The Contexts for Students’ Learning and Effective School Improvement through the Characteristics of Management and Organisational Analysis

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Abstract
The desire for achieving students’ learning and school improvement is contemporarily linked in literature with effective school management. The school as an organisation requires excellent management pedigree characterised with administrative leadership in teaching and learning, programme coordination, community of practice (i.e. interaction between principal, teachers and students) and high academic standards (OECD, 2001). This paper provides a position on the suitability of current managerial practices and organisational analysis in achieving students’ learning and school improvement. Discussion on dynamic engagement management approach was obtained from literature and total quality management (TQM) in school management was found to be relevant for obtaining the standards needed in our purpose for this paper. Issues emerged on high quality teacher development and the synthesis of Willis Hawley and Linda Valli (as published in Westchester Institute for Human Services Research), of the professional development literature create satisfying and useful information for achieving students’ learning and school improvement. The focus is on schools as an ideal organisation where the conditions of teachers’ working life are influenced by the management provided by principals, and it is widely assumed that school leadership directly influences the effectiveness of teachers and the achievement outcomes of students. The teacher represent the techno-structure (within school organisation), and as well known as analysts, design systems concerned with the formal planning, implementation and control of the work, therefore principals must imbibe concrete and current managerial skills, experiences and beliefs to successfully manage teachers in translating their objectives in the structural and logistical changes of school organisation. The focus of the position paper is towards achieving quality learning in schools and making Nigerian children meet up and be part of the struggle in the Global drive towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for children education by 2015. This brief established four characteristics of school management and organisation (process variables) as consistently described in literature and as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. concluded It impacted towards attaining success in students’ achievement and school improvement, principals must coordinate and provide teachers with relevant contextual and contemporary teaching functions, teaching procedures and management experiences that would make them function effectively in teaching profession.

Keywords: management and organizational analysis, instructional quality, total quality management, leadership responsibilities, curriculum planning and school improvement conflict

INTRODUCTION
The question of, “What characterised management and organisation in schools with effective improvements?” as asked without further qualification, is too indefinite to answer. Too indefinite because, there are too many activities, too many fundamental issues, too many assumptions, facts and values, and too many aims fits under the umbrella of the phrase management and organisation in learning. This subject further asserts a fact-value distinction with the inclusion of the life of learning i.e. effective school improvement. Currently, educational researchers are gradually shifting from efforts based on quantifiable variables i.e. status variables (such as qualifications, experiences, students-teachers ratio etc) in identifying factors that influence students’ learning and effective school improvements, and have considerably expanded their scope of studies to greater recognition of more complex variables i.e. process variables, which are characterised by administrative leadership in instruction, programme coordination, community of practice (i.e. interaction between principal, teacher and students) and academic standards (OECD, 2001).

Perhaps one way to expatiate on this is to say that status variables are easier to assess and manipulate, while process variables appear to offer greater potential for understanding school effectiveness and successful students’ learning. The change in focus towards status variables is derived from the potential to effectively achieve quality learning in schools and
making Nigerian children meet up and be part of the struggle in the global drive towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for children education by 2015. This paper is a brief on the four characteristics of school management and organisation (process variables) as consistently described in literature and as mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

MANAGEMENT THEORIES
Early management theories consisted of numerous attempts at getting to resolve the persistent conflicts in the life of organisations between labour and entrepreneurs. This was at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century in Europe and United States. Since then, sociologists, social scientists, philosophers, political scientists and management theorists are developing theories to provide lasting solutions to human resources related management issues. Notable among these theories include:

- Scientific management school;
- Classical organisation school;
- Behavioural school;
- Management science;
- The system approach;
- The contingency approach; and
- The Dynamic engagement approach.

The managers and theorists who developed this assumption about human relationships, did so with little precedents as large scale industrial enterprise was very new and some of the assumptions they made might therefore seem simple or unimportant (Galbraith & Jeffery, 2008). This literature however revealed that the principles of the earlier philosophical thoughts are no longer suitable to the current managerial practices and by extension to the management and development of school organisation. The only philosophy among the listed management theories to be discussed is the “Dynamic Engagement Approach”, because of the consequences of this management theory on learning and its potentials for effective school improvement.

