



Effective Decision-Making and Policies in Educational System in Nigeria

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Abstract

It is the fundamental objectives of this paper to examine and unveil the effective decision-making and policies in educational system in Nigeria. This paper succinctly analyzed the concept of 'decision-making and policies', the high points of effective decision-making in Educational System in Nigeria, types of decision-making in an organization, the characteristics of a good decision-making, domains of decision-making, stages or steps involved in decision-making. The paper further examined the challenges to effective decision-making in a school system and a critical viewpoint is also x-rayed through the examination of some strategies in ensuring effective decision-making and policies in the educational system. This implies that effective decision-making and policies can only be achieved through applying the required strategies and techniques. Therefore, the paper made some conclusions and recommendations in view of the prevailing circumstances in the educational system in terms of enhancing effective decision-making and policies in the system.

Keywords: Effective, Decision-making, Fundamentals, Policies, Education, System, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Decision-making is key to any organization whether formal or informal. Decisions are made and implemented in schools. Decision-making and policy formulation are the major task of a school administrator or manager, and it is however always the most difficult task. In Nigeria today, one of the sources of educational problems is as a result of making decision and formulation of policies that are not in line with the educational objectives. Decision-making and policies can emanate from the school heads or from the Government through the auspices of Ministry of Education or any other educational agencies, such as Senior Secondary Schools board, in charge of Senior Secondary Schools in case of Rivers State and Universal Basic Education (UBE) in charge of Junior and Primary Schools. But the utmost truth is that decision-making or policy formulation always or often emanate from the superior or at the management level of any organization. Though, inputs can be gathered from the lower echelon or lower cadre. Therefore, decision-making and policy formulation in the school is the major function of the school administrators or managers. That is why, the leadership of school or any

school administrator must be abreast and live to the current happenings in the educational sector, that is, to guide him or her in decision-making and policy formulation.

Leadership is synonymous with decision-making and policies. A leader must take decisions on how resources at his disposal will be put into good use and in the overall interest of the school. This implies that no one can be a school administrator or school head if he or she is afraid or cannot make decision or enact policies that are significant to his or her subordinates, or to the general growth and development of the school system. Okoroma (2016) maintained that decision-making in education is crucial and requires much discipline, perhaps more than in other spheres where services are provided. Decision-making and policies in the school system can be viewed in three areas. First, budget, this has to do with school finances, decisions arising from school budget is very important. School budget according to Okai (2013) is an expression of the systematic process of the school to achieve the goals of the institution's plan, programs of projects within a fiscal year. He went further to explain that it involves the determination of annual education cost. Through the

budget, the school makes decisions and policies regarding personnel, equipment, materials, supplies and professional development. A school management strategy is imperative when preparing a school budget. This is to prevent wastage of resources. Second, is the personnel, in terms of personnel decision, schools are given the opportunity to exercise and determine how best to staff their schools. Meanwhile, personnel decisions can be classified into two areas. First, determining staffing needs based on the school objectives, and secondly, educational plan in selecting people to fill the positions. Thirdly, decision-making and policies regarding the curriculum and instructional strategies are determined at the school level within the frameworks of educational goals and objectives. Decision-making and policies pertaining to budgeting, personnel and curriculum are often restricted and controlled, meanwhile, educational policies regarding matters such as curriculum initiatives, textbooks, assessment procedures, class size, hiring, firing, tenure, and any other relevant agencies.

To make decision-making and policies effective, structural arrangement at the school level needs to be implemented to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process. Schools welcoming collaborative decision-making typically develop councils consisting of representative shareholders in the educational institution, for example the teacher, school administrators, parents and educationist or experts. Decision-making involving these representatives understand that reaching collective agreement and consensus around complex decisions requires extended discussions and collective planning. Ololube (2013) explains that one common way of approaching decisions of differing complexities is to see the decision-making process as one of the problem-solving or opportunity-finding. This implies that a problem has a reflection on a distance between an actual and desired circumstance. Sadaghiyani (2011) opined that many managerial decisions are part of a process that entails a series of sub-decisions.

