TEAM BUILDING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The concern of this study is to examine team building and administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Rivers State. The concept of team management was extensively reviewed the concept of team and its importance articulated. Team work need to be nurtured and developed if they are to be effective vehicles or achieving educational objects. The principal restrictive and reclusive the system for effective collaboration of stakeholders in the realization of coveted educational goals. To ensure that individuals in the team work together, the principal ensures that the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) that are associated to members are effectively addressed. The challenges to the practice of team-based management and ways to implement it in secondary schools were also highlighted. In conclusion, team work has the potential to become a powerful tool in resolving the issues of day-to-day administration of the secondary education as the various stakeholder work hand-in-glove to achieve a common educational objectives. It was suggested among others that responsibilities giving to the subordinates (teachers) by the principals should have a common rate authority so as to command the respect of their peers.*
Keywords: Team Building, Administrative Effectiveness, Delegation of Authority.

INTRODUCTION

Education institutions such as secondary schools and universities are saddled with the onerous tasks of preparing the youth for useful living in all its ramifications through appropriate arrangement and implementation of the school curriculum. The business of managing such a curriculum has never been curriculum. The business of managing such a curriculum has never been a one-man affair.

The administration of the secondary school is on the shoulder of the principal, the principal is the custodian and leader of the teaching and learning activities in the school must collaborate with other system.

As the controller of the curricular and extracurricular activities in the school system, the principal coordinate the human, material, physical and liquid resources through the functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the activities of subordinates for the purpose of achieving the desired educational goals. Since the principal cannot do it all alone, team work is required. He must work with the people around him to achieve the coveted educational goals.

It takes collaborative efforts of the principal teachers and non-teaching staff to achieve school goals. Management is all about getting things done with and through others.

However, developing such a team and maintaining it is a major challenge to school management and success rate is not uniform across schools or departments.

Even though the organizational structure of the institutions depicts work relationships and delegation, it is not always easy or possible in a school or any formal organization that every member would operate though that framework. Some individuals may feel they prefer to work alone; others stray out of the group occasionally creating problems for effectiveness of the school work teams therefore need to be nurtured and developed if they are to be effective vehicles for achieving education goals. In that case working through a good team, is more likely to make the principal's job easier.

Further given the continuing growth of the Nigerian educational system as well as the expansion of services, programmes and managerial complexity, (Denga, 2002), another critical challenge facing principal in the administration of secondary school today seems to be that of restructuring and reculturing. Restructuring deals with changes in the formal structure of the school system in terms of organization, roles etc., reculturing on the other hand, is concerned with changing the values, norms, incentives, skills and relationships in the school to promote a different way of working together. Reculturing enhances administrative functioning, teaching and learning in educational institutions (Bezzina, 2002).

Consequently, the administration of Restructuring and Reculturing calls for revolutionary changes in the whole culture of philosophical, pedagogical and management techniques towards collegiality and collaboration among educational clientele students, educators, principals and other stake holder and to create such a change and conditions will require an effective management method and leadership to define the way forward.

Bezzina (2002); Buttressed the fact that the strategic plan poses more challenges to educational leaders to strengthen their team management for effective implementation. Therefore team management is imperative in the administration of educational institution.

However, building such a team requires knowledge and skills for its formation, workings and maintenance in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Team management is a simple concept, can be adapted to varying structures and is easily implemented and enlarged. It should be cultivated since the decision-making process within this context ensures inclusion and involvement of staff members affected by the decisions as well as an effective top-down and bottom-up line of communication. It also provides a means for continuous progress toward individual and organizational goals (Thompson, 2002).

In team management approach, the principal always stand as the group leader, obviously, this technique cannot operate successfully in a secondary school unless the principal supports the concept and strives to make it work. His or Her position as the legal and accepted head of the school, not in any way diminished by conceiving of him or herself as the leader of a management team. Instead, it should be enhanced and strengthened. David-West and Kaegon (2017) assert that management technique with these qualities would provide ownership of decision making and raise staff members' morale.

The Concept of Team Management

Coleman and Bush (2010: 267) describe a team as "a group of people that can effectively tackle any task which it has been set up to do" according to the scholar a term is not an ordinary group. It connotes more meaning than a group. It even goes beyond committees. Teams are built to undertake identified takes or activities. Being a team member is also in the mind and caries some mental or psychological connotation that plays significant roles in the accomplishment of tasks. A member who is not mentally in the team can hardly cooperate fully with other.

