

## School Leadership Effectiveness and Accountability a Panacea for National Growth

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**Abstract:** The study focused on school leadership effectiveness and accountabilities as a panacea for National growth. The need for this review was to establish how school, leadership effectiveness in accountability enhances national growth in a country like Nigeria. The study through this review emphasize on concept of school leadership, effectiveness and accountability. Also qualities of good leadership and challenges to effective leadership were highlighted. Centrally the studies draw attention to the need for accountability in leadership for national growth to include setting up benchmark, transparency, establishment of record and appointment of highly intelligent and experienced leaders. Moreso, the study recommends among other that leaders should be more transparent and as well course them to give yearly or quarterly account/progress report of their stewardship/achievements.

**Key words:** School Leadership • Effectiveness • Accountability and National Growth

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### INTRODUCTION

Economic realities require that all sectors of the Nigerian economy must implement strategies to develop and maintain highly skilled employees in every sector of the society. Today the Nigerian education sector is bedeviled by a myriad of problems ranging from inadequate basic facilities/equipment, funding, staffing, rapid dilapidation/vandalisation of structural facilities, demoralized personnel, examination malpractice, cultism, incessant strikes, political instability, among others. These challenges of building a great and dynamic economy as well as a strong and self-reliant nation have been largely traced to ineffective leadership. The main features of effective leadership include; accountability, transparency, vision and dedication.

It is quite obvious that Nigeria is as a developing nation is one of the most naturally endowed countries across the globe. However, despite this availability of human and material resources, as well as her global recognition as the giant of Africa, her citizens are still languishing in penury and abject poverty due to inequitable distribution of the nation's wealth as a result of ineffective leadership and accountability.

[1] observed that the trouble with Nigeria does not arise from climatic weather condition nor from the air we breath but from bad leadership. This implies that leadership is the bane of social economic development of

Nigerians According to [2] no organization can grow beyond the level of its leadership. We may have many people filling administrative positions but the need is for the true leaders who are able to do the job more effectively.

The Nigerian education system is highly bastardized by a myriad of problems that needs urgent attention, which this paper, attempts to assess school leadership effectiveness and accountability as the panacea for national cohesion and global competitiveness. These aforesaid terms and how they relate to school management are conceptualized herein. The challenge to effective leadership and the way forward is also elucidated.

**School Leadership:** A school leader is also known as the chief administrator or manager of an educational institution. Leadership is the ability to bring out a number of talents in yourself and to operate effectively, through the use of other people, making them gladly accept the set goals/objectives, with a degree of freedom to do things in their ways [3]. [4] defined leadership as the ability of an individual to persuade other members of a group to willingly participate in the activities or make contributions that will lead to the achievement of the groups' goals. They also affirmed that, a leader, whether elected, appointed or simply emerges as a person who gets things done by enlisting the effort of others.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2010) defined leadership as, the position of being the leader of a group, organization (as school) and country or the equality of being good at leading, a group, organization or country. Leadership is also the process of influencing others to achieve organizational goals.

[5] however, viewed leadership as a process or directing and influencing task related activities of group members towards achieving group objectives. Leadership is simply viewed as an influence. It has to do with influencing others to follow you in doing what is either good or bad. It is influencing the reasoning, thinking and action of others to work co operatively so as to achieve set goals and objectives.

From the aforesated plethora of definitions of leadership, one can easily deduce the following points as major ingredients of leadership as opined by [6].

- Taking initiative to achieve group purpose
- Initiating new structures of procedures for accomplishment of organizational goals or objectives.
- The possession of some power or personal attributes that are usually normative in nature.
- Directing and coordinating the activities of others towards goal achievement.
- The interrelationship between the leader and the situational variables.
- The exercise of influence on the part of the leaders over the behaviour of one or more other people in the organization.

From the above conceptualization, it becomes obvious that leadership is therefore indispensable in any organization or group and can have a major influence in organizational performance to ensure national cohesion and global competitiveness.

**Concept of Effectiveness:** Effectiveness refers to the extent to which pre-determined goals and objective are accomplished. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2010) effectiveness connotes something which is successful and working in a way it was intended. It can also be viewed as, a successful outcome of any venture that has been undertaken, with the sole intention of achieving good result for the benefit of the society in general.

In the school context therefore, it can be measured in relation to the quality, quantity, equity or equality of educational instruction. It is quite obvious that

effectiveness is a very broad concept which covers purpose, effort and achievement. In x-raying effectiveness, terms like quality, improvement, development, monitoring, reviewing, appraisal, evaluation, accountability, performance, etc. are constantly used. School effectiveness is measured through different processes like; school performance in terms of learners' achievements, comparison of performance of two or more educational institutions; expenditure incurred per a learner; activities carried out in classes, display of positive leadership features.

