

MANAGING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

A BOOK IN HONOUR OF PROF. O. E. M. FAGBAMIYE

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The Principal as a Leader in the School Organisation

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Introduction

Anyone occupying a managerial position such as that of a school principal performs basic functions such as planning, organising, controlling, directing, motivating men towards goal achievement. While performing these functions, the principal must take decisions in establishing objectives and controlling the education towards the intended goals. Planning function that is basic and it is more or less a foundation of any organization and so when it is accurately done, the organisation achieves its goals. Therefore, the principal must devote substantial time to this function because other functions rotate around it.

The school must be organised so that activities can be carried out smoothly. For example, the school must be divided into manageable span of control such as classes with reasonable student-teacher ratio such as 40 students, to a teacher. School calendar must be drawn out. Lesson and examination time -tables must be drawn appropriately. Students and staff should -grouped homogeneously in order to execute programmes effective!}. Decision-making is also the duty of the principal. He makes decision himself and the group he leads. The quality of the principal's decision one of the yardsticks of measuring his effectiveness and the value o: school.

Qualities of a Leader

Leadership can be regarded as an input into the organisation intended to influence the behaviours of the members in order to attain the organizational objectives through initiating, motivating, directing and co-ordinating the functions of other members of the group. In order for a principal (who is regarded as a leader in the school) to play his role effectively, he must possess such qualities as dependability, maturity, drive, emotional stability. decisiveness, high degree of personal integrity, initiative, scholarship and

intelligence. When employers of labour such as the Ministry of Education and Teaching Service Commission are employing people to occupy the position of principalship, they should look for the above-mentioned qualities at selection interview.

The Principal and Planning Process in Schools

Planning, according to Oyediji (1998), is the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future, which is directed towards some goals. In order to do this effectively, the principal must be able to forecast accurately, he must have foresight and be able to assess the present situation and project into future possibilities. The principal must have clear vision, mission and Objectives in mind and be able to identify Strategic Operating Units (SOU).

The principal must be involved in planning at all levels e.g. sections, departments and the school levels. He is the chief executive and accounting officer of his school; therefore he is responsible for whatever goes on in the school and this is why he should be a major player in the planning process. Since planning deals with identifying the objectives of the school and since objective is like the foundation of the school he should devote much of his time to planning. Planning is the most important of the functions that a principal performs because it can make or mar the school organization.

The Principal and School Organisation

The school must be organised if the objectives of education are to be achieved. The principal must group people into units and sub-units so also the activities. He must formulate a single organisational structure called organisational chart, which will help to identify responsibility and line communication. He should learn to delegate authority since he cannot perform every duty. But in doing so, he should remember that responsibility resides in him and cannot be delegated. He should be able to establish the appropriate procedures for accomplishing the work. He should see that his sub-principals perform their duties. The principal is the chief organiser of his school and he should see that things move according to plan.

The Principal and Decision-making Process

A decision is a conscious choice of one from among two or more alternatives to achieve a goal. Decision-making is thus a process of identifying alternatives and choosing one

of the alternatives to solve a problem or address an opportunity.

Decision-making starts with the initial recognition of a problem or an issue that is worthwhile making decision about, through the collection of data, the identification of the real situation, the development of alternatives and the evaluation to the final choice that is implemented and controlled. From the context of a manager's view. Thierauf (1987, p. 117) defines decision-making process as:

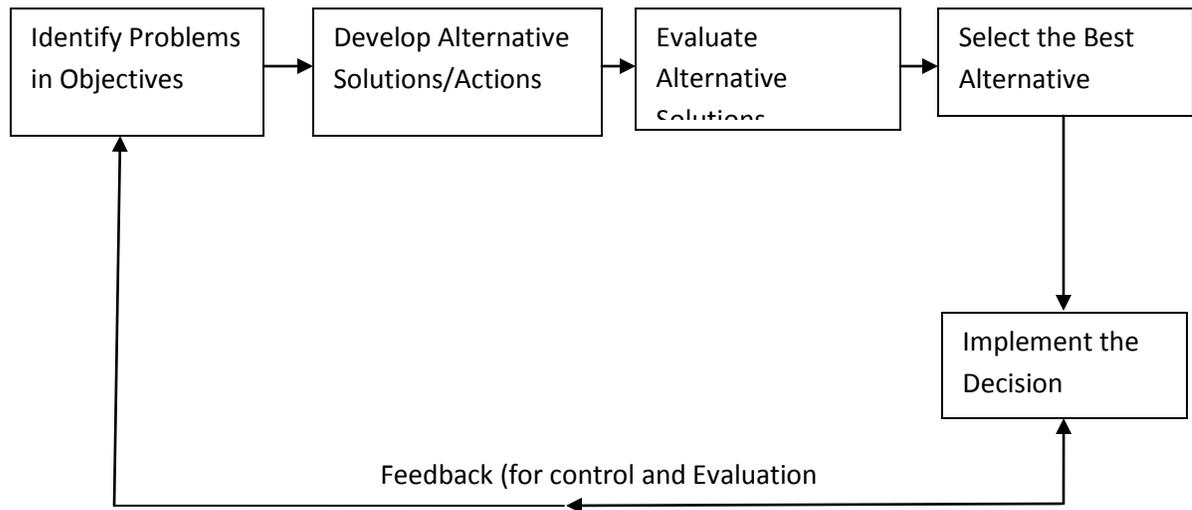
a series of steps that start with an analysis of the information and ultimately culminate in a resolution, a selection from the several available alternatives and verification of this selected alternative (now and at some time in the future) to solve the problem under study.