Dynamic engagement is used in this context to emphasise the intensity of modern organisational relationships which are pursued through the continuous professional development of teachers and the intensity of the time pressures that govern the relationships. Six different themes are identified in the dynamic engagement management theory and its relationships to students’ learning and school improvement:

New Organisational Environment
The dynamic engagement approach recognises that an organisational environment is not some set of fixed, impersonal forces. Rather, it is a complex, dynamic, web within which people interact with each other. As a result managers not only pay attention to their own concerns, but also understand what is important for other managers within the organisation and in other organisation. Teachers need to interact with other teachers to create opportunities for quality learning and jointly work on the condition under which their schools prosper and improve. The theory of competitive strategy developed by Michael Porter which focuses on how managers can influence the conditions in industries when they interact provides a good illustration of the opportunities which professional development portends for contemporary schools as new organisational environment.

Ethics And Social Responsibility
Managers using a dynamic engagement approach pay close attention to the values that guide people in their organisations. The corporate culture that embodies those values, and values held by the people outside the organisation. This idea came in to prominence with the publication of Peters and Waterman in 1982. They concluded that “the top performers create a board, uplifting, shared culture and coherent frame work within which charged up people search for adoptions”. Consequently, school managers must exercise moral courage by placing the values of excellence at the top of the Agenda. Dynamic engagement discourages situations where school managers do things in the way they always have it. To achieve school improvement, there is a need to continuously strive towards excellence and remain focused on professional development as the organisational theme. Excellence and values are ethical concepts which are best achieved through professional development. The dynamic engagement approach moves ethics from the fringe of management theory to the heart of professional learning.

Globalisation and Management
The dynamic engagement approach recognises that the world is at the manager’s doorstep. The twenty-first century managers think of themselves as global citizens in lieu of the world financial markets running 24 hours a day and with the remotest part of the planet connected on telephone. A simple comparison to illustrate how things have changed is when you look through the 1940s, you would find very little about international factors with good reason in the time and place. A good school administrator supports improvement that is responsive to the classroom context (Fraatz, 1989) and professional development, and provides support for classroom teachers. Principals must also create and maintain a sense of trust in the school; use positive micro-politics to negotiate between managerial, technical, and institutional arenas; and create a professional community and networks for communication within the school (Murphy & Louis, 1999), and they must
also maintain a momentum of continuous growth (Goldring & Rallis, 1993).

**Inventing and Reinventing Organisations**

Managers who practice dynamic engagement continually search for ways to unleash the creative potential of their employees and themselves. A growing chorus of the dynamic engagement theorists is about urging managers to rethink the standard organisation structures to which they have become accustomed. Professional development programs provided for school improvement should extend beyond traditional workshops to include activities such as peer observation, mentoring, the creation of teacher portfolios, action research projects, whole-school or team/department study groups, curriculum planning and development, literature circles, critical friends groups, data analysis activities, school improvement planning, the shared analysis of student work, lesson study, or teacher self-assessment and goal-setting activities. Professional development activities should be collaborative but also differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers (Chambers, Lam, & Mahitivanichcha, 2008).

**Culture and Multiculturalism**

Managers who embrace the dynamic engagement approach recognise that the various perspective and values that people of different cultural backgrounds bring to their organisations are not only a fact of life but a significant source of contributions. Joanne Martin pioneered the cultural analysis of organisations. She explained how cultural differences create unprecedented challenges for modern managers. People can preserve their sense of uniqueness and their authenticity only by valuing what they hold in common in the organisation and communities in which they live. The focus in learning and schools improvement should as well involve a culture in which professional collaboration is valued and emphasised. This approach may involve coaching, mentoring, reflection, and self-assessment. Through professional development, school leaders are often better equipped with a culture of promoting collaboration among principals, teachers, and other schools and ministry officials, and to create opportunities for staff to share in leadership responsibilities and develop and demonstrate leadership potential (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Salazar, 2007). Multiculturalism has become a moving target in schools that are successful in students’ learning, as more and more people become conscious of their particular tradition and ties.

