

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The general purpose of this work was to find out how delegation of authority affects effective school management. Specifically, it sought to (1) Determining the extent to which delegation of authority can contribute to effective school management (2) Examining whether delegation of authority affects the provision of quality education in schools (3) Finding out the relationship between a principal's philosophy of delegation of authority and the teaching learning process. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the researcher in this study; Delegation of authority does not significantly contribute to effective school management; There is no significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools: The principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has no significant effect on the teaching learning process. Out of a population of 147 teachers and administrators, a sample of 69 out of 138 teachers was selected from different schools through a simple random sampling technique while 9 were purposively selected. A self-constructed semi- structured questionnaire was used whose reliability was ascertained through the test re-test with a reliability coefficient of 0. 82. The research adopted a mixed method in collecting data. That is, self-delivery, the use of research assistants and social media services (mostly via WhatsApp and few emails) due to insecurity in the North West Region of Cameroon. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the instruments. Findings revealed that delegation of authority has a significant influence on the provision of quality education in schools with calculated X^2 value of 11.05; the principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has no significant relationship with the teaching learning process (3.07); and that there is a significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools (12.7). It was recommended amongst others that principals should constantly follow-up teachers whom they delegate authority to and that policy makers should instruct delegates to organized seminars, instructing them on the need to implement delegation of authority in their schools, school administrator should involve teachers by using their creative minds for the achievement of school objectives.

KEYWORDS: Delegation of Authority, Quality Education, Effective Management, Cameroon

Background and the Problem

The priority of any school is to provide quality education and services to its staff and students in a better and efficient way. This can effectively be done through delegation of authority or responsibilities. Delegation of responsibility is very essential for the success and efficient running of

any institution. It is a very important function of the principal in staff personnel administration. Whether a particular school is big or small, there is no way the principal or headmaster can successfully administer it all alone. He must practice to delegate responsibilities to his subordinate staff in his own interest and in the interest of the institution he serves. No organization can function effectively without delegation. Delegation originates from the fact that one person alone cannot successfully discharge all the responsibilities in an organization or institution. As a head, one is expected to manage the school through one's own know-how, the work of other teachers, staff and even students. It is said that "many hands make work load lighter".

Delegation is the managerial process by which an individual manager or supervisor (principal) transfers part of his legitimate authority to a subordinate (teacher) but without passing on the ultimate responsibility which has been entrusted to him/her by his own superior (minister) or delegation is the process of assigning duties to subordinates to enable them to act within the authority granted to them; delegation does not take away the ultimate accountability of the senior person (Marry, 2010). Delegation means grant or conferment of authority by a superior to a subordinate for the accomplishment of a particular assignment.

By delegation of authority, therefore "means that the subordinate delegated has the power to make decisions and to act within explicit limits without checking with superiors" (Healthfield, 2004). According to Lunenburg (2010), delegation is the process used by principals to transfer authority from one position to another within a school or school district. According to Terry (1964), Delegation may be classified as (a) Downward: when a higher authority delegates to the lower authority as a sales manager delegates to a salesman (b) Upward: when a lower authority delegates to a higher authority as the shareholders delegate their authority to the Board of Directors, and (c) 'Sideward' when delegation is at an equal level as in a case of a person delegating to his peers in the organization.

Delegation being a process of devolution of authority has the following characteristics:

- 1) Delegation is the authorisation to a subordinate or another organisational unit to act in a certain way independently. The delegatee has to act within the limits prescribed by the delegator. Within these limits the delegatee (subordinate) is not free to act arbitrarily but subject to the policy, rules and regulations framed by the delegating authority.
- 2) Delegation has a dual character. A superior or delegator delegates the authority to the subordinate but at the same time retains the authority. It has been rightly observed by Terry (1964). "It is something like imparting knowledge you share with others who then possess the knowledge, but you still retain the knowledge too"
- 3) Delegation implies partial delegation of authority. The delegator does not delegate his entire authority to his subordinates for in case, he delegates all his authority, he cannot exercise the power to supervise and control. Therefore, delegation is subject to specific or limited terms.

4) Authority once delegated is subject to variance. It can be enhanced, reduced or withdrawn. It all depends upon the requirement of the time and accomplishment of the task.

An important matter is to not confuse delegation with consultation. In the case of delegation, the decision-making authority is fully in the hands of the subordinates in comparison with consultation when the employee can present his or her opinion, but the authority is retained by the manager. Gary (2013) identifies several reasons that sit behind delegation including (1) Develop subordinate skills and confidence (2) Enable subordinates to deal with problems quickly (3) Improve decisions by moving them close to the action (4) Increase subordinate commitment to a task (5) Make the job more interesting for subordinates (6) Reduce workload to manage time better and (7) Satisfy superiors who want managers to delegate more.