Thus, as enunciated by Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancerich (1995), the sequence of events that leads to effective decisions include:

1. Problem identification: the problem to be solved is properly identified and clearly stated. This requires correct information; otherwise the decisions made are directed towards solving the wrong problem.
2. Developing alternatives: once the problem is diagnosed and defined, feasible alternatives (actually potential solutions) to the problem should be developed. The potential consequences of each alternative should also be considered.
3. Evaluating alternatives: the developed alternatives are compared and evaluated, towards the set objectives.
4. Choosing an alternative: the best alternative is chosen, based on the gathered and analysed data and guided by the previously established goals and objectives.
5. Implementing the decision: any decision is little more than an abstraction if it is not implemented. Implementation often includes the allocation of funds and other resources.

Developing a feedback mechanism: after implementation, results must be monitored and evaluated, using the built-in information. This sequence of events in organisational decision-making is represented in Figure 1.

Decision-making model



Source: Adapted from Adeleke. A. (2000). *Management concepts and applications*. Lagos: Concept Publications, p. 63.

According to Campbell, Corbally and Nystrand (1983), there are at least four elements necessary for effective decision-making. These elements are sense of purpose (specific objectives to be achieved), existence of a need for decision in the form of an identified problem constituting a barrier to organisational goal attainment, the review of alternatives and selection of a course of action. The selection process can be made through voting, consensus or simply by a responsible principal alone. Organizational and personal considerations are also taken into account in arriving at the best alternative. Among the factors that affect choice are personal style, values, beliefs and skills; available resources (people, materials and funds) and timing. To arrive at effective decisions, therefore, the school principal should consider these elements and sequentially follow the decision-making steps. Conducive environment in terms of the right time, place level of organisation, provision of required resources and effective communication channels and media, should be ensured. Also important is the involvement of those directly affected by an action in the process of making the decision. This participatory decision-making broadens support and acceptance of the decision and ensures easier coordination and communication necessary for its effective implementation.

Decisions taken by the school principal are varied. These decisions could be categorized into strategic, operating and administrative (Cole. 1996).

Strategic decisions are the basic long-term decisions on the goals, objectives and policy statements of the school. Operating decisions are short-term decisions on carrying out school programmes while administrative decisions arise from both strategic and operational problems of the school. Decisions could be programmed or non-programmed. Programmed decisions are routine and repetitive and are capable of being worked out by a computer. For example, computerization of students' examination results. Non-programmed decisions are those that occur so infrequently and are unique, with no established procedures for handling them. This would be the case for all strategic decisions.

According to Griffith (Peretomode. 1996). decisions could also be classified into intermediary (from a superior officer such as directive from Ministry of Education), appellate (from the principal to the Ministry of Education on how an issue should be handled/addressed) and creative decisions arising from any point in the hierarchy. The school principal should be able to distinguish among these various categories of decisions and be proficient in making them.