Decision-making is often the centerpiece of school change that has to do with improved school performance. The effectiveness of decision involvement at the school level points at the teachers and school administrators. The school administrators and teachers are the rally points of school administration and therefore it is imperative to ensure full participation and adequate communication among teachers and administrators. There must be positive relationship between decision involvement and institutional outcomes, such as school commitment, job satisfaction and institutional change. Participation enhances effective communication among teachers and administrators, enhances quality of teachers' work and aids in professionalizing teaching and democratizing schools. All these promote democracy and collaboration and focus mainly on issues of curriculum and instruction that will eventually bring about change at the classroom level and entire school system. Ololube

(2013) maintained that decision-making and policies made by school administrators can involve a wide range of issues including curriculum planning, motivation, staff and student discipline, facilities and services management, school community relations, conflict resolution, and so on. Based on this, Githens in Ololube(2013) explained that in order to effectively address these issues, a number of variables or principles may be considered, these include:

- Decisions are a driver performance. They involve decision-makers and individuals who possess critical information.
- After decisions are made, all those involved and affected need to support the implementation of the decision. Some often do not support implementation because they neither understand the decision nor participate in it.
- There are consequences to both implementing and failing to implement the decision.
- Leaders should be concerned about both the quality and timing of decision.
- There are different types of decisions that require different decision-making styles and tools.
- Categorizing decisions into types can help to make decision-making more efficient and effective.

Holmes in Okoroma (2016) opined that in formulating policies, it is important for educational manager to take into consideration the means or available resources necessary for effective implementation. This implies that it is possible to anticipate or predict the outcome of policies with some measures of assurance. Examples of educational policies are the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program of 1976 and the New National Policy in 1981. Educational policy is used to guide the activities of education industry. That is why decision-making and policies in education are crucial and requires much discipline. Education contends with two kinds of raw materials: inanimate (money, vehicles, buildings, books etc.) and animates (students and staff) (Okoroma 2016:87). This implies that the education industry deserves adequate attention by the government, looking at the complex nature. All these factors pose extra challenges to leadership in education, as it calls for extra carefulness in embarking on the decision-making process.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Decision-making and Policies in Educational system

Decision can be known as resolution, conclusion, settlement, choice, option, selection, verdict, ruling, recommendation, judgment, pronouncement etc. A decision could be referred to as a conclusion or resolution reached after consideration. Decision-making can be referred to as the action or process of making

relevant decisions. Psychologically, decision-making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities. It is a process of identifying and choosing alternatives. Decision-making process enables school administrators solve problems by examining alternative choices and deciding on the best route to solving problem. Decision-making process is continuous and indispensable component of managing educational institutions. Decision-making is central and significant to all aspects of management. Decision-making comprises the selection of alternatives in order to achieve the desired result. The school administrator cannot run away from making-decision. It is a means to an end and not the end itself. It is vital to realizing school goals and objectives.

Igwe in Okoroma (2007) opined that decision-making is purposive act intended to achieve a desired outcome which is usually envisaged by the decision-maker. That implies that in decision-making, there is the relationship between the action and the outcome. He further opined that all other activities are subordinated to this process of administration. That means that, all other administrative jobs are dependent upon administrative decisions.

Decision-making in schools is a panacea in the improvement of human resources management. School head must involve or inculcate the idea of the teacher's giving them the sense of belonging and thereby accelerating the efficiency of the school system. Decisions are made and implemented every day in schools. However, to ensure that rational decisions are made and double standard are not applied in decision-making, all the school stakeholders should be allowed to make decision as and when due especially the teachers in the school.

School as an institution has a structure. For example, in Secondary Schools, the Principal is the head, followed by the Vice Principal, Administration and Vice Principal, Academics, Heads of Department, teachers, non-teaching staff and students. For a free flow and streamlining of authority and duties, the principal oversees the affairs of the school, assign responsibilities to other subordinates. The students also allotted with positions such as Senior Prefect, Deputy Senior Prefect, Sports, Labor, Punctuality Prefects and others. This structural arrangement in a school system helps in effective decision-making and policy formulations in the system. This arrangement (structure) in a school system like Secondary School, necessitated the principle of delegation of power and authority to the lowest possible level of school administration, most especially when the school management is at stake, can always fail if it is not followed by a determined effort to improve the abilities and capabilities of local decision-makers.