Coleman and Bush (200:267) borrowing from Bell, consider a team as a group of people working together on the basis of shared perception, a common purpose, agreed procedures commitment, cooperation and resolving disagreements openly Further, it is a structure whereby a number of people with different backgrounds, skills and knowledge, drawn from various areas of the organization work together on a specific and defined task. There is generally a team leader or captain. The actual number of team members depends on the team's responsibilities.

Team building thus involves "the process of diagnosing task procedures and patterns of human interaction within a work group" (Mullins, 2000:646).

The need to improve work performance and organizational effectiveness is the fundamental objective of team building. The process will pay attention to:

- work procedures in relation to the objectives; and
- interpersonal relationships including leader-team relationship, identification of barriers to effective teamwork and individual development (Mulliñs, (2000).

Team building is the responsibility of the leader or manager. Team management, therefore, involves building or developing a team and maintaining its performance toward improved organizational effectiveness. Kanter (2001:l97) views the team management concept as "a way of performing tasks that spreads opportunity and power." It is a participatory management using various ways workers in decisions affecting theft work.

Thompson (2002) identifies five possible teams in a school system:

1. Senior management teams - aims and policy;
2. Middle management teams - heads of departments, head of year;
3. Staff teams-within departments or pastoral units:
4. Project teams - ad hoc groups established to achieve short-term goals: and
5. Interdisciplinary teams - comprise members from various departments to deal with long-term issues.

Importance of Team Management

The concept of team management allows for a collaborative effort that is considered a vital ingredient for the effective administration of educational institutions (Obanya, 2002). Collaborative effort gives administrators, educators and other stakeholders the opportunity to deal with complex educational issues as a group. While the Head or Chief Executive of the institution has the responsibility and authority hi manage the school through team management, other school administrators have the chance to participate in setting administrative policies and translating these policies into administrative strategies. It is

important to note that administrative policies are different from the Federal/State Board of Education policies. Administrative policies are goals that the management deem essential in accomplishing the mission of the school system which are reflected in the national policy. Administrative goals are translated into procedures - the plan for attaining those goals. These strategies are utilized by the administrators charged with managing a delegated function. They are implemented through the establishment of processes and procedures as they work with their staff in the daily operations of the school system (Rebore, 2004).

For team members to function effectively, it is incumbent upon the team to state clearly the objectives and the role of each member of the team. Team members must learn to cope with conflict, effectively use paraphrasing, give and receive feedback, continually check the perceptions of others and use a two-way communication pattern efficiently. It is worth mentioning at this juncture that team management is not a panacea for all management problems. However, if it is adequately planned and implemented, it will lead to improved institutional effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

The study is supported on Management objective (MBO) developed by Peter Drucker in 1964. This Motiva concept is defined as a process thereby super ordinates and subordinates, administrators or teachers define jointly their common goals and major areas of responsibility in terms of expected outcome and use these measures to assess each member's .contribution. MBO sees an organization such as the school, as a social system which has subsystems within it.

This implies that the head of an educational institution must realize that his institution is a system made up of sub-systems, each of which must make definite contributions to the attainment of the overall goals of the school. To achieve expected results, the head of the institution should endeavor to involve staff members in setting up objectives and final end-behaviors for the institution. This is because, as these are mutually agreed upon, the staff members or subordinates will be more dedicated, willing and committed to attain them to the best of their abilities.

In other words, the staff members will be motivated to work. Hence, to get subordinates acquainted with all the information regarding the school programme, a good communication system is very essential. Therefore, MBO should be purposefully organized and properly applied so that people in the organizational set up would be motivated to work to ensure the achievement of desired results.

Team-based Management Practice in Secondary Schools

The concept of team management allows for a collaborative effort that is considered a vital ingredient for the effective administration of educational institutions (Obanya, 2002). A collaborative effort gives administrators, educators and other stakeholders the opportunity to deal with complex educational issues as a group. While the Head or Chief Executive of the institution has the responsibility and authority to manage the school through team management, other school administrators have the chance to participate in setting administrative policies and translating these policies into administrative strategies.

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essential in accomplishing the mission of the school system which are reflected in the national policy. Administrative goals are translated into procedures-the plan for attaining those goals.