**Quality**

The dynamic engagement approach emphasises that total quality management (TQM) must be in every manager’s vocabulary. All managers should be thinking about how every organisational process can be conducted to provide product and service. Researchers like Willis Hawley and Linda Valli (as published in Westchester Institute for Human Services Research, n.d.), in their synthesis of the professional development literature, found out that the high-quality teacher development required for school improvement is as follows:

- Informed by research on teaching and learning and provides a strong foundation in subject content and methods of teaching;
- Integrated with district goals to improve education, guided by a coherent long-term plan, and driven by disaggregated data on student outcomes;
- Designed in response to teacher-identified needs and utilises collaborative problem solving in which colleagues assist one another by discussing dilemmas and challenges;
- Primarily school-based, provides sufficient time and other resources, and enables teachers to work with colleagues in their school improvement;
- Continuous and ongoing, incorporates principles of professional learning, and provides follow-up support for further learning;
- Evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.

**Organisational Analysis**

An organisational analysis is a process by which an organisation's systems, capacity, and functionality are assessed in order to increase its efficiency, performance, and output. With the use of various models and theories, an organisational analysis aims to understand behavioural relationships, structure, and technology in establishments. This is a process of reviewing the development, work environment, personnel and operation of a business or other type of association such as the school organisation. Performing a periodic detailed organisational analysis of an organisation can be a useful way for management to identify problems or inefficiencies that have arisen, but have not yet been addressed, and then develop strategies for dealing with them.

The proliferation of complex organisations has made most human activities become collective endeavours. The collectives manage the input and output in order to create private or public good. In organisational analysis, "management" is typically defined as the process of utilising numbers and resources (personnel, materials, physical plant, equipment, information, time, and money) to accomplish organisational goals. An analysis, or sometimes called restructuring, of an organisation may become necessary when either external or internal forces have created a problem or opportunity. Some examples of pressures that may lead to the implementations of an
organisational analysis are:

- The environment shifts;
- Technology changes;
- Organisations grow;
- Leadership changes.

Organisations must have a clear and precise vision and mission. The purpose of the organisation must be realistic in the interest of the short-term and serving the best interest of all stakeholders. Long-term strategy should also strive to meet the mission of the organisation, particularly in the context of decision-making, and the long term interest of the organisation’s stakeholders. Having a unified strategy helps guide the organisation into a unified direction rather than branching out and not having a clear vision. Employees must clearly know their roles within organisations and how they support the short-term and long-term organisational strategy.

There are five basic parts of an ideal organisation:

- The first is strategic apex or the top management who have the ideas and the vision for the organisation (proprietors and governmental agencies);
- The second is the operating core, who hires the workers to do the basic work of the organisation (principals);
- The third is intermediate management (or middle management). As the organisation grows, these middle managers are necessary to become the liaisons between the workers and top management (heads of departments);
- The fourth, techno-structure, also known as analysts, design systems concerned with the formal planning, implementation and control of the work (teachers);
- The fifth and last aspect is support staff - they provide indirect services to the rest of the organization (clerks, cleaners, security, account officers etc).

Effect of Instructional and Administrative Leadership in Achieving Quality Instruction in Schools

Teachers teach and work in schools that are usually administered by managers, often known as principals or headmasters. School administration is itself often part of larger administration units. The conditions of teachers’ working life are influenced by the administration and leadership provided by principals, and it is widely assumed that school leadership directly influences the effectiveness of teachers and the achievement outcomes of students (e.g. Hallinger and Murphy, 1992; OECD, 2001).

School principals face challenges due to rising expectations for schools and schooling. This is consequence upon the technological innovation, migration and globalisation that characterised the 21st century development. There are needs for countries to aim to transform their educational systems to prepare all young people with the knowledge and skills required in this changing world, hence, the roles of principals and teachers as school leaders and related expectations have changed radically. They are no longer expected merely to be good managers of schools - effective school leadership is increasingly viewed as key to large-scale education reform and to improved educational outcomes. Literature revealed that the principals of secondary schools exhibit two main management styles - instructional leadership and administrative leadership, and that a reasonable number of principal use both styles to a considerable degree. The school management behaviour performed by these principals is described in literature on the basis of five indices (or dimensions) of management as:

School Management Behaviour

1. Management for school objectives – explicit management via the school’s objectives and curriculum development

Principals that exhibit this behaviour frequently take actions to manage schooling operations in accordance with the school’s objectives, with direct emphasis on ensuring that teachers’ instruction in classrooms aims to achieve these objectives. These principals also tend to use student performance levels and examination results to set objectives and promote curricular developments. They endeavour to ensure clarity within the school about the responsibility for coordinating the curriculum. These principals also frequently make sure that teachers’ professional development activities are aligned with school objectives and curricular objectives.

