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Managerial Behaviour in Educational Organisations in Nigeria

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Abstract

Educational institutions are established at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Nigeria, purposely to pursue and ensure the achievement of national objectives. Heads of these institutions are expected to perform management functions such as planning, controlling, organizing, staffing, leading, co-coordinating and directing all available resources towards actualization of the objectives. In carrying out these duties, a manager could adopt either a democratic or an autocratic style of administration. This paper posits that the quality and quantity of resources in an institution, the subordinates' personal characteristics and the influence of different groups within the institution, are factors which could determine his choice of administrative styles. It is suggested that the manager should evolve effective motivational, communication, decision-making and human relation strategies in order to ensure the achievement of organizational objectives.

Keywords: Managerial Behaviour, Managerial Functions, Managerial Styles, Educational Organisations, Educational Institutions

Introduction

In Nigeria, education has been adopted as an instrument for achieving national development. At different periods and stages of the nation's history, solutions are sought in the education system to any emerging socio-political and economic problems (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 1988; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Thus, the government has invested human, material and financial resources into educational organizations with the expectation that national objectives would be achieved, using education as a tool.

Educational organizations can be divided into two. The first consists of organizations which are involved in management of education. They are ministries of education and their parastatals at federal, state and local government levels. The second consists of organizations which are basically involved in production of manpower. They are educational institutions at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Each of the organizations consists of people who are working together under the leadership of a manager.

In this paper, educational organisations refer to educational institutions. As a manager, the head of an educational institution has to interact with other employees who are subordinates in order to ensure that teaching and learning processes are conducted under a favourable and productive atmosphere. Also, he has to make sure that educational resources are judiciously utilized for achievement of educational objectives. In doing these, he is capable exhibiting different forms of behavior.

Managerial behaviour implies the manner in which the head of an organization behaves towards subordinates in the work environment. It is a combination of managerial functions (what he does) and managerial styles (his manner of doing things). In an organization, actions of a manager would bring reactions from subordinates. Conversely, actions of subordinates would trigger reactions from the manager. Thus, actions and reactions of a manager on one hand; and, actions and reactions of subordinates on the other hand, constitute different aspects of behaviour.

Incidentally, a manager who is supposed to lead members of his educational institutions in working diligently and productively could behave in a manner which could constitute a cog in the wheel of progress. If this happens, the hope of the nation, which has led to its adoption of education as an instrument for national development, would be a mirage and all efforts would become futile. Hence, the study of managerial behaviour in educational organizations becomes imperative.

The Manager and his Educational Institution

In Nigerian educational institutions, the manager is given different titles. At primary school level, he is the headmaster or head teacher. At secondary school level, he is the principal. At tertiary level, he is the provost of a college of education, the rector of a polytechnic/college of technology or the vice-chancellor of a university. He employs or accepts workers into the organization under his control and assigns them to different departments, units or sections. He is looked upon as one who should ensure achievement of educational objectives (Olagboye, 2004). His position is so important that the functions he performs and his manner or style of performance, would have an impact on members of his organization, other organizations and the entire society.

Managerial Functions

According to Nwankwo (1982); Peretomode (1991) and Olagboye (2004), the manager is responsible for staff and students' personnel services, instruction and curriculum development and school financial management. He is also responsible for school plant administration and maintenance of cordial relationship with the community. In the discharge of these responsibilities, the manager is expected to plan, control, organize, staff, lead, co-ordinate and direct human and non human resources in the organization. These are managerial functions as highlighted by Adeleke (2001); Onifade (2004).

Planning: This is a process of decision- making in advance on activities to be performed, workers to be involved and materials to be utilized in an organization. It also implies decision-making on when and how actions are to be taken. In planning, the manager looks into the future and makes necessary preparations for discharge of his responsibilities. The ultimate is to achieve educational objectives

effectively. Hence, rational decisions are made on actions to be taken so that resources will be judiciously utilized, and maximum benefits would be attained.

Controlling: A process of ensuring that educational activities are conducted as already planned. It involves regulating, curbing and checking the excesses of members of the organization, so that things are done in accordance with established rules. Supervision, budgeting, records keeping, periodic meetings, informal discussions and evaluation, constitute different aspects of control mechanism in educational institutions.