According to Marry (2010), an effective manager must monitor a delegated project or task assuming responsibility while allowing the delegated autonomy delegation; therefore, delegation is essentially a two ways power sharing process. When he streams line his/her work load, the amount of time available for essential managerial task will be increased, staff feel motivated and more confident and stress level decreases across the work force. However, In Bamenda III Sub-Division precisely, the concept of delegation of authority or responsibility to subordinates does not appear to be practiced.

On the level of manager, it alleviates functional burdens, gains employees' satisfaction and builds cooperation and trust between manger and employees giving a chance for manger to have full-time for realization more important work (Hamdan & Akif, 2015). So, it reduces physical and intellectual efforts exerted by manager and other employees. The above authors further stress that on the level of an employee, delegation of authority works on achieving functional empowerment, constructing alternative and administrative leadership, making employees feel self-confidence and motivation for Excellency in performance. On the level of customer, it meets the needs of customers rapidly, delivering or providing the service will not be delayed due to delegation authority. Giving the customer a higher level of care and attention, building customer's perceived and creating loyalty and mutual respect for an organization and production in which the organization produced (Hamdan & Akif, 2015).

Delegation of authority is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of results-based management. To be accountable for results, managers have to be duly empowered through the clear delegation of authority in all areas, including, and in particular, human resources management (Fontaine, Gorita & Vislykh, 2004). The primary objective of delegation of authority is to foster a more efficient use of resources and facilitate the emergence of more agile and responsive organizations, thus enhancing overall performance. Because performance improves when the people who are closest to the work have managerial authority and responsibility delegated directly to them, leading private sector organizations ensure that internal processes provide managers with the authority

and flexibility they need to contribute to the organization's mission (Fontaine, Gorita & Vislykh, 2004).

In the school system therefore the delegation of responsibilities to teachers should not be mistaken to mean that the principal has given up all his powers. This is no so but simply that the delegates (teachers) to whom certain duties have been delegated are performing such duties on behalf of the principal. "If anything goes wrong in the process of performing such a delegated function, the final responsibility rest on the principal", (Marry, 2014). As a school administrator, an individual cannot achieve his goals and objectives if he handles all the tasks alone. Here, the principal cannot teach all the subjects, head all the departments, ensures effective discipline, head of all the clubs and cannot also head all the classes. Therefore, the school head will need to use the talents of other teachers who work under him/her not fearing that they will take over from him but rather trusting them and having confidence in them. By doing this the principal actually will be delegating responsibilities and duties to the teachers.

In the educational sub sector, keen observation has proved that delegation of authority is not practiced by some administrators. They may choose not to delegate tasks feeling that they can do better than anybody else. The researcher observed that the concept of delegation of authority has not been effective in the Sub-Division. According to Fonkeng and Tamajong (2009), school administrators face some problems such as poor administration, inadequate teachers, and increase rate of indiscipline among staff and students. The researcher through observation and discussion with some members of staff during a visit to some schools discovered that the principal was reluctant to delegate duties to her subordinates with the fear that they will not do the work well. Some staff members fear criticisms for mistakes and as such, they always wish their bosses to take decisions for fear of being held responsible for any failure. The problem now is what can be done to ensure that effective school management and the various principles of effective delegation of authority be implemented by school heads. Here the researcher is of the opinion that if the principals and head teachers use teachers' experiences and expertise in teaching to delegate authority, the problem of delegation would be a welcomed practice.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this work was to find out how delegation of authority affects effective school management. Specifically, it sought to:

- 1) Determining the extent to which delegation of authority can contribute to effective school management.
- 2) Examining whether delegation of authority affects the provision of quality education in schools.
- 3) Finding out the relationship between a principal's philosophy of delegation of authority and the teaching learning process.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the researcher in his investigation;

- 1) In what way can delegation of authority contribute to effective school management?
- 2) To what extent does delegation affect the provision of quality education in schools?
- 3) What is the relationship between a principal's delegation of power and the teaching/learning process?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the researcher in this study;

Ha₁: Delegation of authority significantly contributes to effective school management.

Ho₁: Delegation of authority does not significantly contribute to effective school management.

Ha₂: There is a significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools.

Ha₃: The principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has a significant effect on the teaching learning process.

Ho₃: The principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has no significant effect on the teaching learning process.

Theoretical framework

Taylor (1856) and his associates thought that workers motivated economics, and limited physiology needs constant directions. Here he provided some guides for the best type of management which includes;

- 1) A large daily task; each person in the establishment high or low should have a clearly defined daily task which requires a full day effort to complete.
- 2) Standard conditions; the workers should be given standardized conditions and appliances to accomplish the task with certainty.
- 3) High pay for success; High pay should be ties to successful completion
- 4) Loss in case of failure; Failure should be personally costly and may lead to loss of jobs.
- 5) Expertise in large organization; an organization becomes increasingly sophisticated.