Every institution or organization such as school has a guiding principle upon which operations are regulated

and assessed. These principles are commonly regarded to as policies. Wali (2018) maintained that policy is a statement of principle(s) with supporting rules and actions, guidelines, laid down rule in general and specific terms that governs the achievement of goals to which a business is directed. This implies that policies are the machineries through which school goals and objectives are realized. Mmejim (2018) also stipulates that a policy is a general guide to action that helps in management. That means that no decision will be made outside the stipulated policy. Policy gives birth to decision, that is, school administrator makes decision in line with the laid down policies in education. However, school administrator sometimes makes some minor policies that guide the decisions of the subordinate in case of delegation of authority. School systems are guided to enhance the realization of their set goals by policies. Anderson (2010) opined that public policy is a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. Policy implementation is an important and inevitable stage of policy in realizing its objectives. It is the execution of the action that decisions are taken towards the actualization of the goals and objectives of the school system. A policy can be a mere statement when it is not implemented and it becomes effective statement when it is fully implemented and the objectives realized or achieved.

Importance of Effective Decision-making and Policies in Educational system in Nigeria

The importance and the reason for effective Decision-making and policies in the school system are identified below (Olejurolo2018:139).

- To achieve growth and development of the institution.
- To solve the multi-faceted problems of the institution especially manpower needs.
- To give direction to all managerial activities and persons involved in the institution through the implementation of the policies.
- To achieve maximum results by making rational, informed and productive decisions in the institution without any interference of time pressure and personal emotions (Boundless Management, n.d)
- To sustain management activities and enhance institutional functions.
- It enhances the leadership skills and abilities of the institutional leader as a useful decision-maker.
- To reduce high risk, losses and opportunity cost in management activities due to wrong, weak, or insufficient information and creating a stable academic environment, and
- To check and balance the success of all managerial activities and maintain focus in the institution.

Types of Decision-making

There are different types of decision-making as identified by Gatzimos in Ololube (2013) and these include:

Authoritative

According to Ibara (2013) authoritative decision-making are decisions made in response to authoritative communication from a superior officer. This implies that the decision flows from the superior to the subordinate. In the case of Secondary Schools, decisions flows from the Principal to the subordinates like the teachers and any other categories of staff are bound to follow these decisions regardless of whether it is beneficial to the organizational goals.

Consultative

This has to do with decisions that are made in consultation with subordinates. That is seeking the consent of teachers before carrying out decision. A wise leader is one who consults subordinates when he thinks that they have valuable expertise to offer (Ololube2013).

Delegative

Delegative decision-making has to do with delegating the responsibility of making decisions to one or more subordinates. For example, when the Principal assignsthe duty of decision-making to teachers. This type of decision-making is usually adopted by a leader who is confident of the capabilities of his or her subordinates (Ololube, 2013).

Facilitative

This is when the Principal or school head collaborates with the teachers (subordinates) or work together to arrive at a viable decision. The expertise and contributions of subordinates are inculcated and regarded in decision-making. It is regarded as all-inclusive or participatory in nature. The risk of making wrong decision is often very low or minimized.

Furthermore, Cole in Alabi (2012) highlighted six types of decision-making which a school head can adopt to solve management challenges in educational system or in institutions. They include:

1. Programmed and non-programmed decisions.
2. Routine and strategic decisions.
3. Tactical and operational decisions.
4. Organizational and personal decisions.
5. Major and minor decisions.
6. Individual and group decisions.

Programmed and Non-programmed Decisions

Programmed decisions are decisions that are adopted by lower echelon managers to solve routine problems or challenges which the manager (school head) has solved before using specialized or standard procedures. They are guided by rules and regulations. For example, granting leave to subordinate (employees), assigning students to faculty/departments

and many more. Simon in Olejurulo, (2018) explains that non-programmed decisions involve more difficult issues in management made by higher echelon manager. For instance, opening a branch business or an affiliate campus of the university, curriculum planning, budgetary planning are institutional leader's decisions. In other words, non-programmed decisions are complex and deserve a special treatment.

