

Good Governance: a Panacea for Effective and Efficient Management of Nigerian School Systems

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Abstract: This paper examined the relevance of good governance as a panacea for effective and efficient management of the Nigerian school systems. It highlights some conceptual definitions of terms used and actually discussed the rationale behind good governance in the public sector for effective and efficient management of the Nigerian school system. The paper further highlights the essentials of good governance by stating the key elements of good governance for effective and efficient management of the Nigerian school systems. The paper also pointed out the problems associated with leadership which affects the management of the Nigerian school systems. Some recommendations were made as way forwards for enhancing good governance for effective management of the Nigerian school systems. Among such recommendations includes: that school administrators and their teachers should be encouraged to follow the guidelines of good governance as a strategy for enhancing quality assurance, quality outputs and effective service delivery; constant personnel training and retraining programmes on good governance should be designed in order to boost their efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the school systems.

Key words: Good governance • Panacea • Efficiency • Effectiveness • Management • School system

INTRODUCTION

The concept of good governance is not a new term in the Nigerian society today. Quite often, it is used to describe most successful governments in the contemporary world which use it to set standards towards achieving liberal democracy. According to (Wikipedia) [1] the concept of good governance often emerges as a model to compare ineffective economies or political bodies with viable economies and political bodies. Within the education today, this concept is also being borrowed when accusing on school governance, effective leadership, administration and management of schools.

To showcase the importance of good governance to economic development, the United Nations Development Programme highlighted that good governance and sustainable human development are indivisible and the development of the capacity of good governance at any level of education is the primary way to eliminate poverty and other vices. Therefore, good governance is important for sustainable economic development and prosperity (Richardson) [2].

(Diamond) [3] said that the deepest root cause of development failure is lack of good governance. Good governance is the answer to the challenges and problems facing policy makers and administrators in managing the Nigerian school system. This has been pointed out on an NTA Live Television broadcast by the minister of Education (Rufai) [4] and minister of information (Maku) [5], who was emphatic that governance is one major problem in the Nigerian schools. They also expressed dissatisfaction on the way leadership in most Nigerian schools operation and exercised their functions.

Stressing that governance in school should be made to give accountability of all their activities, including governance in the tertiary institutions as well citing examples with the case of University of Abuja whose problems were relatively associated with governance and the case where the federal ministry of education supplied books to public primary schools stamped “supplied to schools freely, not to be sold”. Observations show that these books especially the ones supplied in the North have not been distributed to schools. With such situations, the ministers called for leadership

accountability. The issue of accountability is very possible where good governance has highly been promoted (Maku) [5].

(Okojie) [6] highlighting the importance of good leadership towards achieving development in Nigeria, blamed all the bad happenings in Nigeria to leadership whom he opined that they are the worst rogues not only armed robber, those who steal with pen and do not do the right but think only for themselves and their families.

However, good governance in education and school systems will aid effective and efficient management of the Nigerian schools. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) [7] declared that promoting good governance in all its aspects will ensure that the principle of rule of law is practiced, improve the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, tackle corruption as essential elements of a framework within which economies can prosper.

The IME feels that corruption within economies and across borders is caused by ineffective governance. Governance will ensure that all the administrative officers, administrators including classroom teachers give proper account of their duties and activities. According to (Richardson) [2] and (Maku) [5] a situation whereby teachers in the public schools do not attend classes or are not responsible or committed to their duties is as a result of bad governance.

Bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within our society (United Nations Escap-UNESCAP) [8]. Bad governance has been characterized by low capacity to plan, allocate and execute budgets; weak internal controls; poor management and supervision of funds. Absence of external accountability, distorted incentives that considerably increase the opportunity for mismanagement and corruption, affecting the funding received by education providers and thereby the delivery of education services (Lewis) [9].

Wherever good governance is highly promoted, such principles which form the elements of good governance are equally enhanced and these include: transparency, openness, responsiveness, participation, efficiency, effectiveness, rule of law, consensus oriented, accountability, equity and inclusiveness not exclusiveness (United Nations) [10].

However, the importance of good governance in the management of Nigerian education sector cannot be over emphasized and it is necessary that school leadership, administrator or managers within the education sector and the state ministries of education adopt this concept when executing their responsibilities in order to ensure that high standards are met in the education (Wikipedia) [1].