Organizing: This is the process of arranging human and material elements appropriately to specific function and position. It also implies identification of jobs within an educational organization, classification of jobs and assignment of employee to specific jobs. Organizing as a managerial function could facilitate a structure and a hierarchy of authority for effective administration.

Staffing: This is an aspect of personnel services which includes supplying, training and motivating the teaching and non-teaching staff. It is meant to ensure that a right employee occupies a right post. It focuses on the workers' recruitment, welfare and retirement.

Leading: This refers to an act of influencing employees in a manner that they will work towards the achievement of organizational goals. The manager as a leader serves as a link between the workers and the organizational goals. Using an effective channel of communication, he guides, motivates and directs the workers, so that the organizational goals will be realized.

Co-ordinating: This is the process of conducting works in different departments, sections and units at the same time without one disturbing another. It is also a process of ensuring that different groups of workers in the educational organization utilize the same facilities at different times without one clashing or conflicting with another. The manager harmonizes all activities and channels them towards desired outcome.

Directing: Tailoring workers' activities towards organizational goals. The manager must make and implement decisions which will assist in tailoring workers' personal objectives towards those of the educational organization. There should be no deviation between workers' efforts and organizational expectations. Otherwise, the organization will fail to achieve its objectives. This will have adverse effects on the organization and subsequently on its members.

Managerial Styles

In performing his functions, the manager could adopt a style which he deemed fit for achievement of organizational goals. Ejiogu (1988) gave an analysis of Fredric Winslow Taylor's scientific principles of management. Taylor was of opinion that it was possible to recommend where a worker should stand, how he should position his body at work, where he should place his various working materials and how the materials should be handled. Going by this analysis, a manager who

adopts scientific principle would treat employees like a machine which can be operated, commanded, and made to work at all times.

Taylor's principle could be likened to McGregor's theory X which stipulated that (Mullins, 1999 p.209),

1. The average person is lazy and has an inherent dislike for work;
2. Most people must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment if the organization is to achieve its objectives;
3. The average person avoids responsibility, prefers to be directed, lacks ambition and values security most of all; and
4. Motivation occurs only at the physiological and security levels.

These assumptions seem to be true with some workers. Farounbi (1983), observed that when people want to dodge work, they know how to obtain sick leave and stay away from official duties for as long as they wish.

However, McGregor has another set of assumptions on behaviour which he refers to as theory Y. The theory states that (Mullins 1999 p.209)

1. For most people, work is as natural as play or rest;
2. People will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed;
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of rewards associated with their achievement;
4. Given the right conditions, the average worker can learn to accept and to seek responsibility;
5. The capacity for creativity in solving organizational problems is distributed widely in the population;
6. The intellectual potential of the average person is only partially utilized; and
7. Motivation occurs at the affiliation, esteem and self-actualization levels as well as the physiological and security levels.

According to this theory, some people are very much committed to their works. Without any form of coercion, they go to their places of work regularly and punctually. They also perform their duties conscientiously (Farounbi, 1983).

One fact that could be inferred from McGregor's theories is the assumption that a person is capable of behaving in two different ways. He can work hard and achieve high productivity. He can also slack in his duty and care less about the achievement of educational objectives. Therefore, a manager could make use either theory X or theory Y in order to achieve organizational objectives.

In the same vein, Adeleke (2001) identified three main styles which a manager could adopt in the process of guiding the subordinates towards the attainment of organizational goals. They are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire styles. An autocratic manager would tell subordinate what to do and would not give room for initiative. A democratic manager has a human relation approach. He carries subordinates along as important contributors to the success of the organization. A laissez-faire manager exercises little or no control over his subordinates. He allows them to act the way they feel.

The choice of management style in an organization depends on the manager, the subordinates and the organizational objectives. A manager, who assumes that an individual worker

is capable of working without coercion, will tend towards democratic style. Also, a manager who believes that workers should be controlled and directed will adopt autocratic style. Incidentally, some workers would prefer to be directed and controlled before they can perform productively. Theory X or autocratic style of management will be suitable for them. However, theory Y or democratic style would be appropriate for jobs which offer intrinsic satisfaction and those involving a variety of tasks. Thus, it could be concluded that managerial style should be situational, transactional and transformational (Mullins, 1999; Olagboye, 2004).