Routine and Strategic Decision

These are decisions that are every day and often made decision in school management. These kind of decisions are often repeated and sometimes delegated to the school management team or lower echelon managers to tackle within the limit and the structural arrangement of school or school policy or policies. It is strategic or basic because it has to do with the objectives and policy matters of the school. Strategic decision, according to Ebrary (2018) is more difficult decision as it affects the goals and objectives plan layout, production and the entire future of the organization in the school system. Strategic decision would be concerned with the admission of students, budgetary planning, and execution of educational policies for the growth and development of school. This has to do with high level institutional decisions. It requires a lot of caution, analysis and reasoning of all options before the leader or school head makes them.

Tactical (Policy) and Operational Decisions

This has to do with top echelon decisions; the reason is that it can affect the entire school system. In this kind of decisions, there must be compliance to the functional rules, policies and procedures of the school. Operational decisions involves everyday operations and function of the school decisions taken by lower or middle echelon managers, for example, calculation of teacher or staff's bonuses.

Organizational and Personal Decision

Organizational decisions are made in the official capacity. It has to do with release of money to execute a project. Personal decision is a kind of decision that has to do with the personal life of decision-maker.

Major and Minor Decision

Major decision is a kind of decision that when made, can affect the entire school holistically. Minor decision is a kind of decision that has no much influence in the entire organization. Example of major decision for a school system is starting an affiliate campus, by university institutions. Example of minor decision is preparing admission letters for new student intake.

Individual and Group Decision

Individual decisions are decisions taken by an individual or a person devoid of the instructions of any group. Group decisions are decisions taken by group or

committee. Group decision is always prolonged because each input is important.

Characteristics of Good Decision-making

Every decision cannot be a good one; therefore every good decision requires special efforts. In order for a decision to be good, it must possess certain attributes that can enable it stand the test of time. Such attributes include:

- A good decision must consider and confine itself to available resources. It is obvious that the essence of any good decision is to bring about development. Decision must relate and reconcile the scale and pace of the desired development with available resources. This is necessary in order to avoid non-implementation of decision in the school system.
- A good decision must be geared towards school goals and objectives. Every good decision must reflect the predetermined educational objectives.
- A good decision must be capable of identifying options. In trying to solve a problem through making a decision, it is important to note that there can be more than one way of bringing a solution. An educational administrator must be capable of identifying various possible options or alternatives through a better understanding of the issues and trends associated with the educational system.

Furthermore, Robins (2007) maintained that decision-making should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- It must focus on the vital issues.
- It must be logical and consistent.
- It should be subjective, objective and analytical with intuitive thinking.
- Decision-making requires a lot of information and analysis to solve a problem.

NOUN module (2016) in Olejurulo (2018) stated thus:

- That a good decision-making requires the gathering of relevant information and opinions
- It should be concerned with the morale and satisfaction of the employees and students.

NOUN module (2016) explains that since decision-making is about problem solving; it therefore, requires that educational institutional leaders and managers should make intelligent, appropriate and effective decision to achieve the set goals of the institution.

Domains of Decision-making

Domain of decision-making can be seen as the very angle in which decision-making originate from. That is, where the need originates. Therefore, Okai (2013) identified three domains of decision-making as follows:

- Institutional or Policy Domain

- Managerial Domain
- Technical or Operational Domain.

Institutional or Policy Domain

Basically decisions from this domain with the objectives of vis-à-vis the mission of the organization, issues such as the policy that governs the nations educational system originates from either National Assembly or House of Assembly (in the time of the military they were described as decrees and edicts). Therefore, decisions that originate from the policy domain are intended to deal with issues that concern general objectives and national policies.

Managerial domain

These are decisions that may be returned to the manager to implement, and may take the form of intermediary decisions and appellate decisions. Such decision has a short-term plan than those decisions that may originate from institution or policy domain. For instance, decision on issues such as:

1. Motivation of subordinates.
2. Procurement and allocation of resources.
3. Co-ordination or internal administrative activities.