Therefore, the thrust of this paper is to discuss good governance as a panacea tool for effective and efficient management of the Nigerian school systems. To highlight the importance of good governance on the Nigerian school systems, the paper has been divided into various sections. Section one is an outline of the conceptual framework and definitions of some key concepts as used in the paper, such as good governance, leadership and management. Section two equally dealt with the elements of good governance for effective and efficient leadership and management of the Nigerian school systems by highlighting the elements of good governance. Section three is an outlook of the problems associated with leadership in the Nigerian school systems which affect the management of schools. While section four proffered some recommendations to serve as way forward, by identifying possibilities on effective and efficient management of the Nigerian school systems.

Good Governance: Governance is not a new concept, is as old as human civilization. Different organizations and scholars have given various definitions of governance and good governance. According to the (United Nations Escap)[8], the term governance simply, means the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented.

According to (Richardson) [2] governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. It can be seen as the economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. The (Wikipedia) [1] further described governance from the higher education perspective as the means by which higher educational institutions are formally organized and managed. Thus, university governance is the way in which universities are operated. It predominantly refers to the internal structure, organization and management of institutions.

According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) [1] governance has three distinct aspects which include: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance is the process by which authority is exercised in the management of economic and social resources for development. This includes decision-making processes that affect a country's or organizations' economic activities (Richardson) [2]. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy while administrative

governance is the capacity of the authority to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.

Governance has two faces: first, the leadership which the responsibilities derived from the principles of effective governmental organizations and second, the governed, that is the citizens or subordinates who are responsible for making relevant inputs to the socio-economic and political affairs of the society. In other words, governance is a relationship between rulers and the governed. It is important that the two principal actors be as close as possible to ensure the legitimacy, accountability, credibility, effective participation and responsiveness of the rulers. An important aspect of the relationship within and between these two components of governance is the change that usually occurs whose result can either be good or bad (Arisi and Ukadike,) [12].

According to (Uddin) [13] governance can either be viewed as positive and negative terms which could be good governance or bad governance. Good governance is an ideal governing system that is inevitable for political, economic, social and cultural development of the country. It is the ideal orientation of a state that works best to achieve self-reliance, sustainable development and social justice (Uddin) [13].

Good governance as defined by (Arisi and Ukadike) [12] is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the human rights. Good governance can be viewed as the exercise of power or authority political, economic and administrative or other wise to manage a country's processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights and harmonize their differences (Arisi Ukadike) [12]. According to (Edokpolo) [14] good governance is the positive or progressive outcome of symbiotically integrated leaderships showing that there is a strong nexus between good governance and leadership. Here, leadership applies the elements of good governance that will enhance development. However, effective leadership is the mother of good governance. In education and school systems, good governance promotes effective delivery of education services which ensure that appropriate standards, incentives, information and proper accountability that induce high performances are met. Such high performance in turn, raises the level of education outputs and can contribute to improved outcomes. Good governance in education can discourage corruption, an out growth of poor governance which directly affects performance of the education sector.

However, the goals of good governance are to achieve national sustainable development of capacities that alleviate problems and sustain the environment and create needed opportunities for employment and other livelihood.

Therefore, the rationales behind good governance in the public sector as highlighted by (Richardson) [2] include: to successfully design and implement development policies and programmes; provide efficient and cost effective and responsive public sector; to promote sustained environment that will facilitate the emergence of a strong and vibrant public sector and civil society; to establish and manage an effective and transparent regulatory and legal framework to guide the growth and development of the sector; to address the issue of transparency and accountability in public service; enhance institutions that promote and enforce institutions that promote and enforce the rule of law for legitimacy, social stability and the promotion of public rights; manage the changing role of the public sector in the context of globalization, market economy, multi-party democracy and information technology which have significant implications for openness in the public sector management; cultivate and nurture an environment that will accelerate sustainable development. However, improving good governance discourages corruption in education ultimately aiming to increase the efficiency of education services so as to raise performance and improve student learning and labour productivity. Poor governance results in inefficiency in service provision and in some cases no service at all. Where it exists, there is lack of standards, information, incentives and accountability that cannot only lead to poor provider performance but also corruption (Lewis and Petterson) [9].

Leadership and Management: According to (Wikipedia) [1] leadership means organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal. It is a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. Here, a person known as the leader influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization on a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent in order to achieve a common goal. Leaders carryout this process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills.