These strategies are utilized by the administrators charged with managing a delegated function. Three key principals guide delegation of authority-parity of responsibility and authority, absoluteness of accountability and the principal of unity of command. They are implemented through the daily operations of the school system for team members to function effectively. It is incumbent upon the team to state clearly the objective and role of each member of the team. Team members must learn to cope with conflict, effectively use paraphrasing give and receive feedback, continually check the perceptions others and use a two-way communication pattern efficiently. It is worth mentioning at this juncture that management is not a panacea for all management problems. However, if it is adequately planned and implemented, it will lead to improved institution effectiveness.

The idea of team management as related to educational institutions management could be traced to various management principles. The basic principles of McGregor's theory (1960) in Nwankwo (2014) are crucial to the introduction of a team. Confidence must be exhibited in the ability, integrity, creativity and motivation of those to whom team goals are committed.

Beer and Spector (2003) opine that "management leans on a weak crutch if it relies too much authority today". Given the current complex social and political situation in schools, the administration of an educational institution is likely to be weakened if the leadership relies solely on authority.

Joseph and Winston (2005) opine that effective participation which is a vital necessity in team management need to be strictly adhered for the attainment of stated organizational goals. This entails a formal method providing an opportunity for every member of the institution to contribute brains and ingenuity as well as physical effort to the improvement of organizational effectiveness.

Various types of approaches May be utilized to implement team management in secondary schools. According to Kremer (2001:35), after a strong theoretical and philosophical foundation for team management has been established, the basic processes would include:

❖ Dialoguing with staff and determining who will be included on the management team.
❖ Determining long-and short-range goals for the organization.
❖ Identifying task areas as a basis for designing job descriptions and setting individual goals.
❖ Holding formal meeting of the team on a regular basis.
❖ Planning for periodic reassessment of progress toward stated individual and organizational goals.

The administrative team membership may differ from one institution to another. For example, in a university, a team consists of the vice-chancellor and the principal officers. In a secondary school, membership may comprise the principal, vice principals, bursar, director of guidance and counseling department, and other special project coordinators. Usually, every person who manages other members of staff for at least o alt of his/her working period will be included as a member of the team. The team management approach is also applicable to each level a school system

Strengths and Weaknesses of Team-Based Management in Secondary School

The strengths of this team management approach to administrative personnel, local schools, universities and the community served in many areas.

Some of art that team approaches include:

❖ Permit members to expand their horizons by participating in decision- making process in all areas of the total school environment, thereby enhancing theft professional development;

❖ Generate a feeling of ownership and a high level of commitment as people have invested in the success of the decision;

❖ Gives a feeling of involvement in working toward common goal;

❖ Improve communication and a higher degree of trust;

❖ Provides the wide consensus that a large system need in making decisions; and

❖ Builds up trust and staff morals, and promotes team work. (Denga, 2002:192)

Some Weaknesses of Team Management:

❖ Requires more time;

❖ Enables some administrators to escape individual responsibility;

❖ Leads people to expect consensus in all decision; and

❖ May result 'in more outspoken team members dominating the process.

Challenges to the Practice of Team Based Management in Secondary

Despite the numerous models for effective management there are some obstacles hindering the smooth operation of effective team management as identified by scholars and business leaders around the world.

The first problem according to Thompson (2002) is that team requires the right environment to flourish. Many companies forget this point by putting people in teams without changing anything else. As earlier noted, team requires appropriate rewards; communication system, team leadership and other conditions to improve team work management could result in higher cost than benefits for the overall organization.

The scholar further stated that team work management requires alternation of organization structure, workers roles and skills. Therefore the greatest obstacle is the resistance to change, which will occur in managing the team. Team management process requires improved technology, functional social infrastructure, organization resources, training techniques and other tools for effective team management. These may be lacking in organization especially organizations in less developed countries.

Zand (2002) also identified lack of top managerial commitment, inefficient and ineffective communication, inadequate feedback mechanism and lack of effective leadership in organization as other obstacles militating against effective team management.

The diversity of perspectives, skills, expertise, opinions and status has to be integrated which can lead to dissent disagreement or conflict among team members. Although conflict in itself is presumed to help decision quality, it can be detrimental, especially, if group members get, involved in dispute which are taken personally.

Team members are confronted with uncertainty and ambiguity, which can be source of stress. In turn, stress and autocratic leadership in a highly cohesive group that feels invaluable can provide antecedents for "group think" (i.e the defective decision making) the group

members favour unanimity above the realistic assessment of alternatives, thus suffering momentarily from a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment.