2. Instructional management – actions to improve teachers’ instruction

Principals using the instructional management strategies frequently work with teachers to improve weaknesses and address pedagogical problems, and also to solve problems with teachers when there are challenges to learning in a particular classroom. Also, they often inform teachers about possibilities to update their curricular knowledge and instructional skills. Finally, these principals are vigilant about disruptive student behaviour in classrooms. In general, these principals spend significant amounts of their managerial time in attempting to improve classroom instruction.

3. Direct supervision of instruction in the school – actions to directly supervise teachers’ instruction and learning outcomes

Principals in this category frequently use direct observation of teachers’ pedagogical practices and also make frequent suggestions to teachers.
on how to improve instruction in classrooms. These principals also frequently monitor students’ academic efforts and work.

4. Accountable management – managing accountability to stakeholders and others

Accountable management principals see their role as making the school accountable internally and to stakeholders outside the school. Their role is to ensure that ministry-approved instructional approaches are explained to teachers and that all teachers are held accountable for improving their teaching skills. These principals also focus on convincing students’ parents of the need for new ideas and procedures at the school.

5. Bureaucratic management – management actions mostly aimed at bureaucratic procedures

Principals exhibiting bureaucratic management believe that it is important for them to ensure that everyone in the school follows the official rules. They see their role as being significantly involved in dealing with problems in the scheduling of teachers and courses and in ensuring adequate administrative procedures and reporting to higher authorities. These principals also focus on creating an orderly and task-oriented atmosphere in the school.

Management Styles and Leadership in School Improvement

The five behavioural indices cover a significant range of principals’ management actions. These five indices will be distributed within the two earlier mentioned management styles – instructional leadership and administrative leadership. The two management styles in this context characterise more comprehensively principals’ approach to their leadership responsibilities. Principals in the category of the first management style are significantly involved in what is referred to in research literature on school management as an instructional leadership style. This index was derived by averaging the indices for the first three management behaviours, management for school goals, instructional management and direct supervision of instruction in the school. The second management style can be best referred to as an administrative leadership style and was derived in literature by averaging the indices for the management behaviours - accountable management and bureaucratic management. This style of management focuses on administrative tasks, enforcing rules and procedures, and accountability.

The two styles are not necessarily mutually exclusive, even though they are sometimes portrayed as such in the research literature on school leadership (e.g. Hallinger and Murphy, 1992). This point is reinforced by the idea of an evolution of school leadership and a move from competent administration to school management which includes an emphasis on instructional leadership and a stronger focus on student learning. A number of principals use both styles to a considerable degree. So, while these styles help to capture the underlying approaches that principals take to their job, particularly concerning teachers, they need not be mutually exclusive in practice.

Coordination of Instructional Programme

The term, instructional programme, refers to a replicable instructional activity that is designed and implemented to achieve a mentioned instructional objective, which is determined to effect some clearly defined change or changes in a selected group of learners. The primary criteria for determining the
success or the effectiveness of an instructional programme are the measures of changes in the selected group of learners. These changes can be affective, academic, social, or physical. Every instructional programme combines a curriculum component (what we teach), and a teaching procedure (how we teach). An instructional programme can be as small as a social skills lesson to teach a child to say thank you at appropriate times and in appropriate contexts. An instructional programme can be as large as one whole term algebra sequence, or the complete Basic 6 curriculum for basic science and technology programme.

Whether small or large, an instructional program will have a curriculum component that defines the objective(s) for the learner and a set of teaching procedures (the pedagogy) which is the plan to use the curriculum and to achieve the curriculum objective(s). In each instructional programme the essence of instructional accountability; e.g., programme effectiveness, resides in the relationship between the curriculum component and the teaching component. If curriculum objective(s) have been carefully and appropriately set for each learner, then teaching procedures must be progressively adjusted and revised based on the extent to which the curriculum objective(s) have been achieved. The determination of the objectives achievement is based on the measures of changes in the learner. If, after exhausting the possible teaching procedure alternatives, we fail to achieve the curriculum objective(s), then we must revisit the assumptions that led us to believe a curriculum objective was appropriate for the learner. In many cases we will find that the reason a curriculum objective was inappropriate was our failure to ensure that the learner had the prerequisite knowledge, skills, or attitudes needed for success in the selected instructional programme.