However, while a leader is one who leads and directs people to carryout a common task; management is the act of getting people together to accomplish desire goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively. Management in any organization comprises of

planning, organizing, staffing, leading or directing and controlling an organization for the purpose of accomplishing a goal.

In the school systems, leadership includes: top government officials, policy makers, senior officers in both the federal and state ministries of education, school heads like principals, head teachers, provosts, vice chancellors, departmental heads and heads of different non-academic administrative units that lead and share responsibilities or authority to subordinates to accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organization.

The basis of good leadership is honourable character and selfless service to the organization and the employees. Your leadership is everything you do that affects the organization's objectives and well-being. However, the important keys to effective leadership which leaders of any organization must exhibit or adopt in the management of their organization as highlighted by the (Wikipedia) [1] include: building trust and confidence for employees satisfaction in an organization; be technically proficient in his job; making sound and timely decisions; setting good examples and be a good role model for your employees; knowing your subordinates or workers and look out for their well-being; developing a sense or responsibility to your workers by assisting to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities; ensuring that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished. Here, communication is the key to this responsibility; using full capabilities of your organization by developing a team spirit you will be able to employ your organization, department, section to its fullest capabilities; keeping your subordinates or workers with them; knowing yourself and seek self improvement by continually strengthening your attributes and search for ways to guide your organization to new heights. All these are achievable wherever true governance is highly projected.

Apparently, the ways and manner through which leadership acts, leads and directs his subordinates is also a form of governance. Any process by which the superior or leadership allocates tasks, supervises his subordinates, distributes resources communicates with others, carry the organization along either positively or negatively, such entails governance which is imperative towards the management and responses of subordinates behaviour in the organization. The ability to understand and manage moods and emotions in the self and others, contributes to effective leadership within organizations. However, to govern, leadership usually adopts various styles which

according to the (Wikipedia) [1] include: democratic or participative style, autocratic or authoritarian and laissez-faire or free rein style.

Elements of Good Governance for Effective Leadership and Management of the Nigerian School Systems: Over the years leadership in education sector have always faced with the problem of managing the education system towards achieving educational goals, objectives and production of positive outcomes for national development. For leadership to achieve these, it must apply some key elements and characteristics of good governance which are essential for effective management of the education system.

The (United Nations) [10]; (UNESCAP) [8]; (Uddin) [13] identified eight elements or principles which are pillars and essential against which good governance and leadership can be judged for effective management of the Nigerian education and school system. These include: accountability; consensus orientation; transparency; responsiveness; efficiency and effectiveness; equity and inclusiveness; rule of law; participation.

Accountability: It is a process whereby leadership must be made accountable to the public, their institutional stakeholders and those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Leadership should also ensure that subordinates are to be made accountable for their activities for the development of the organization. According to (Uddin) [13] accountability has to be imposed on every step of the organization. Government institutions or sectors must be made accountable to the public about their respective acts. Both leaders and their subordinates should be held responsible for their actions and leadership ensures that their subordinates cooperate to proper enforcement. According to (Ekundayo) [15] the principal as the chief executive and accounting officer who is entrusted with the responsibilities of controlling the resources from the school must endeavour to give accountability of his activities to ensure that they are all directed towards effective and efficient management of the school, so as to produce quality outputs.

Consensus Orientation: According to (Ekundayo)[15] as the chief executive, the principal owes it a duty to modify the attitudes of the staff and motivate them to put in their best at achieving educational goals through effective teaching-learning. However, motivation enhances job performance. When it comes to efforts to improve the quality of school, the principal is the critical person in making change to occur.

Transparency: This means that decisions taken and the enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations (UNESCAP) [8]. This also includes that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement.

According to (IFAD) [11] this concept is built on the free flow of information processes, institutions and information should be directly accessible to those concerned and enough information should be provided to render them understandable and motionable.

Responsiveness: Good governance here requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame. This entails that the leadership in the school system must be made to serve all stakeholders. Leadership must be responsible and answerable for the conduct to the entire organization in general. As a result, the school leadership has the responsibility of providing their subordinates with the necessary resources for effective teaching-learning, for the realization of educational goals. This responsibility is very obligatory and the school leadership is expected to deploy the managerial skills in effecting this to the school system (Ekundayo) [15].