Task should be made difficult so as to be accomplished only by a first rate work.

From the above theory, one can deduce that when delegating authority, clear directives should be given to the subordinates. Also, the time in which the execution of the task should be made available to the subordinates and they should be motivated if successful and reprimanded if otherwise. Above all, principals should be selective when delegating authority.

Equally, Fayol formulated fourteen management principles to guide management action. Some of these that ties to this study included division of work/labour, parity of authority and responsibility,

discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, and scale of chain. It is pertinent to mention that the above seven of Fayol's fourteen principles of management above are concerned with mostly primarily with aspects of delegation of authority that is principles (1,2,3,4,5,9 and 10). So, managers need to plan effectively before delegating authority to subordinates and also make sure that orders and commands are well implemented constant supervision of work is necessary.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in selected schools in Bamenda III Sub Division, Mezam Division, North West Region of Cameroon adopting a descriptive research design. Out of a population of 147 teachers and administrators, a sample of 69 out of 138 teachers was selected from different schools through a simple random sampling technique while 9 were purposively selected. The instrument used in this research was a semi- structured questionnaire constructed taking into consideration the research question and research objectives. The reliability of the Research instruments was ascertained through the test re-test method with a reliability coefficient of 0. 82. The researcher adopted a mixed method in collecting data. That is, self-delivery, the use of research assistants and social media services (mostly via WhatsApp and few emails) due to insecurity in the North West Region of Cameroon. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the instruments. The method used in analyzing the data was the chi square (X²) test.

FINDINGS

The collection of data in this section was analysed basically using inferential statistics. The validity of the hypotheses was checked using the Chi-square test (X²). The X² table value for all the hypotheses was read at 0.05(5%) alpha (α) level of significance with a degree of freedom (df). The observed and the expected frequencies were computed to enhance the calculation of the calculated X² value as the tables below indicated.

Testing hypothesis one

Ha1: Delegation of authority significantly contributes to effective school management.

Ho1: Delegation of authority does not significantly contribute to effective school management.

Table 1 Calculating the X2 value for hypothesis one

O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
30	37.67	-7.67	58.83	1.56
48	40.33	7.67	58.83	1.46
34	37.67	-3.67	13.47	0.36
44	40.33	3.67	36.66	0.91
49	37.67	11.33	128.37	3.41
29	40.67	-11.67	136.19	3.35
Total				11.05

$$X^2 = 11.05$$

With a 0.05 level of significant and a 2 df, the calculated X2 value (11.05) is greater than the critical value (5.991), we accept the alternative hypothesis and concluded that delegation of authority has a significant influence on the provision of quality education in schools.

Testing hypothesis two

Ha₂: The principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has a significant effect on the teaching learning process.

Ho₂: The principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has no significant effect on the teaching learning process.

Table 2: Calculating the X2 value for hypothesis three

O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
47	49	-2	4	0.08
31	29	2	4	0.14
45	49	-4	16	0.33
33	29	4	16	0.55
55	49	6	36	0.73
23	29	-6	36	1.24
Total				3.07

$$X2 = 3.07$$

At a 0.05 level of significant and a 2 df, the calculated X2 value is 3.07 is less than the critical X2 value which is 5.991 therefore, the alternative hypothesis is disqualified and the null hypothesis accepted which means, the principal's philosophy of delegation of authority has no significant effect on the teaching learning process.

Testing Hypothesis three

H_{a3}: There is a significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools.

H_{o3}: There is no significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools.

Table 3: Calculating the X² value for hypothesis three

O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
2	5	-3	9	1.8
7	4	3	9	2.25
3	5	-2	4	0.8
6	4	2	4	1
5	5	0	0	0
4	4	0	0	0
7	5	3	9	1.8
2	4	-2	4	1
8	5	3	9	1.8
1	4	-3	9	2.25
Total				12.7

The X²value = 12.7

With a 0.05 level of significance and 4 df, the calculated X² value is 12.7 which is greater than the critical value from the Chi –Square table. Here the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education in schools.

DISCUSSION

It was found that delegation of responsibilities really provides the base for effective school management in the Division in the division in particular and the region at large. It has a positive effect on the educational system of a country as it motivates teachers to explore new instructional strategies, innovative approaches to increase effectiveness at work improve on teachers and students' assiduity and above all encourages teachers' professionalism.