School effectiveness also demands accountability and the necessity to take responsibility for school outcomes. Thus, [7] define school effectiveness as a multi- disciplinary and multi-level activity, where productivity in terms of quantity and quality of school product is seen as the ultimate criterion and all other criteria are seen as preconditions and means.

From the above conceptualization, one can easily comprehend that effective leadership in any school system is a basic to the performance of other school activities. The managerial functions in a school system are baseless or directionless without effective leadership. It therefore behooves on government and school administrators to note that, knowledge of what constitute effective leadership is a pre-requisite for selecting some school personnel to serve in leadership position so as to achieve national cohesion and global competitiveness.

**Concept of Accountability:** Accountability on the other hand as defined by [8] is to be responsible for something that has been assigned to you. In other words, it means to be controlled by those who placed you in a position of authority and you must be prepared to explain and just if your actions to them.

Accountability may also be defined as setting goals, evaluating the effective achievement of the major objective and at what price presenting and interpreting this information to the public and accepting for failure if any [9]. Accountability is therefore linked to the notion of stewardship. This behooves on all school administrators as a basic requirement to be faithful at all times. In theory, accountability may be viewed as a process of just if cost by presenting the positive effect derived from expenditures.

On the whole, school leadership, effectiveness and accountability are concepts that are often used interwoven as far as the issue of basic quality education and other means of survival are concerned. Effective leadership and efficient management of available

resources and proper accountability are factors that must be taken into cognizance and handled with utmost sense of integrity and veracity in the process of providing the basic quality education for the nation's sustainable development.

Accountability is the hallmark of effective leadership which involves team work. A transparent and an accountable leader must explain what he or she intends to do and accept responsibility for the accomplishment of group objectives. An accountable leader must also provide information of what has been achieved and how, so that those who appointed or elected him/her would be well informed and not depend on rumour to gather information on what he/se is doing or wants to do.

[10] emphasized that leaders must make it clear to their subordinates that they will be held accountable for the work delegated to them. This also implies that for a school administrator as a leader to be effective and accountable, supervision of instructions is a necessary ingredient and comparison must be made between actual and predetermined progress in terms of global standards and performances to ensure national cohesion and global competitiveness.

**Qualities of Effective Leadership:** The qualities that determine the effectiveness of a leader are dependent on the situation of the task to be carried out. This is in addition to the skills, approaches and expectations of the followership, the organization goals, the school environment, the past experiences of the leaders and the subordinates. This leads to contingency approaches which must be taken into cognizance by school administrators at all levels or systems of education.

This is why [11] opined that, "it is more fruitful to consider leadership as relationship between the leader and the situation than as a universal pattern of characteristics possessed by certain people". Although there are still some common qualities, that are possessed by most leaders in various organizations or societies. These qualities according to [12] are as follows:

- A leader should be able to inspire his followers
- A leader should be a motivator
- A leader should be optimistic and abhor pessimism
- A leader should have a clear vision of the direction he wants his organization to go.
- A leader should be intelligent so as to be able to make reasonable judgment of events and situations.
- A leader should be emotionally stable.

- An effective leader should possess the requisite charisma to enable him store the emotions of men and capture their hearts and minds.

In addition to the aforesaid qualities, [13] stated four basic essential qualities of leadership, with an acronym "WIST", which stands for wisdom, integrity, sensitivity in approach and thinking and tenacity. This is further elucidated as follows:

#### **WISDOM:**

- Able to create visions of the future and pursue them.
- Intuitive, yet wise in the way the vision is pursued.
- Judges people and situations well.
- Has thoughts and opinions on the future of business methods and the nature of work.
- Inspiring when necessary and able to be a mentor at all times.
- Adapt at influencing and persuading others.
- Aware of the demands of organizational politics - a communicator and networker.

#### **INTEGRITY**

- Demonstrate to others that they are worthy of trust.
- Does not operate on hidden agenda.
- Open and honest in dealing with others.
- Does not shrink from candour when necessary.

#### **SENSITIVITY IN APPROACH**

- Can operate as a coach
- Is a good listener
- Able to empower and develop others
- Understands the power of teams and how to work with them.
- Capable of learning continuously.
- A facilitator of learning and of situations.