Principals referred to the heavy demands on their time by others, including parents, staff; students, board members and community organizations. A further difficulty was act that these individual and groups competed with each other, not just because they vied for the principal's time and attention, but because they came from differing perspective and had different motivations consequently; the principal faced the challenge of reconciling conflicting sets of goals to satisfy a range of stakeholders.

In summary, these negative factors have been categorized as:

a. The scope of the job - its sheer size and complexity (with curriculum leadership being one facet among many others that demand attention, financial and property management often taking precedence over attention to curriculum);

b. The nature of the job - many interruptions and crisis demands (with paperwork; conflict management, resource juggling and personal choices to engage in hands-on activities creating a workload that is difficult to time-manage), and

c. The expectations of others - urgent and often conflicting needs of stakeholders to be met (with high accountability demands from central agencies and the expectations of parents, students and staff that the principal will be available and effective in resolving their problems, adding to the complexity of the deflecting attention from the curriculum leadership role).

Ways to Implement Team-Based Management Practice in Secondary Schools

There is a growing understanding of the conditions necessary for effective team work, and the characteristics for effective team functioning. These serve as important guidelines for principals who want to take seriously the sobering caution "that it is easy to form so-called teams and then claim that the school is structured 'collaboratively', but unless there are major shifts in thinking...little real change will result" (Walker, 2010:38-39).

These major shifts' involved the development of conditions necessary for teamwork, which may broadly be described as two-fold: structural and cultural. By 'structural' is meant the logistical arrangements and decision that need to be made to accommodate teamwork in a school 'cultural' refers - to the culture and climate of a school, the less visible norms and values that inform practice, and the resultant ethos that prevails. The argument is that teamwork needs favourable conditions of both a structural and cultural nature to flourish.

Structural Support

Schools are by nature highly structural organizations, with (usually) clear lines of hierarchy and accountability (Bush, 2003 45). This feature is systematically linked to the self-evident reality that schools are complex organizations, peopled by complex individuals, often drawn from a range of cultures, all working towards the goal of effective teaching and learning. It would simply be impossible for schools to function without clear procedures, firm guidelines, and clear lines of accountability. A hierarchically rigid organizational structure will clearly work against important attributes of team management, which need to be flexible to accommodate team work. Such as flexibility, creativity and risk-taking (Stott & Walker, 1999:53-56).

This implies that organizational structure needs to accommodate teamwork. Walker (2010:39) argues that schools need to nurture "more organic organizational patterns". Organic

here means patterns that are dynamic growing in response to needs and projects, as opposed to patterns previously determined and static. The term should, we think, refer not only to the formation and dissolution of teams (as in ad hoc project committees) but also to ways in which groups function.

An organic which all teams members feel free to participate, and conversation is shaped by interest and participation rather than rigid procedure. A further structural condition is sort nothing new flourishes without support and teams are no different - Support here refers to more than but includes-logistic and administrative support. Clearly teamwork needs an investment of time, space, even money less obviously, teams need to have free and easy access to information they may need to tackle problems. But what teamwork needs from the organization as a whole is clarity concerning their roles and structures, as well as how each team links with other teams and the organization as a whole.

Cultural Support

The principle should give a sense of belonging to every member of the team for them to function effectively for the perform of achieving administrative Cohesion is widely acknowledged as a key characteristic of effective teams.

According to Walker (2010) effectiveness geared towards the behavioural pattern of the leader refers to the extent to which team members 'cohere', feel that they belong and are happy to work together. It also refers to the extent to which team members agree on and identify with the work at hand, and clearly links with structural support in the sense that a team which knows its role in the organization structure as a whole is more likely to feel a sense of belonging at and purpose. Joseph and Winson (2005) assert that though, cohesion is about relationships, and this fact raises issues of attitudes and leadership, among the key values that underpins to participate including "interpersonal attraction, task commitment, and group pride".

These key values point to the importance of interpersonal, social relationships m teams, and also highlight the role of the team leader. This is an element easily overlooked in teamwork, but it would be naive to imagine that teams will simply continue to function in the absence of leadership. As Nwankwo (2014:59) put it: "even a team has a dominant person who can be called a leader who may well play a central role in determining group performance".

Strategies for Involvement of School Administrators and Teachers in Team-Based Management Practice in Secondary Schools

In team management four of the most crucial elements are the process of managing by collaborative practice are leadership, communication, decision making, and the exercise of shared power and authority (Smith and Piele 2012).

None of these strategies is considered to be more important than the other, but taken as a whole; they form the most significant functions within team management practices. And for the purpose of this study, each of these is discussed briefly below.

