CHALLENGES IN THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the challenges in the use and management of existing knowledge in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting 184 principals used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire named index of secondary school leadership knowledge management questionnaire (ISSLMQ) that was completed by the respondents. The questionnaire was structured by the researcher and validated by educational management specialists. The findings revealed that principals encounter challenges in the use and management of existing knowledge in the management of schools. It was also revealed that there are no differences in the challenges encountered by male and female principals in the use of KM. The implication of the findings is that principals must overcome these challenges to realize effective school leadership. The study recommends that school principals should be trained on the use and management of KM for decision making and that knowledge management clubs be formed by teachers and principals as a way to tap existing knowledge that will be used for decision making in the future.

Keywords: Challenges, Knowledge management, Secondary school management, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

School is a factory with the school head (principal) as the manager who directs the day-to-day activities of both the students and staff which involves decision making, planning, organizing, co-ordination and evaluating school activities for goal attainment. These roles require not just formal education of the school head but his experience, skills and experience of others within the school and or educational system to succeed. In light of this, it is important that every school head should have some skills on which his success and performance can be based. These skills in view of Kants (1958) in Peretomode (2008,p.4) are technical, human and conceptual skills. Facilitators of these skills are education, experience and learning from senior officers. Tapping from the experience of others for effective management and goal attainment is the main focus of the use of knowledge management.

Knowledge is experience acquired over years and without sharing same, it is difficult to project into peoples mind to grasp what is in it. To tap into someone else experience, knowledge of knowledge management on how to gather and manage staff experience for effective manage purpose is required on the part of the leader. In line with the above contribution Bajari (2000), assets that knowledge management (KM) is the practice of making knowledge instantaneously available in a useable format and using it. Therefore, effective school management in this era of technology advancement requires that school managers know how to use and manage knowledge around them to their advantage and goal attainment.

Inspite of the benefits in the use of Km in effective management, there are challenges that the manager must know how to overcome as to make progress in his administrative involvements. In this regard, Reinhardt, Bornermann, Pawlowsky and Schneider (2003), said that there remain a challenge of KM for the future which results in both theoretical and conceptual studies as well as practice and application. Dierkes, Antal, child and Nonaka (2003) saw these challenges as; Technology (the challenge of building a culture that value face-to-face human relationships, reflection, and sharing of knowledge). Individual (the challenge of changing the mindset of the workers or the ability to integrate the knowledge acquired). Culture (development of a culture that embraces learning, sharing, changing, and improving all through collective intelligence and knowledge of people). Flexibility and change (manager's challenge on his ability to embrace, grow, and attend to the human dimension of knowledge management). Shared leadership (challenges manager's encounter in ensuring that knowledge

workers are given a voice). Building blocks (challenges of maintaining the dynamic nature of the interrelationship of free access of knowledge management). Desire and motivation (manager's willingness to motivate those who are willing to share their knowledge or desire for the organization to initiate knowledge sharing).

Although major challenges to school management in the use of knowledge management is how to convert what is already known into useful knowledge, how in a continuous bases update the knowledge base such that it remains current, accessible, and useable. Yet review of literature on school management seem not to reveal that school managers use existing knowledge in the school for decision making, what these challenges are and how these challenges were handled. Therefore, it is the onus of this study to investigate into the challenges in the use of KM in effective secondary school management.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

 School managers are made for the purpose of effective management of school resources (human and materials) for educational goal attainment. It is therefore the responsibility of the school managers in this era of modern management techniques and technology to tackle challenges associated with these modern management techniques. This is so because, it has been identified among other factors that school managers who are ill equipped in the application of new useful management techniques as well as has the ability to overcome these challenges as a contributory factor to the mis-management of school resources, unattainement of educational goals, and underdevelopment of the education system. The study becomes imperative as a measure to proffer lasting solution to this education problem. Elements of the problem board on the challenges in the use of knowledge management and its impact on effective school management.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do challenges in the use of knowledge management affect decision making in the effective school management?
2. How do challenges in the management of existing knowledge impact on your decision making?

HYPOTHESES

HO_1:There is no significant different on the challenges encountered by male and female principals in the use of knowledge management.

METHODOLOGY

The design for the study was the descriptive survey method and the population comprised 247 principals in secondary schools in Rivers State. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to draw 168 principals used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire tagged index of Secondary School Leadership Knowledge Management Questionnaire (ISSLMQ) which had 15 items that were validated by experts in Educational Management and whose reliability coefficient stood at 0.80. Mean was used to answer the research question and Z-test statistics was used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

RESULTS

Mean weightings of the responses gathered from the questionnaire were computed, interpreted and presented in tables.

Research Question 1.　　　　How do challenges in the use of knowledge management affect your decision making in effective school management?

Result 1. Challenges in the use of knowledge management.

SN	Assessed Variables	Responses		
		Man	S.D	Remarks
1	Building a culture that value face-to-face human relationship in decision making	2.5	0.2	Positive
2	Changing the minds of workers to integrate their acquired knowledge in decision making	2.7	0.3	Positive
3	Develop a culture that embraces learning, sharing, changing, and improvement through a collective intelligence and knowledge on decision making	2.6	0.2	Positive
4	Ability to embrace, grow and attend to human dimension of knowledge workers to share their experience on decision making.	2.6	0.3	Positive
5	Allow voice of knowledge workers to share their experience on decision making	2.6	0.3	Positive
6	Ability to maintain dynamic interrelationship of free knowledge management.	2.5	0.1	Positive
7	Willingness to motivate workers to share their knowledge	2.5	0.14	Positive
8	Make available knowledge current for workers	2.5	0.14	Positive
9	Allow workers access to available knowledge	2.5	1.7	Positive
10	Make available knowledge useable to workers	2.5	0.14	Positive

Criterion mean 2.5

Table 1 has 10 variables that examined the challenges principals face in the use of knowledge management for effective school management. The mean scores of the variables examined ranged between 2.5 and 2.7 revealing positive responses when compared with the criterion mean of 2.5. It is evident that principals are faced with challenges in the use of knowledge management in effective decision making.