Technical or operational domain

Okorie (2009) explains that technical or operational decision come from people who possess expert knowledge about organizational tasks and also the ways through which the tasks are carried out in order to promote productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. In the school system teachers are closer to the students so that they are in good position to understand students' problem and they are best equipped to address such problem.

Decision-making Style

There are styles of decision-making in an institution as identified by Gatzimo in Ololube (2013) and they include:

- ❖ Irreversible
- ❖ Reversible
- ❖ Delayed
- ❖ Quick Decisions
- ❖ Experimental
- ❖ Trial and Error.
- ❖ Conditional

Irreversible Style

These decisions are permanent. Once taken, they cannot be undone. If or when hard luck strikes and the repercussions are frightful, suitable reward can be made if there is no other reasonable course of action (Johnson, 2013). As the effects of these decisions can be felt for a long time to come, irreversible decisions are generally only made when there is no other option.

Reversible Style

These decisions are not permanent. They can be changed if need be. Ideally, reversible decision-making permits one to acknowledge a mistake beforehand and after the non-conducive circumstances instead of enduring the worst consequences (Johnson, 2013).

Delayed Style

Delays occur naturally in decision-making problems. Many corporations face regulatory delays which need to be taken into account when corporations make decisions. Delayed decision can be implemented only after a certain amount of time elapses. For example, after paper work and regulatory requirements have been satisfied (Bayraktar and Egami,2000). The implementation of decision can also be voluntarily put on hold until the decision-maker deems that the right time has come. While such delays may cause some losses, particularly in the case of business, they allow for sufficient time to collect all pertinent information and systematically review all the decision-making factors/inputs. Despite the possibility of delays, a true leader always approaches decision assertively and is fully in charge of the decision-making process (Johnson, 2013).

Quick Decision Style

These are decisions that are speedily taken. Quick decisions can only be done by an experienced and capable decision-maker, if the objectives are to be achieved as determined.

Experimental Style

In this style of decision-making, the final decision is not made until preliminary results are available and are positive. In this approach, a decision is not finalized until results prove themselves to be as pleasing as desired (Johnson, 2013).

Trial and Error Style

In this style of decision, a course of action is selected and tested (Johnson, 2013). This implies that if the result is positive, it is followed. If not, then a new course is adopted. This is continued until the decision-maker arrives at a course of action that convinces him or her of success. Trial and error decision-making allows a school head to change and make adjustment before a final commitment is made.

Conditional Style

These are decisions that permit or allow school head to keep all options open. That is, multiple options are kept open and considered backups so that one can react quickly to the ever-changing scenarios inside and outside competitive markets.

Stages or Steps Involved In Decision-making Processes

Baporikar (2017) opined that decision-making should not be reactionary but systematically planned. According to Oxford Dictionary (2012) process is a series of act or steps taken to achieve a particular end. Davis (2010) defined decision-making as an intellectual process which involves selection of one course of action out of many alternatives followed by a second function of management known as planning. However, Umass D (2018) explained that decision-making process is a step-by-step process that can help you make more deliberate, thoughtful decisions by organizing relevant information and defining alternatives. This implies that decision-making process is sequential in nature, it is orderly, and this gives the opportunity of selecting the most appropriate alternatives. Meanwhile, UmassD (2018) identified seven steps to decision-making processes and also diagrammatically explained them. They include