Leadership

There must be a leader working hand-in-glove with the subordinates to achieve the predetermined educational goals is a vital part of team management. It is wrong to think that of this approach is that it brings leaders and subordinates together in a forum of openness and

trust and seeks to elicit Ideas froth other employees. The nature of management team requires competency and trust among all the members of the group, especially the leadership. These involved, team management must display qualities of professional perspective, the ability to coordinate functionally and the skill to motivate others. Being a head of department is quite different from being a team leader.

The role of the latter includes building and maintaining the team, achieving the task and developing the individual. The three roles are said to be linked and are interdependent. The leaders in part of the team but at the same time must step out of the team to assess and fine-tune its performance.

The practice of teaming gives administrators the opportunity to keep up with the demands of daily routine, to know more about the intricacies of the school management systems and to make well-informed decisions based on the goal of the organization. The team leader's commitment to the organization and its goals is strengthened by the team interaction as well as his or her overall leadership abilities and communication skills.

Communication

Abraham (2003) and Nwankwo (2014) to team management: They argue that the, single most important ingredient to successful team management is a flow of information to and from administrators and other management employees. Open communication contributes to more openness to change. It also influences the school relationship with the community.

Decision-Making

Team players must participate in the decision-making process in the system. This affords them the opportunity to contribute their quota for the betterment of the system leading to the achievement of predetermined educational goals. These factors have brought about community demands for participation in the decision-making process in the school system. Teaming then in like bridge building in that it bring everyone together to-work for better education. However, Okorom (2001) argued that simply having a voice in decision-making is meaningless unless each team member perceives the involvement as genuine and important.

Shared Power and Authority

Team work paves the way for shared power and authority, like Smith and Piele (2012), some management experts viewed team management as an invitation to trouble. They claim that teaming creates more problem than it solves and that some administrative officers do not really want to share power and authority; these officers agree to use team management practices only to prevent negotiations and to put off the union movement.

However, scholars like Smith and Piele (2012) take a more favourable position towards team management arguing that officers who share power will be seen as effective leaders by their staff and by other groups within the school organization. In addition, school administrators need to realize that power is finite. Additional power can often be gained by giving a certain amount of clout to others.

The key to the success of team management is involvement, which is, input. Team management concept employs a high degree of involvement among the people who will either implement or be influenced by management decisions. In short, the use of team approach is a way to seek more inputs and more involvement for problem solving in a changing environment

with a more educated and sophisticated workforce. The distinction between ordinary school management and team management lies in emphasis and scope.

According to the scholars, team management:

❖   Involves the entire school system's operation.
❖   Is a long-term, continuous undertaking and not a onetime attempt;
❖   Is concerned with developing a positive orgtzat4al climate and job satisfaction.
❖   is aimed at improving effectiveness of decisions through quality and acceptance;
❖   Involves a commitment to change from the top to the bottom;
❖   Is aimed at developing organizational competence and open communication; and
❖   Involves establishing collaborative relationship and trust. (p. 139)

CONCLUSION

The management complexities and increased number of demands placed by educational administrators provide a great evidence that effective management technique is imperative and a prerequisite to the success of the administration of Nigerian educational institutions especially the secondary schools, team management has the potential to become a powerful tool in resolving the issues of day-to-day administration of educational institutions, if it is adequately planned and implemented.

Also team management practice in secondary school administration goes beyond mere organizing of work force or role playing but managing an organization through collaborative efforts. Team building is a conscious effort; it is gradual and takes time. However, its benefits are enormous for the leader, subordinates and the organization. It is supportive and complementary.

Finally, in the implementation process, it is vital that the participants be patient in theft expectations to see positive results as time will be needed for training in team skills and building mutual trust and openness among team members. Care has to be taken to the full advantage of its strengths and guide against its weakness in secondary school administration in Rivers State Nigeria.

Suggestions

1.   Principals should encourage team work in the administration of the school system so as to easily achieve the desired educational goals.
2.   Teachers should be effectively involved in the decision making process that concerns them for effective implementation of educational policy.
3.   The principle of delegation of authority should be encouraged in the school by principals so as to teachers as sense of belonging in the administration of the school system. Responsibilities giving to the teachers must have a commensurate authority so to command the respect of their peers.
4.   Team members should answer to one and only one boss at a time in order to maintain the chain of command in the school system.
5.   Team members should learn to cope with conflicts using effectively communication which is the live-wire of every organization including the education industry.

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