Research Question 2: How do challenges in management of existing knowledge impact on your decision making

Table 2:   challenges in the management of existing knowledge in the school

S/N	Assessed Variables	Man	S.D	Remark
1	Converting existing knowledge into useful knowledge for the future.	2.7	0.3	Positive
2	Update of the knowledge base such that it remains current.	2.6	0.3	Positive
3	Making the knowledge base accessible to staff.	2.5	0.2	Positive
4	Make existing knowledge useable by staff.	2.5	0.1	Positive
5	Create knowledge bank for your school.	2.7	0.3	Positive

Criterion mean 2.5

In table 2, five variables were investigated to assess the challenges of managing existing knowledge in the school by the principals. The mean ranged between 2.5 and 2.7 showing positive response. Judging from the mean and the criterion mean of 2.5, it is evident that principals face challenges in the management of existing knowledge in the schools.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

HO_1:   There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered by   male and female principals in the use of KM.

Table 3: Z-test of difference on the challenge encountered by male and female principals

	N	Mean	SD	Df	Z cal	Z Critical	Level of significance
Male	85	3.3	0.08	164	0.23	2.120	0.5
Female	81	2.5	0.06				

Table 3 revealed that the calculated z-value of 0.23 is less than the table z-value of 2.120 at 164 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. We therefore fail to reject the hypothesis and uphold that there is no significant difference in the challenges encountered by male and female principles in the use of KM in effective school management

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that principals encounter challenges in the use of KM in effective school management. The challenges are in the aspect of how to build a culture that value face to face human relationship in decision making, change the mind of workers to integrate their acquired knowledge in decision making, develop a culture that embraces learning, sharing, changing, and improvement through a collective intelligence and knowledge on decision making, embrace, grow and attend to human dimension of knowledge workers to share their experience on decision making, allow voice of knowledge workers to share their experience on decision making, maintain dynamic interrelationship of knowledge management, wiliness to motivate workers to share their knowledge, make available knowledge current for workers, allow workers access to available knowledge, make available knowledge useable to workers. This revelation is in agreement with the previous contribution of Reinhardt, Bornermann, Pawlowsky and Schneider (2003), that there remains a challenge of KM for the future which resides in both theoretical and conceptual studies as well as in practice and application. The result also corroborates Dierkes, Antal, Child and Nonaka (2003) contributes on the challenges managers face in the use of KM, these challenges are: technology (the challenge of how to build a culture that value face-to-face human relationships, reflection and sharing of knowledge), individual(challenge on how to change the mindset of workers or the ability to integrate knowledge acquired), culture (how to develop the culture that embraces learning, sharing, changing and improving all through collective intelligence and knowledge of people), flexibility and change (managing the ability to embrace, grow and attend to the human dimension of knowledge management), share leadership (challenge to ensure that knowledgeable workers are given a voice), building blocks (challenge on how to maintain dynamic nature of the interrelationship of free access of KM), and desire and motivation (willingness to maintain those who are willing to share their knowledge or desire for organization to initiate knowledge storing).

The study also revealed that to convert existing knowledge into useful knowledge, continuous update of existing knowledge such that it remains current, made accessible, and useable are challenges encountered by principals in managing existing knowledge. These findings is in tandem with the contribution of Dierkes, Antal, Child and Nonaka (2003), that major challenges in the management of KM in an organization are that of converting already existing knowledge into useful knowledge as well as the ability to continuously update the existing knowledge so that it remain current, accessible and usable to every worker.

Also revealed is the challenges uncounted in the use of KM in school management are same for both male and female principals.

The probable reason for these results could be because principals in the school system who use and manage the existing knowledge were use for the study. They were able relate how the use and management of existing knowledge impact on their day to day decision making.

The study has far reaching implication in effective secondary school management for educational good attainment. In that, every school management must be acquainted with the knowledge on how to identify knowledge workers, tap their knowledge and be able to manage the tapped knowledge for every day decision making in the school. Implying that school managers must be able to interact with people and also recognize knowledge workers importance in his task achievement. This is so because, it is only when school managers can manage the existing knowledge in the school properly that there can be effective decision making and proper school management. Against this background, government should seek to appoint school managers (heads) who can get along with other staff, so that their knowledge can be tapped and used in the growth of the school and the educational system in general.

CONCLUSION

Effective school leadership for goal attainment depends on the ability of the manger to manage the school resources adequately. This leadership responsibility has some challenges that the managers must overcome, especially when existing knowledge is used in decision making. The use of Km in decision making in schools, especially when the decision demands a quick and urgent action requires proper knowledge and management of existing knowledge. Therefore, for effective school management for goal attainment the use of KM is very important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made from the study:

i. School heads should be trained on the use and management of knowledge workers.

ii. Knowledge workers in the school should be identified and used in the areas they have knowledge.

iii. School managers should create data banks, form knowledge club for staff members, and use experience shared to update the data banks.

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