Seven Steps to Effective Decision-Making

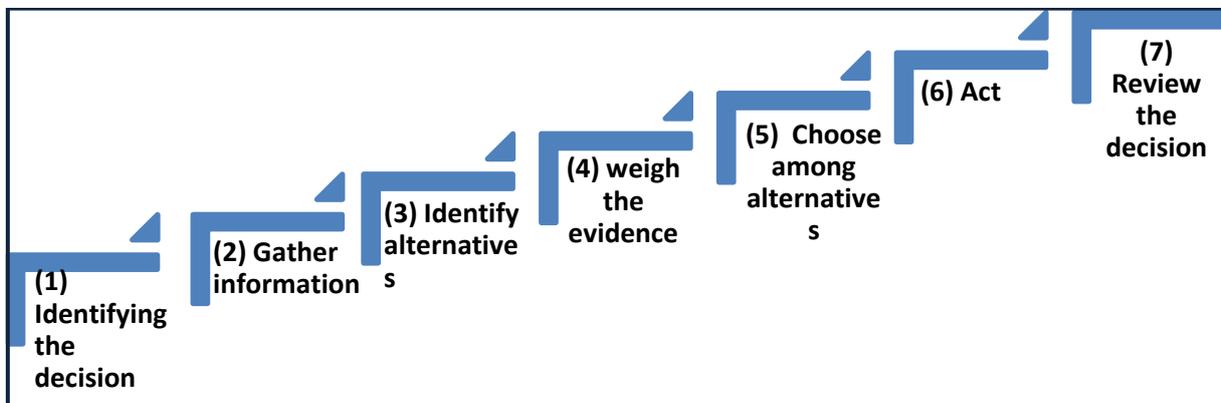


Figure-1: Decision-making process
Source: Umass D (2018)

Identify the Decision

This is the initial step in decision-making process. The school head must recognize and define the kind and nature of the prevailing problem in the school system. The school head need to identify what decision needs to be taken in respect to management activities, curriculum planning, development and implementation, opinion of parents, allotting of classes to teachers, discipline in the school system, teachers' welfare package and many more.

Gather Information

This has to do with gathering relevant information that is connected to the decision or problems at hand. Identifying the source of information and how accessible is the information? This will help or aid the school head to make a rational conclusion.

Identify Alternatives

When all the critical information are gathered or assembled, the school head identifies the suitable possible line of action among the options or alternatives.

Weigh the Evidence

This is when the school head select the alternative that has the highest and acceptable potential for success. This can be done by prioritizing and weighing the various options.

Choosing Among the Alternatives

This is a situation where the school head selects the alternatives or options placed considering the potential risks involved.

Act

This has to do with the actual implementation of the alternative(s), having the support of the employee (teacher) or stakeholders.

Review the Decision

This has to do with evaluating the decision to check its effectiveness and strength. In other words, looking at the results of the decision taken and its implementation, finding out if the problem has been solved, if not, repeat of the choice of alternative(s) and source for more information. Humanly, school head can make mistakes during decision-making and it is also reasonable to quickly correct the mistake(s) before it results to serious crisis in the school system.

Approaches to Decision-making in School System

Decision-making is one of the critical responsibilities of all school administrators. For example, the Principal, Head Teacher, Provost, Rector, and Vice-chancellor. Institutional administration is a complex one. Especially those of the higher learning. There are a range of

problems that school heads encounter on a daily basis in the management of the schools for which they need to take or make decisions. However, in this discourse, five (5) approaches for decision-making in school system shall be examined. Simon, Aikinson, Azekeska, Coulter, Konadu, Etzioni in Olejurulo, (2018) identified five approaches or models of decision-making, which include:

- The Classical Approach (Okai, 2013)
- The Administrative Approach
- The Incremental Approach
- Mixed Scanning or Adaptive Decision-Making Approach
- Garbage-Can Approach

The Classical Approach

This approach laid emphasis on rational and comprehensive process of systematic steps whereby the decision-maker chooses from among the available alternatives. The classical approach strategy is good to school head because it enables them to make cost-benefit comparison of alternatives, make more accurate predictions.

The Administrative Approach

Simon (1974) developed this approach to effective decision making. He maintained that the approach studies the real behaviors of school head as decision-maker. He further explained that due to the complex nature of the organization, the limited capacity of the human mind and the lack of time to get full information for decision making, the school head may not be able to make perfectly rational decisions but can introduce the satisfying strategy. The administrative approach would have been effective if the institutional governance had a complete autonomy to make and implement their decision. Be that as it may, the approach is confronted with several challenges such as undue interference by the political class at the governmental level, government interest to control the educational system and many more.