Effectiveness and Efficiency: Good governance here means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of the society while making the best use of resources at their disposal.

The concept of efficiency in the concept of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. For instance, in education and school system, leadership as supervisors owes it a duty to inspect the teaching-learning experiences; obtain and make available for subordinates all educational information; and offer professional advice as at when necessary for their improvement.

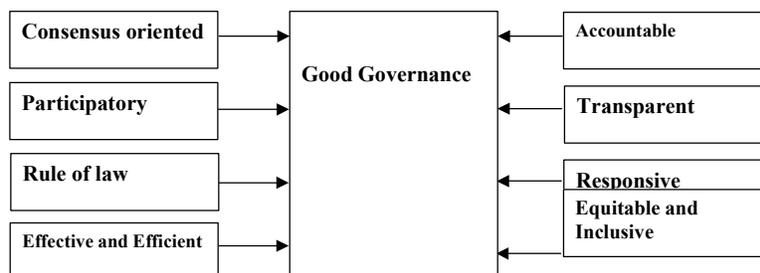
Equity and Inclusiveness: Equity according to (IFAD) [11] entails that all men and women should have equal opportunity to maintain or improve their well-being. Equity and inclusiveness depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in their well-being and decision making. Appropriate consultations and continuous dialogue should be made at every stage of the decision-making.

Rule of Law: Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires for protection of human rights particularly those of minorities (UNESCAP) [8]. Here leadership should allow subordinates have some amount of freedom in the organization and act in accordance with due process.

Participation: This is the key cornerstone of good governance which highlights that all men and women be involved in decision making either through direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. Leadership must give room for dialogue and participation that enable the subordinates to provide inputs and make contribution in the organization (Muna) [16].

Generally, for effective leadership and management of the education and school system through good governance in Nigeria, leadership must also make sure that the following are well harnessed. Leadership should ensure that all stakeholders in the system are engaged in activities by making accountability real, perform effectively in clearly defined functions and roles; promote values for the whole organization and demonstrate good governance through behavior; focus on the organizations' purpose and on outcome for subordinates and service users; develop the capacity and capabilities of other governing body and subordinates to be effective and take informed, transparent decisions and be able to manage risk.

Characteristics of Good Governance in a Diagram form:
Characteristics of Good Governance.



Adopted from United Nations Escap (UNESCA)[8], Good Governance Retrieved from <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/projectactivities/ongoing/gg/governance.asp>.

In line with the above, the (School Development Division) [17] identified good school-based governance which enhances quality education and such entails the following:

- Involving collective participation of all key stakeholders in school management.
- Lay a solid foundation for the long-time development of the school as it is the cornerstone of quality education.
- Ensure that the use of public funds is appropriate and in the best interest of students and the community. Enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and overall performance of administrative management which are crucial to the continuous development of the school.
- Boost the confidence of parents and the public in the school.

However, collective participation and accountability in education and school system comprises of all education body manager and agencies in the education sector, the school heads, parents, teachers, community members and other alumni association. Collective participation of different stakeholders helps to enhance the transparency and accountability of school governance as well as the objectivity and fairness of administrative management.

For efficiency and effectiveness in the school system, leadership should take full and ultimate responsibility for ensuring school performance, establish strategies and implement clear, comprehensive and effective governance framework and an internal control system and review their effectiveness regularly. This will also entail that leadership set broad directives and formulate overall strategies, monitor and supervise operational performance and carefully draw up appropriate policies after considering relevant factors so as to achieve the objectives and continuous development of the school (School Development Division) [17].

In the area of responsiveness, leadership should establish a clear responsibility and accountability framework under which powers are properly delegated, set up committees, formulate their framework and clearly define their terms of reference and monitor specific areas so as facilitate the continuous development and operation of the school (School Development Division) [17].

The effectiveness of internal control is closely related to the integrity and performance of every member of the school. Leadership should draw up a code of ethics for self-improvement purposes. Leadership should act with loyalty and devotion and in the best interest of the school.

Transparency will include that all leaders should adopt a transparent policy and an open attitude towards disclosing information about school performance and operation, such as school development plans, reports and financial situation of the school, evaluate the progress towards the targets and disclose other relevant information as required by law.

