is on the increase. Principals and teachers form victims of this vicious attack and evil conspiracies against fellow human beings.

For principals to have a list of essential teaching skills and necessary experiences is not enough. Instructional leaders are expected to live by example and be models to their followers in the classroom management so that they can evaluate their subjects without prejudice.

Incessant changes in government policies and curriculum overloading do not augur well for principals to provide effective leadership roles. Frequent changes in government policies have really affected the administration of grant-aided secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. Furthermore, principals are change agents. Gradual change is not well understood even by experts talk less of principals who have little training to prepare for the changes. If the school curriculum is overloaded, some aspects will be implemented while some will suffer attention or ignored by the teachers.

Often time principals receive embarrassment from parents, because parents want safe school environment for their children, proper up bringing to complement their efforts, good health habits to mention but a few. Complains may arise when parents feel that one or more of these essential elements is missing. If the principal fails to resolve the issue, the parents may report to the school board, and if not satisfied he will report to a law court for redress. The principal is at the receiving end of all the consequences.

Principals of grant-aided secondary schools are starved of funds, this is evidence because in many states such as Kogi, Benue, Kwara and Niger, government has stopped annual subventions. Principals are left at the mercy of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) that is always inadequate for school programmes. This problem has led to inadequate infrastructural materials and provision of hostel facilities like toiletry and sanitary facilities.

Grant-aided secondary schools are managed by government in partnership with the proprietors who established the schools before government gave them grant-aid status. The proprietors exercise some measures of control on the school by recommending people for the post of principal, serve as Chairman, Board of Governors, and control of PTA funds. There is a wise

saying “He who calls the piper dictates the tune” often times when they place demand on the principal and he refuses, they will ask for his removal which will negate his leadership roles. In view of the challenges ahead of the principals the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations

Given the roles of the principal as a panacea to effective administration of grant-aided secondary schools in Kogi State, the principal should plan well and also review his plan from time to time in order to meet the test of the time. He should readily involve his subordinates in planning since they work together as a team to achieve the goals and the objectives of the school.

Grant-aided secondary schools should be adequately funded by government. Principals need money to implement government policies and programmes and also to meet up administrative running cost of their schools.

Principals and School Boards should ensure that it is only competent personnel that are employed to serve in grant-aided secondary schools. If half baked teachers are employed for any reason they may not have the knowledge or the needed experience to prosecute government policies.

Government policies should be allowed for a fairly long time before advocating for changes. Policy makers must be aware that it takes a lot of time and efforts to convince people to accept new changes and ideals. For diversification of education to succeed, changes should not be too frequent.

Proprietors of grant-aided secondary schools should not interfere in the leadership roles of principals because they (principals) are considered to be competent in handling their issues. Although they have some measure of control on the school, they should equally realize that principals are accountable to the government and not to individuals.

The school environment should be secured and safe for principals and their workers. Police men should be deployed to schools to counter any attack from terrorists. Perimeter fencing of grant-aided secondary schools should be encouraged. Also movement of strange persons around the school premise must be checked to obviate any breach of peace.

Conclusion

Professionalism leadership roles and management skills are crucial for enhancing effectiveness of principals in grant-aided secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. For principals to effectively manage the diversification of education, they must bring to bear the needed leadership

roles such as planning, teachers' evaluation, school business administration, personnel administration to mention a few.

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