Individual Behaviour in Relation to School Management Process

Job performance in an educational institution is influenced in a variety of ways. Primarily, an individual brings his personal characteristics into the organization. His knowledge, interest in the profession and attitude to work would influence his performance. Moreover, the individual belongs to a society which has its peculiarities and from which many virtues and vices could be imbibed. For instance, qualities such as hard work, obedience and honesty could be imbibed. Conversely, corruption, laziness, dishonesty and other forms of bad behaviour could be imbibed. The individual would enter his employment organization with societal values which are likely to influence his activities. Other inputs from the society include human resources (e.g. students) and material resources (e.g. learning facilities and equipment). The quality and quantity of these resources will influence, positively or negatively, the activities of the individual worker in the organization. He will also be guided by organizational policies and style of leadership in the performance of his duties.

Getzel and Guba, according to Peretomode (1991), postulate that an organization, (e.g. an educational institution), is a sub-system of the society, and it is established to perform certain functions for the benefit of the society. These functions are called nomothetic dimensions, and are in conformity with the institutional role expectations. Also, the individual is a unique personality with a peculiar way of thinking about, acting on and reacting to issues. As a human being, he needs money, wealth, material, recognition, fame and achievement. These are referred to as idiographic dimension or individual personality need-disposition (see figure 1). The organization is likely to achieve its objectives if the individual’s need agrees with the institutional role expectations.

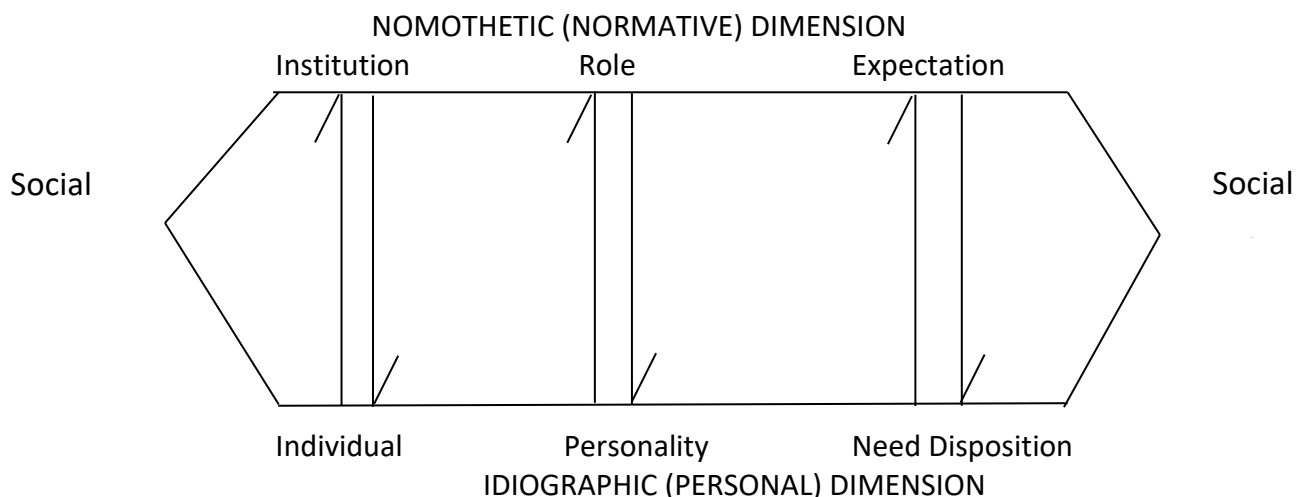


Figure 1: Nomothetic and Idiographic dimensions of social behaviour

Source: Peretomode, V.F. (1991) Educational administration: Applied concept and theoretical perspectives p.95.

While the manager of an educational institution would want subordinates to play their expected institutional roles, the subordinates are likely to have interest in their personal needs. Both the manager's expectations and the subordinates' needs have to be met before organizational objectives could be achieved.