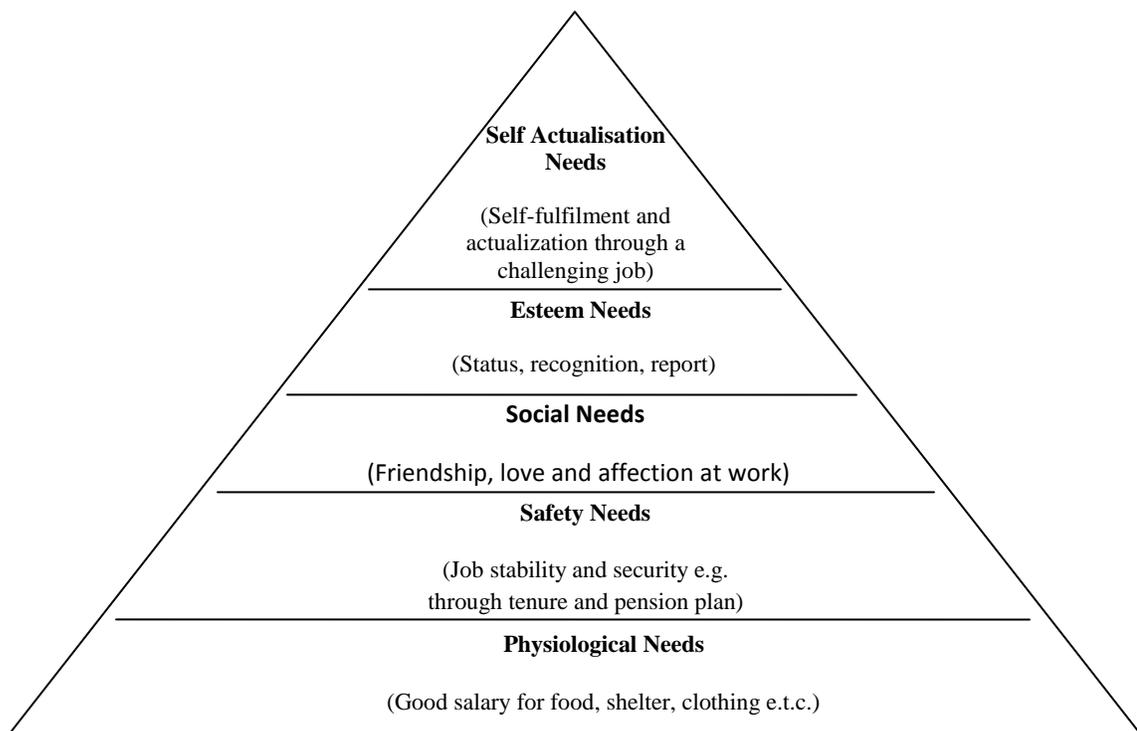
Motivation

Every individual within the school organization requires an effort or force that energises him to perform the expected roles towards goal attainment. This force is called motivation. Motivation is thus the drive or intrinsic force within an individual that makes him willing to contribute action towards the attainment of organisational goals. It refers to the motives or unsatisfied needs of an individual that stimulate him to put up a particular behavior directed at performing certain tasks towards the desired goals. It then becomes imperative for the school principal to understand the theory of human needs as a basis for motivating the behaviours of his staff and students.

Maslow (1954) postulated that human behaviours were motivated by the necessity to satisfy certain needs. These needs were categorized into five levels, namely: the physiological, safety. Social, esteem and self actualisation needs. The physiological needs are basic to physical survival and include clothing, food, shelter and

other physical/ welfare needs. Safety needs involve protection against danger, threat and deprivation, security of lives and property. Social needs relate to the needs for belongingness, association with, and acceptance by colleagues, giving and receiving friendship and love. Esteem needs include respect and recognition from others and feelings of achievement and self-confidence. Self-actualisation needs involve feeling of self-fulfilment and ultimate realisation of one's life potentials and goals.

Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Adapted from Adeleke. A. (2001). *Management Concepts and Applications*. Lagos: Concept Publications, p.113.

Another important theory of motivation is Herzberg's two-factor theory. This theory identified two classes of factors, namely: motivation and hygiene factors. Motivation factors stem from the job itself and relate to Usability to achieve and advance psychologically. Hygiene factors, which involve maintenance needs such as working environment, compensation and comfort, function as dissatisfiers when inadequate but do not in themselves motivate.

The School Principal and Motivation

The principal as the leader and manager of the school needs to employ some measures to motivate his staff and students in order to achieve the set goals. One of such measures is to create an enabling environment for job and academic performance respectively, within the school. This could be done through providing for staff needs within his power such as recognition and respect for staff, assigning compatible people to work together and giving challenging jobs to staff accompanied by basic facilities to aid performance.

Training is needed to increase an individual's ability to perform and contribute to organisational goal attainment. The school principal should encourage his staff (especially teachers) to develop their capabilities towards personal and organisational goal fulfilment. Staff development activities should include organising seminars and workshops, encouraging staff to join relevant professional associations, and empowering and releasing staff on relevant further studies.

The principal needs to be proficient in participative style of management by consulting and allowing workers to take part in making decisions on issues that affect them. In this way, the school organisation would benefit immensely from the worker's knowledge and skills. In addition, the need-of the individuals and the overall needs of the organisation would be jointly identified and decided upon for efficient and effective satisfaction, resultant satisfaction of these needs would make the staff more committed to school programmes and would facilitate prompt achievement of school objectives.

The students should not be left out in the scheme of motivation. The principal should provide for adequate classrooms, laboratories, hostel accommodation and sport facilities. Day and night guards should be employed to safeguard the lives and property of students. Social clubs could be encouraged and older students should show affection to the younger ones. The principal should recognise achievement of the students by awarding prizes and calling honour rolls where necessary and above all, the students should be given challenging work by the teachers.

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