

The use of Principal's Efficiency as a tool for Operational Program Execution in Kaduna State Secondary Schools Nigeria: A Pragmatic Examination

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Abstract

Very many researchers are viewing responsibility in discharging official duties as a very essential factor because it rises success and competence in delivering services. The purpose of the study is to investigate how a principal can use his efficiency as a leader to execute policy in secondary schools in Kaduna state. As domestic workers principals are expected to portray the highest assurance in the administration of secondary schools as this will lead to the realization of excellence in educational pursuit. The paper critically pointed out that if secondary education is of good value, precise students will be conceded into tertiary institutions of learning and eventually, experienced graduates will be generated who will work in different aptitudes. This research is limited to Secondary schools and their principals in Kaduna State. The MLQ 5x developed by (Bass & Avolio, 1993) was used as the instrument to measure the Leadership ability of the principal. The population of the study was 400 in which 330 were duly completed and returned with 300 free of problems and fit for analysis. Educated labour force is however competent of implementing government's policies in a more operative and efficient manner. The research employs descriptive research analysis to analyze principals' efficiency in Kaduna State secondary schools. The results showed pleasing principal's efficiency. The researcher therefore suggested that the government should strengthen efforts and provide more suitable means or method including incentive and continual training and re-training of the principals in order to sustain the rhythm as this will guarantee the fulfilment of the desired quality education and then effective application of government policies.

Key words: Secondary School Principals, Efficiency, Policy Implementation, Quality Education,

Introduction

Leaderships of the world are incessantly longing for effectiveness in institutions through accountability. Accountability as part of the principles of good governance, refers to the responsibility on the part of government and its bureaucrats to exonerate their duties in line with the required policies (Adegbite, 2010). This is crucial as governments are always opening plans and agendas for the advantage of the masses. These guidelines are most often applied by the public servants or the officials who are assigned with the authority to achieve the mission of making indispensable services available to the citizens on behalf of the government as such the officials are likely to be accountable to the government (Onuorah, 2012) else the total aims will not be achieved.

Every government extorts efforts in striving to ensure accountability in service delivery which necessitated the need to employ people with demonstrated honesty; those with the necessary knowledge, enthusiasm and passion to show the assurance to achieve on the occupation assigned to them (Nevell & Shackleton, 2000) towards the realization of the intended goals, aims and objectives that are designed by the authority. This is applicable to all subdivisions of the economy, including education sector which is serving as the life blood of every development. There have been pervasive degradation of institutions in Nigeria as a result of massive corruption which at the long run affected every citizen as a perpetrator or a consequential victim due to lack of accountability (Iyanda, 2012). Workers are constantly found deficient in carrying out their duties and the government seldom check the unwanted activities. Lack of proper delivery in the education sector in Nigeria was due to this short coming.

This research is intended towards analyzing principal's accountability in Kaduna state Secondary schools. The reason for focusing on secondary schools principals is based on the fact that principals are the leaders of disseminators of knowledge and (Caillods, 2010) reported that secondary education lays the foundation of future useful members in the society because it is at this level of study that students with diverse talents and abilities are recognized. And, hence, this gives room for empowering them towards harnessing their highest potentials.

UNESCO, (1999) observes that whenever less attention is given to the secondary education sector, it will led to generating unskilled secondary school leavers that will end-up in tertiary institutions of learning with empty contribution towards national development after graduation. It is always the predicament in most developing countries including Nigeria. In the backward education northern states and particularly Kaduna state for example it is the common issue found facing the region. Contestably, where principals are accountable and demonstrate high level of leadership commitment in carrying out their duties, operational teaching will take place and when there is operational teaching there will be qualitative education. The principal's accountability is therefore the stepping-stone for acquiring qualitative education, hence those that enjoyed such quality education at secondary

level are liable to proceeding to tertiary institutions and will give their massive contribution to national growth and development. These are the type of people who will work in various government institutions upon graduation. The general believe is that highly literate personnel is proficient enough to apply any government policy or program in a more professional and effective manner and therefore national growth and development will be attained.

In the recent efforts of the United Nations (UN) to come up with new Sustainable Development Goals of the year 2015, a development plan tagged “Transforming our world-the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development”, the item number four (4) of the seventeen (17) goals stated thus: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all”. The most interesting issue about the item four agenda is pointing out quality education and [7] stated that: “it is not education alone that is the concern but quality education because when education is of good quality, students tend to further their education and that individuals who have stayed in school for a long period of time are believed to have higher working life earnings compared to those who drop out early”. And that makes the graduating students great citizens and competent leaders in the future.