Group Behaviour in Relation to School Management

An individual also belongs to formal and informal groups within his educational institution. These, according to Ford and Heaton (1980, pp 180-181), are further divided into five groups.

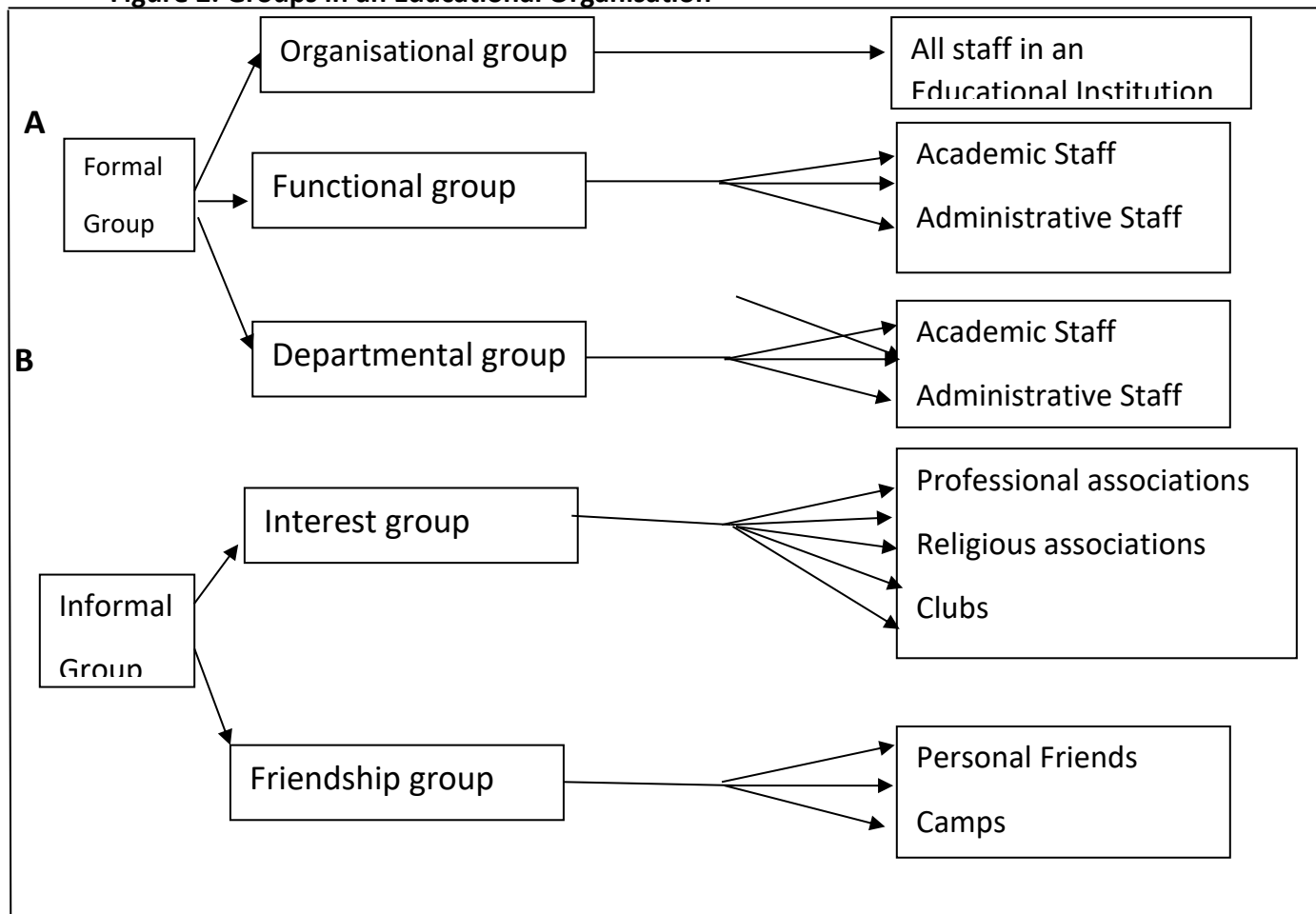
1. The organisational group: All staff belonging to the organization;
2. The functional group: All staff performing the same function in the organization;
3. The departmental group: All staff working in the department;
4. The interest group: All staff joined by a particular interest, whether or not the people are in the same department or perform the same function;
5. The friendship group: All staff who associate because of an interpersonal attraction.