Delegation of authority contributes to effective school management

The analysis obtained for hypothesis two showed that the calculated chi-square value 11.05 was greater than the critical value of 5.991, concluding that delegation of authority contributes greatly to effective management in school. This finding is in line with Hall (2015), who posits that the transformation of the educational system needs to be triggered through assigning tasks to subordinates so that everyone

is provided with skills and educational experience that are explicitly designed to equip and incline teaching and learning to thrive in the modern world, and to change the world for the good of all. Furthermore, Riisgaard et al (2016) supports this finding by stating that delegation promotes empowerment that is an effective tool that management and leadership allow a team or an individual staff the freedom and creativity to achieve the strategic goals outlined by management of the educational institution.

Again, this finding is in line with Hubbard (2016) who found that effective delegation provides several benefits to the educational setting as managers are able to mobilize resources, share responsibilities and also focuses on doing a few tasks well. Therefore, Delegation enables management to make the best use of their time and skills as well as ensuring that staff and subordinates are assisted in their growth and development whilst building trust and confidence as well as increasing the amount of expected work to be completed.

Delegation of responsibilities influences the provision of quality education in school

From the analysis conducted for hypothesis three, it was realized that the chi-square calculated value (12.7) is less than the critical value of 5.99, concluding that there is no relationship between delegation of authority and the provision of quality education. This is in congruence with the Education for All policy that delegation of authority should add value to the quality of education by handling and delegating power to qualified staff for quality work done. This means that if power is delegated to unqualified staff the quality of education would not be effective since the unqualified staff would not know what to do to influence teacher's effectiveness and ways to discipline students to take book work serious. Furthermore, Riisgaard et al (2016) states that delegation of authority should be emphasis on education's role in prompting value and attitudes of responsible citizenship and nurturing creative and emotional development which will intern determine how much and how well children learn. The need for quality education and its subsequent management envisages the need to delegate some roles to other staff to ensure that more ground is covered in administering quality education to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Principal's philosophy of delegation of authority does not influence the teaching learning process

From the findings, it was discovered that there is no significant relationship between a principal's philosophy of delegation of responsibilities and the teaching learning process. This is supported by Tambo (2012) who asserts that a country's philosophy of education focuses on the application of philosophical analysis in educational thinking and implementation it serves as a method for identifying societal problems and needs and possible sources with suggestion about ways of solving these problems.

This finding is contrary to Muir (2006) who found that delegation promotes self-esteem as it tends to show that the leader has trust and confidence in the subordinates. He further concluded that that delegation presents an opportunity for subordinates to develop themselves as well as acquire new skills

as they achieve the outlined objectives set by the leader. It goes further to promote innovation and initiative taking among subordinates

CONCLUSION

Based on these findings, delegation of task has proven to have a positive effect on school management which must be taken as an important tool for principals. The management of today is shared with the help of democratic leadership and sound management which is open, flexible and transparent and allows for the participation of school structures; managers should be aware that for them to delegate responsibilities properly there is a need for authority planning and training as far as delegation of authority is concerned. Increasing volume of work requires that there should be some sort of delegation. It becomes difficult for the head of an organisation to keep all the workload to him. If he does like this, the work is sure to suffer and there will be neither efficiency nor economy. Delegation is a universal phenomenon. No organisation can work without devolution of authority as it brings not only efficiency and economy, but also makes the administration smooth. Regular delegation of authority should be done because it is an indispensable aspect of school management.

Delegation is aimed at developing the leadership potentials of subordinates thereby empowering them to assume leadership positions. In the case of empowerment through delegation, it is expected that management and leaders measure the performance of the individual based on the milestone reports and results as well as the final reports submitted. The need for quality education and its subsequent management envisages the need to delegate some roles to other staff to ensure that more ground is covered in administering quality education to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Delegation helps enhance the credibility of the leader. As subordinates are allowed the opportunity to show their strengths and also make contributions to the work, the leader earns some respect and loyalty from the subordinates. Delegation allows a fair sharing of responsibilities and work. School administrators should select the best person to perform delegated tasks and provide them with a lot of training and supervision as well as coaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

To principals and school administrators:

They should constantly follow up teachers to whom they delegate authority because as heads of institution they will give an account to their superiors on how the task was executed. The blame of any unsuccessful task will be shifted on them. They must always plan well before delegating so as to avoid such situations.

The school administrator must involve teachers, administrative staff by using their creative minds for the achievement of the school objectives thus leading to effective school management. The

management team should recognize the need of subordinates to be viewed and the need to achieve. Subordinates should be motivated, rewarded and promoted when task will be accomplished.

To policy makers:

They should instruct inspectors, delegates to organize seminars time to time and instructing principals on the need to implement delegation of authority in their schools for they are not machines but human beings, regular training for both school principals and staff must be revived.

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