Review of literature and research methodology will be next and the paper will then discuss the results of the analysis and finally conclusion.

Literature Review

Accountability

Agara, (2009) Reported that “Accountability in community service is essential for effective governance in organizations because it is seen as a basic instrument for insuring effective service delivery by the authority to their citizens”. Accountability signifies the dominance of government aims and strategies above the personal yearning’s of the policy implementers who are expected to perform their duties according to the stipulated rules. The public servants should be impartial even if they have their own opinion of how issues are supposed to be done. In other words, this means that at the time of discharging official assignments, personal issues or prejudicial feelings should be set aside.

The word Accountability is sometimes used to mean “responsibility” which is often translated as the type of connection between an employer and an employee based on an agreement to perform duties and responsibilities (Odunayo, 2014). The public servants are therefore, expected to report their actions to their superiors based on the agreed framework of discharging and answerability to duty. This is also the view of (Adegbite, 2010) who reported that accountability is “the obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with the agreed rules and standards and the officer reports fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles or plans”. While accountability according to (Onnuorah & Appiah2012) “is about being answerable to those who have invested their trust, faith and resources to you”. Conformity to the laid down rules and regulations while discharging official duties is therefore very essential while at the same time utmost care should be taken to perform it in a more transparent and effective manner.

Okoh & Ohiwoyibo, (2009) Posits that “accountability reflects the needs for the government and its agencies to serve the public effectively in accordance with the laws of the land”. The norms and code of ethics are the guiding principles of discharging official duties in both public and private organizations and as such they are expected to be adhered to strictly especially during policy decisions making. However, the world development report in (World Bank, 2003) reported that accountability is a central agent of organizational change in service delivery due to its paramount importance. It used in government institutions as a control mechanism and a tool of regulating the behaviors of employees (Eckart, 2008).

Odunayo, (2014) Asserted that in leadership roles, accountability “is the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility of actions within the scope of role in position encompassing the obligation to report and be answerable for resulting consequences”. The fundamental concern of accountability in public institutions is to see that the day to day activities of the government are being discharged sincerely so that the general public will all benefit from it (Lanre & Tomola, 2010). By being accountable the employees will appreciate the value of goal attainment in accordance with the planned standard criteria (Odunayo, 2014). Accountability therefore requires an account of the actions taken by the employees to be given (Dennis Osborn, 2004).

Educational accountability is an attempt of ensuring that education stakeholders especially the principals perform quickly in their duties so as to enhance educational quality (Bandeled 2007). Bandeled further noted that secondary school’s education stakeholders are many and each and every one of them is expected to contribute towards the realization of the objectives which in Nigeria are designed to produce capable graduates who will be useful not only to themselves but to the country at large. Accountability in a school system is the obligation on the part of the principal to display good leadership qualities for the smooth running of teaching-learning situations in our secondary schools. So also accountability is seen as an issue above obeying the stipulated rules, it is now seen as an issue worth benefiting from because every government have shifted attention on governance on results based on what workers can do not what they can get from their job performance. That is why accountability in the

teaching profession is required so that the goals of attaining quality education in schools can be achieved. Principals who are the focus of this study and part of education stakeholders are described as (Halle, Mokeki, & Marinda, 2011) drivers of academic activities and agents of student's achievements (Branford et al, 2005; Sacilotto-Vasylenko, 2013) should therefore, act responsively (Odunayo, 2014) and transform effectively (Adegbite, 2010) in line with the stipulated rules (Ohwoyibo, 2009) so that the overall aim will not be defeated. This will ensure the attainment of not only quality education but subsequent implementation of government policies and programs.

Policy Implementation

Implementation is all about execution of government policies (Kraft & Furlong, 2007; Ajaegby & Eze, 2010). Paudel (2009) sees implementation as undertaking a task to achieve some targeted goals. It encompasses all the procedure and efforts of actualizing the policies decided upon by the government in order to attain the desired outcome as prescribed in the policy guidelines. In other words policy implementation is the routine administrative procedures of putting the targeted goals set by the government into action which is normally carried out by the government agencies or its officials in line with the stipulated laws. Effective implementation in the secondary education sector is therefore, required as this will subsequently lead to the realization of the targeted outcome i.e. the attainment of quality education.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership offers active interaction resulting from trusting each other to appear in a positive effect between followers and leaders by generating unity of purpose and wholeness. Marques and Huston, (2000) narrated that transformational leadership as interaction between leaders and followers bonded with trust between them, subsequently having the same goals and are consistent with the goals of the group.