Ford and Heaton state further that a manager could exercise control on membership in the formal groups (i.e. organizational, functional and departmental groups). The manager employs or admits members into the organization and assigns them functions within the department. Beyond managerial control are interest and friendship groups (informal groups). These groups do influence the acceptance and implementation of decisions, they concluded. An inference that could be drawn from Ford and Heaton's assertion is that the first three are formal groups while the remaining two are informal groups (see figure 2).

As shown in figure 2, all groups in an educational institution are categorized in to two: formal and informal. An individual automatically becomes a member of the formal group immediately he joins the formal organization. He belongs to the organizational group which comprises of all staff in the institution, e.g. members of a university community. He also belongs to a functional group e.g. a faculty in the university, where he is an academic, administrative or technical staff. He also belongs to a departmental group. Here, he could be an academic, administrative or technical staff.

The individual could also belong to an informal group if he wishes. There are interest groups such as professional associations, religious associations, clubs and social groups. Another set of informal group consists of friendship groups (personal friends, camps and cliques). The implication is that it is not the educational institutional manager alone that has influence over a subordinate. The informal groups could also dictate the pace of work and consequently the extent of achievement in the institution.

Figure 2: Groups in an Educational Organisation



Source: Adapted from Ford & Heaton (1980)'s five categories of groups within a formal organization. pp 180-181

Recommendations

Employees are in the organisation primarily to have their needs actualized. In their work environment, they belong to different groups who could influence their actions and reactions towards managerial behaviour. Yet, the manager has the responsibility of ensuring the attainment of organizational goals. Hence, the following guidelines are recommended.

Motivation: Many employees in the educational institutions, especially teachers, are in the habit of hiding their identities in the public, unlike other professionals who are happy to be seen as specialists in their fields. Also, many teachers would want to quit job as quickly as possible for more recognized and more rewarding ones. A major cause of this attitude is poor motivation. Both the employer and the manager should adopt motivational strategies which could enhance teachers' status and job performance. Teachers, like their counterparts in other professions, want to enjoy their rewards on earth (Ejiogu, 1985). Therefore, their entitlements should be improved and given promptly. Their

working environment should be made conducive and they shall be given opportunities for personal growth and development. Other categories of staff should be equally motivated.

Communication: This is effective passage of information from one person to another. The manager must ensure free flow of information among all members of his organization. Information on school activities must be relayed at the right time, to the right people and in clear language. Communication could be verbal, written, electronic or any other means. The manager serves as a link between his educational institution and the government, the community and the international bodies. He should give correct and up to date information about the school. Information emanating from these bodies should be passed to all staff members without delay. The manager should communicate and allow free communication in order to guide against rumour, misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

Decision-making: This is a process of choosing from alternative course of action. Many issues arising in the educational institutions demand decision-making because there is more than a single option of action. Many alternatives are generated out of which one is taken for implementation. The manager must have an adequate knowledge of alternative actions available on an issue, who should be involved in decision-making and mode of implementation of the decision. Right decision at appropriate time and place will enhance achievement of organizational goals. As much as possible, subordinates should be allowed to participate in decision-making.

Human relation: The manager, while being concerned about achievement of organizational goals, should not close his eyes on human side of the enterprise. He can not do without being humane in an organization which is dominated by human elements. Nwankwo (1982), cited Mary Parker Follet as saying that human relations are at their best when difference is solved through conference and co-operation. This implies that the subordinates should be informed and involved in all aspects of educational organization. Individual differences and consequently individual needs should be identified, recognized and considered in order to enjoy the co-operation of all members of the organization. Moreover, organizational environment should be conducive for improved positive relationship between the manager and the subordinates, among subordinates and between the organizations.

Conclusion

Educational organizations, such as schools, colleges and other places of learning, are established for a purpose. The purpose could be achieved when there is a manager who performs his functions with appropriate styles. Adequate motivational strategies communication, logical decision-making process and good human relations are some of the essential tools for managerial effectiveness.

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