Leadership must encourage active communication and stakeholders given adequate opportunities to express their views at meetings and views be headed to and communication strengthen a through various channels. Meetings should be organized when necessary and high attendance maintained. Leadership must ensure that the procedures for taking actions should be in line with the education regulation, Code of Aid/conduct as well as the requirements and guidelines issued by the Education Bureau (School Development Division) [17].

For effective management of the education and school system, leadership must take cognizance of the following which are also embedded in good governance:

- All members in the school must have the ability to act together towards achieving a common goal.
- Opportunities for feedback and updating skills, training are provided and taken advantage of, by team members.
- Conflicts are dealt with and are considered important to decision making and personal growth.
- There must be interpersonal relationships.
- Members must have a chance to contribute and learn from and work with others.

When all the above have been properly harnessed by leadership, there will be effective management of the education and school system. However, there are some problems associated with leadership which might affect the management of the Nigerian education and school system and thereby categorizing leadership as bad governance.

Problems Associated with Leadership:

- Corruption and mismanagement of resources. These would lead to poor quality delivery of service, poor productivity and performance.

- Adoption of wrong leadership style and use of harsh policies on subordinates as at when not necessary. This usually leads to abuse of power, inefficiency and lack of cooperation from subordinates.
- Lack of continuous training and inexperience on the part of leadership which will affect his skills in the management of school.
- Poor accountability and lack of consultations of stakeholders in decision-making process.
- Poor communication systems and channels

According to (Lewis and Petterson)⁷, to improve governance and subsequently performance of the school system, it is critical to identify the weak points that contribute to poor performance and corruption. They include pervasive teacher absenteeism especially in developing countries is a symptom of governance failure due to little or no accountability of teachers to employers or parents. Budget leakages, where public education funds fail to reach intended recipients, offers another sign of governance failure due to some combination of mismanagement, lack of incentive to track funds, weak information system that thwart the ability to track funds and absence of mechanisms that would hold officials to account.

Recommendations: Based on all that have been discussed, the following recommendations are made as way towards enhancing good governance for effective leadership and management of the Nigerian education systems.

- Leadership and its subordinates should be encouraged to follow the guide lines of good governance as a strategy for enhancing quality assurance, quality outputs and effective service delivery in education.
- Awareness must be created by propagating good governance for effective leadership and management of education through seminars, conferences and workshops for leadership in the education sector.
- School principals according to (Ekundayo)⁴ must not only be trained in the act of administration but be well-acquainted with the principles that guide and control administrative processes.
- Measuring good governance in education sector entails establishing benchmarks for efficiency, enhancing performances and assessing effectiveness of public education investments. Therefore, government must emphasize and strengthen good governance in the management of schools by making leadership and their subordinates in the education

sector to give proper accountability of all their operations.

- To strengthen good governance in the schools, leadership must lead according to fairness and the rule of law and as well as live good exemplary life for their subordinates to emulate. Leadership must lead with transparency, responsiveness, openness, desist from fraudulent acts like theft, embezzlement, corruption and mismanagement of school resources.
- Constant leadership training and retraining programmes on good governance should be designed in order to boost their efficiency in the management of the education and school system.
- Effective controlling, monitoring and supervisory boards, agencies and panels should be set up for proper checks and balances of leadership operations and activities in schools. Disciplinary actions and penalties should be laid and properly executed on offenders. According to (Lewis and Petterson)⁷ Nigeria has been selected as one of the fourth countries in the world in 2005 that has high level of corruption and bad governance in the education system. Thus, the entire education system in Nigeria needs to be sanitized by propagating good governance in the school systems.

CONCLUSION

The poor standard of education in Nigeria at all the levels of education can be traced to bad governance of the education sector by the school leadership. The Nigerian school systems can only be productive and rise to standards if there is effective and efficient management of educational resources by leadership through enforcement of good governance. Any country's education system whose leadership practices good governance in the management of its educational systems stands to promote broad base development, raise high standards and thus, try to eradicate inefficiency out of its system. When leadership exhibits broad commitment towards the subordinate welfare, it increases performances and productivity which stimulates quality delivery of service.

For elective management of the school systems, leadership must embrace the principles of good governance in all ramifications which include: transparency, openness, responsiveness, accountability, consensus orientation, efficiency and effectiveness, equity and inclusiveness, rule of law and participation. Only through the adoption of these principles that Nigerian school systems can survive and maintain high standards.

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