. In addition, (Bass & Avolio, (1996) suggested that transformational leaders generally have better relationships with their supervisors and that subordinates or employees of transformational leaders often exert more effort toward their organizations goals. Transformational leaders can be categorized by four factors. These include: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence.

In the words of (Bollington, 1999) transformational leadership is observed as having the capability to change a school's environment and to create the conditions for school improvement.

Transformational Leadership Qualities of Principals

Principals are the life blood of administration in every secondary schools, hence, the transformational leadership theory was used to weigh their ability of incorporating stakeholders in their administrative qualities to move the secondary schools forward. Effective principals bring a clear and common vision that puts students first, and see that this vision is communicated clearly and effectively to all stakeholders. Therefore, school principals who can balance a variety of pressures while never losing sight of their values best inspire and serve the school community would be a much greater principal (Bollington, 1999). "In addition, principles that work and realizes the organizational vision and values form the school's mission and purpose, instilling the intangible forces that motivate teachers to teach, school leaders to lead, children to learn, and parents and community to have confidence in their school thus shaping the definition of achievement would become more successful (Deal & Peterson, 199).

Research Methodology

The research used a descriptive research technique using a six point Likert scale questionnaire called the multifactor leadership questionnaire MLQ 5X developed by (Bass & Avolio, 1996). The questionnaire was administered to a sample of forty (400) respondents selected from each of the forty three (55) secondary schools within the Kaduna metropolis out of which the response of three hundred and thirty (330) participants was obtained. From the responses obtained however, three hundred (300) were fit for analysis. Therefore, the research is based on a sample of three hundred (300) respondents.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation

Question Number	Mean	Agreement Level	Standard Deviation
1.	4.47	Very high	1.592
2.	4.90	Very high	1.447
3.	4.93	Very high	1.484
4.	4.87	Very high	1.306
5.	4.87	Very high	1.358
6.	4.80	Very high	1.627
7.	5.03	Very high	1.217
8.	5.10	Very high	1.125
9.	5.13	Very high	1.332
10.	4.97	Very high	1.217
11.	4.57	Very high	1.040
12.	4.60	Very high	1.163
13.	4.43	Very high	1.406

From the above table, it was observed that question one which stated that “My principal provides others with assistance in exchange for their efforts” has a mean of 4.47 with a corresponding standard deviation of 1.592. In the second question which stated that “My principal re-examines critical assumption to questions whether they are appropriate” have a mean of 4.90 and a standard deviation of 1.447. Question three stated that: “My principal fails to interfere until problems become serious” and have a mean of 4.93 and a standard deviation of 1.484. The fourth question stated that “My principal focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions and deviations from standards” it has a mean of 4.87 and a standard deviation of 1.306. On the fifth question which stated that “My principal avoid getting involved when important issues arises” the mean observed is 4.87 and a standard deviation of 1.358. The sixth question stated that “My principal talk about my most important values and benefits” the mean observed is 4.80 with a standard deviation of 1.627. The seventh question stated that “My principal is absent when needed” and has a mean of 5.03 and a standard deviation of 1.217. The eighth question stated that “My principal seek differing perspectives when solving problems” the question record a mean of 5.10 and a standard deviation of 1.125. However, a mean of 5.13 with a corresponding standard deviation of 1.332 was observed in question nine which stated that “My principal talk optimistically about the future”. The 10th question stated that “My principal instill pride in others for being associated with me” the question has a mean of 4.97 and a standard deviation of 1.217. Eleventh question has a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation of 1.040. The question stated that “My principal discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets”. Question twelve stated that “My principal wait for things to go wrong before taking action” a mean of 4.60 with a standard deviation of 1.163 was observed. The last question i.e. question thirteen stated that “My principal talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.” a mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 1.406 was observed.

From the results obtained, it was discovered that all the questions have a mean above 4.50 i.e. between “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. The highest mean score of 5.10 and 5.13 is obtained in question eight (8) & question nine (9) respectively.