Decisions on effectiveness of instructional programme are not one-shot decisions (Bateman, 1992). First, we use the best information available to select an instructional programme. Second, we monitor the implementation of the programme to verify that programme objective(s), particularly the projected impact on all learners, are indeed being achieved. In an ideal situation, teachers would be able to select from a range of effective programmes. These programmes would be valid. To be classified as valid, the programmes would do what it claims to do. The most important claims would identify the academic, social and attitudinal changes in learners. Other claims could include the costs, the amount of teacher support and training, the time needed to achieve the projected learner(s) change and the extent to which other curriculum objectives are supported.

Additionally, the teacher monitoring of the program implementation is extremely important, because immediate adjustments do prevent failure experiences. Instructional effectiveness must be measured by examining the impact of specific instructional programmes on students. Related terms of similar intent are programme validity and learner verification. Instructional materials serve as vehicles to support the implementation of instructional programmes. The term, learner verification, is often used in association with instructional materials. In order to verify or validate instructional materials, e.g., a textbook, we must know how the materials will be used in the classroom. The research has consistently noted the wide variability among teachers with similar students and using the same textbooks and related materials (Batemann, 1992; Brophy, 1986). While instructional materials can certainly limit or enhance a teacher’s efforts, the associated teaching procedures (e.g., the effective use of teaching functions, time management, feedback procedures, etc.), will be very important.

**Academic Standards as Evidence of Success in Students Learning and School Improvement**

Standards describe the objectives of schooling, the destinations at which students should arrive at the end of the unit or term. For example, most standards expect students graduating from senior secondary school to be able to write for different audiences in different formats -- things such as reports, instructions, literary criticism, and persuasive and reflective essays -- and to demonstrate a command of standard written English (Slavin, 1989).

Note that the standard doesn't prescribe how to get the students to this destination -- that is determined by the curriculum. Standards do not prescribe any particular curriculum. National policy or benchmarks do not prevent teachers from choosing teaching materials and methods, and this aspect of teachers’ responsibility should not be compromised. Standards indicate what students should know and should be able to do at basic 4, basic 6, basic 9 etc. The teacher can choose whatever curriculum he or she finds appropriate to help the students meet the standards. Standards are the WHAT of education while curriculum and instruction are the HOW.

Two kinds of standards are referred in this paper -- content standards and performance standards. Content standards indicate what students should know and should be able to do. For example, students should be able to write and speak for a variety of purposes and for diverse audiences, using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. A performance standard measures how well a student's work meets the content standard. A performance standard has levels (5, 4, 3, 2, and 1; or advanced, proficient, novice, and basic)
and frequently, examples of students’ work are provided for each level. Performance standards are essentially the same as rubrics. Rubrics describe what student work must consist of to get a certain score. Rubrics or performance standards list one of the characteristics of student work -- for example, problem-solving in mathematics or persuasive writing in English/language arts. All examples of problem-solving or persuasive writing, no matter what the topic, should contain these characteristics.

CONCLUSION
This paper focused on how management and organisation in schools influence successful students’ achievement. The preview in the brief on management theories and organisational analysis gave evidences of how modern organisations are driven by management theories. The dynamic engagement approach is emphasised in this paper, because it is a very strong influence on the success of modern management and its strengths are derived from the combination of earlier management theories that include the principles of the scientific management, human relations movement, efficiencies of bureaucracy, principles of administration and many others. The instructional leadership and administrative leadership styles were used to explain the management styles provided by principals, thus, five indices of school management behaviours were established. The implications of this were further discussed in the coordination of instructional programmes and the implication of academic standards in promoting students’ achievements (Budd, 2009). Towards achieving success in students’ achievement and school improvement, principals must coordinate and provide teachers with relevant contextual and contemporary teaching functions, teaching procedures, management and experiences that would make them function effectively in teaching profession. Teachers must be supported to understand the broader context of school as an organisation and to develop management skills, attitudes, and the dispositions to empower them to participate much more competently in school management.

REFERENCES