#### **SENSITIVITY IN THINKING**

- Conforming in approach when necessary but capable of non-conformity when appropriate
- Able to handle and embrace diversity of approach and opinion.
- Creative - can think ahead strategically and able to communicate strategy.
- Able to think ahead strategically and able to communicate strategy.

- A risk taker when necessary. Adventurous and courageous.

#### **TENACITY**

- Dynamic energetic.
- Hardworking, yet able to balance work and home life.
- Able to cope with pressure.
- Capable of handling own stress and other people stress.
- Discipline in own approach to situations.
- Able to cope with failure and setbacks.
- Tenacious — doesn't give up.
- Understands and cope with the pressure of power.
- Able to handle uncertainty and to help and help other people do so as well.
- Demonstrates optimism when necessary.
- Handles change well; plans it and make it happen.

**Challenges to Effective Leadership in Nigerian Educational System:** From the foregoing, it is quite obvious that, becoming an effective leader is something one chooses to do through a process of action and self-discovery. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, people often buy their way into leadership positions through the use of politics, quota system, economic power, ethnicity, bribery and corruption as well as Godfatherism. Those leaders who had their way into leadership position through any of the aforementioned process work autocratically to recover what they spent and to settle their Godfathers before leaving such positions held.

It has been noticed with exasperation that most teachers in some states in Nigeria pay as much as #50, 000 to N 400, 000 to school Board members and Local Government Education Authority Secretaries to be appointed as principals and headteachers of schools. This is at the expenses of merit, experience and required qualification which leads to maladministration.

As a result of this, Nigeria educational institutions are faced with a myriad of problems such as abandoned projects, insecurity, inadequate funds and unqualified staff, cultism, incessant strike actions, lack of adherence to standards and merit in terms of staff recruitment and students admission, rioting and destruction of school plants, examination malpractice, sex abuse, etc. thus, leading to the production of half-baked graduates who cannot be creative or functional in the society. This adversely affects the quality and quantity of Nigerian goods and services which in turn reduces the national income and place high demand on white collar

jobs by these graduates rather than being creative and self-reliant.

Management is the greatest challenge to effective leadership in Nigeria educational institutions. It is the fundamental force within any organization. Management is the process or act of harnessing human, material and financial resources as well as time to achieve organizational goals, through specialized skills and approaches. The task of any educational leader or administrator is to judiciously convert available resources of people, materials, finance, time and space into useful enterprise to achieve desired results for which the Institutions were established.

#### **Need for Accountability in School Leadership for Nation Growth:**

- Setting up of benchmark: Accountability will help in setting up benchmark for leadership effectiveness in schools. This wills the institutional heads to understand the standard through which school leaders will operate upon.
- Transparency: Accountability in schools will help in ensuring that schools leaders are conscious of their activities and as well ensure that school transactions are in line with the laid down rules and regulative in schools. There by help to be transparent.
- Establishment of records: It help leaders to maintain good record so as to promotion the effectiveness or image of their leadership.
- Appointment of highly intelligent and experienced leaders. This means that accountability propagate school image, thereby x-ray the leaders image and pane for appointment of school leaders that is devoid of ethnicism, Gofatherism and bribery,

#### **CONCLUSION**

School leadership effectiveness and accountability is crucial to civilization and survival in this age of globalization. This is what can lead to quality, creative and functional education, an education hat can quickly and rapidly respond to the changing needs of the society and the demands of global realities so as to guarantee national cohesion and global competitiveness. It therefore behooves on all tiers of government, stakeholders and the general public to note that, anybody aspiring for leadership position must be ready to serve and provide effective leadership and be accountable to those who appointed or elected him or her in such position. He or

she must be capable of exhibiting most of the aforementioned leadership qualities and be ready to adapt and blend all the leadership styles and types to achieve the philosophy and objectives of Nigerian educational system. Unless this is done, Nigerians will continue to languish in abject poverty and penury due to ineffective leadership and lack of accountability in the education sector. We must stop paying lip service to educational matters. This we cannot continue to do, because we have already been left far behind when compared with other countries of the world.

**Recommendations:** To achieve school leadership effectiveness and accountability in Nigeria, the following must be strictly adhered to:

- There should be well defined criteria/benchmark for appointing/electing school administrator.
- Appoint highly intelligent and experienced as well as gifted staff on basis of merit to head educational institutions devoid of ethnicism, Godfatherism and bribery.
- School administrators as leaders must be transparent and coursed to give quarterly or yearly account or progress report of their stewardship/achievements.
- The previous records of intending school leaders must be critically assessed before appointment as head of any educational institution.
- Only skillful and dynamic staff in the management of resources, both materials, finances and human should be appointed to head schools.

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