Question eight stated that “My principal seek differing perspectives when solving problems” This is indeed a good move in the right direction for the fact that seeking for the advice of co-workers is very important in solving problems this is because school principals who can balance a variety of pressures while never losing sight of their values best inspire and serve the school community would be a much greater principal (Bollington, 1999). “In addition, principles that work and realizes the organizational vision and values form the school’s mission and purpose, instilling the intangible forces that motivate teachers to teach, school leaders to lead, children to learn, and parents and community to have confidence in their school thus shaping the definition of achievement would become more successful (Deal & Peterson, 1999). This scholar (Sifuna, 2009) also observed that quality education is associated with improvements in the cognitive achievement of students and improvements in the social and economic lives of their societies. Such individuals tend to develop character traits such as perseverance, honesty, determination and reliability that are encouraged in schools and that are required and rewarded in the job market. Therefore seeking for the advice of colleagues is beneficial not only to

themselves but to the entire nation as it leads to honesty, sincerity, hospitality and effectiveness in discharging responsibility.

Question nine on the other hand states that “My principal talk optimistically about the future”. This is very imperative in as much as acquiring quality education is the goal which is the final outcome of secondary education. David and Don (2002), Sifuna, (2009) opined that “Quality education involves four issues namely: inputs, process, output and outcomes. The input includes the number of teachers available, the amount of teacher training as well as the number of textbooks. The process involves the amount of direct instructional materials and the extent of active learning. The output includes test scores and graduation rates while the outcome includes performance in subsequent employment”. Whatever materials are put place and however effective the teachers teaches in class once the students are not hardworking the end results may not be achieved. There is therefore the need for trained, qualified and committed principals who are always willing to perform their duties with zeal and enthusiasm (Chong, 2013); those principals who always act as role model to their colleagues and encourages them to be steadfast and stand on their own. Such principals are the facilitators and drivers of student’s success and achievements (Branford et al, 2005; Sacilotto-Vasylenko, 2013).

However, almost all the questions centered on how principals can induce the right habit and excellent academic attitude to the students and by so doing the students are being groomed for a better future. Principal’s accountability is thus regarded as a vital ingredient in societal transformation and development.

Table 2: Percentage and Frequency distribution from the Questionnaire Administered

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	30	0	60	10	110	90
2	10	10	50	10	70	150
3	20	0	30	40	50	160
4	10	0	50	40	60	140
5	20	20	30	10	70	150
6	20	0	30	0	120	130
7	0	10	30	20	100	140
8	10	10	30	20	120	110
9	10	10	20	20	70	170
10	0	10	50	10	100	130
11	0	10	40	70	130	50
12	10	10	20	60	150	50
13	10	20	50	50	90	80
Total Freq.	150	110	490	360	1240	1550
Percentage	3.85%	2.82%	12.56%	9.23%	31.79%	39.74%

Furthermore, from the table above, it was indicated that a total of 3.87% of the respondents with a frequency of one hundred and fifty (150) answered “Strongly Disagree” in all the questions administered. 2.87% of the respondents with a frequency of eleven (110) answered “Disagree” in all the questions administered. 12.56% of the respondents with a frequency of four hundred and ninety (490) answered “Slightly Disagree” in all the questions administered. Also 9.23% of the respondents with a frequency of three hundred and sixty (360) answered “Slightly Agree” in all the questions administered. 31.79% of the respondents with a frequency of one thousand two hundred and forty (1240) answered “Agree” in all the questions administered. 39.74% of the respondents with a frequency of one thousand five hundred and fifty (1550) answered “Strongly Agree” in all the questions administered.

This indicates that majority of the respondents supported principals accountability for the fact that accountability in the teaching profession is very vital and it goes beyond acting according to the stipulation of the law; nowadays accountability is considered as results oriented being that good government plays more emphasis on the final results i.e. the output which in secondary schools is the attainment of quality education. Principals are therefore expected and supposed to be accountable in discharging their responsibilities so that the aim of ensuring quality education can be achieved.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Accountability in the public service is a sort of control mechanism and a means of checking the excesses of the public servants. It is useful in the sense that it leads to effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery.

Accountability is also seen to be a means of implementing government policies and programs effectively. In the education sector, principal's accountability is bound to lead to attaining quality education. Also the foundation laid at secondary school level for quality education leads to admitting competent students into tertiary institutions that are believed to excel in their studies and work in different government institutions upon graduation. It is also a well-known fact that highly literate workforce is capable of implementing government policies and programs in a professional, competent, effective and efficient manner. Principal's accountability is therefore seen as a vital instrument of ensuring quality education and also a means of effective service delivery and effective policy implementation in public institutions.

The research thus recommends that the government should put in place more efforts in order to ensure that principals are adequately motivated so as to give in their best. Positive motivation boosts principal's morale towards achieving greater output. The government should therefore intensify efforts to train and re-train the principals, provide all the necessary facilities and other materials required for effective administration and learning to take place in schools. This is believed to make the principals more accountable and sit up to their responsibilities.

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