The Incremental approach

In this approach, the school head seeks for a short-term solution to solve the problem at hand to realize the goals and objectives of school not looking at his outside interest as a decision-maker. Sometimes, the school head may not consider the negative outcome or consequences of his decisions. This approach can be adopted for systematic decision where the issues are complex, and uncertain. This approach or model was introduced by Charles Lirblom in (1980).

Mixed Scanning/Adaptive Approach

This approach was introduced by Amitai Etzioni, (1917). This is used by organizational leaders or school heads for making complex decisions. It unites the

administrative and incremental approaches in decision-making. It is sometimes called “the humble decision-making”. The rules of the approach are based on trial and error, tentativeness, delay, staggering and reversible decision. However, this calls for carefulness, dynamism, ability and capacity to make a strong and effective decision. Obviously, our schools nowadays, their decision-making is more of trial and error and lacks consistency, creating lack of orderliness and unnecessary or irrelevant changes in educational policies, programs, and curricula due to an unexpected and sudden change in government.

Garbage-Can Approach

According to Baner and Erdogan (2009) Garbage-Can approach is initiated by the (school head) manager in absence of strategic management and there are no specific set goals for the organization and this approach is useful when the solution to the problems are unclear the people involved in the decision-making are often changed. This implies that the school head has enough opportunity to think and rationalize through the issues at hand before making or initiating any decisions. The school head in that case can make a rational decision that will bring about fruitful results or outcome to the organization.

Challenges to Effective Decision-making and Policies

Challenges to effective decision-making are impediments, setbacks, drawbacks, barriers and factors militating against the effective implementation of decisions in a school system. Effective decision-making in educational institution has become a difficult task. Many authors like Ibara (2010), Okai (2013), Ololube (2013), Rapista (2014), Dudafa (2018), Alabi (2012), Ejimob (2015) and Ogbogu (2013) are of the opinion that there are challenges or barriers to effective decision-making in an organization, especially institutions of learning, which include:

- ❖ Personal bias
- ❖ Time pressure
- ❖ Factors in decision-making environment
- ❖ Corruption
- ❖ Political interferences
- ❖ Limited information
- ❖ Poor implementation of decision
- ❖ The capacity of the decision-maker.

Personal Biases

School administrations who feel very strongly about an issue may not be able to consider alternatives without bias (Ibara, 2010). Baporikar (2017) maintained that personal biases in the decision-making styles of most Nigerian institutional leaders are responsible for the woes of management in educational institutions.

Ejimabo (2015) postulates that a leader must have the self-confidence to gather and process information, make quality decision to solve problems, their personal biases notwithstanding. Dan (2017) also maintains that personal bias hinders leaders and managers from thinking in a local, rational way. Examining the above postulations, one can deduce that why most of the decisions taken by some school heads become ineffective is because of having personal interest, abandoning the general interest of the school. It is important that school heads leave their personal biases, weakness and pitfalls aside when making crucial school decisions. Olejurulo, (2018) identified some factors that can help the school heads to overcome personal biases and they include:

- ❖ Work through a group or team who will provide needed information, expertise and alternatives to make the decision.
- ❖ Taking advantage of existing institutional data to guide his/her decision.
- ❖ Determining to take the right decision no matter his/her personal beliefs or pressures.

Time Pressures

Time is an impediment to effective decision-making; most educational managers are too busy such that they don't have time to explore the various alternatives, particularly when a deadline has been given (Okai, 2013). Ibara, (2010) opined that deadline set by others could cause hasty decisions as they limit the time available to properly consider all options. Ololube et al. (2018) in their empirical results or outcomes on decision-making, discovered that time pressure is one of the woes in institutional management in Nigerian institutions. Evaluating the above contributions, it is believed that time pressure can result to quick or rush into the alternative and this can endanger the effective school administration.

Factors in Decision-making Environment

Factors in a decision-making environment such as the level of risk involved, the degree of uncertainty and the conflicts to be encountered can affect the quality of decisions (Ibara, 2010). Another environmental factor that affect the quality of decision is the issue of cultism, student union body, Nigeria Union Teachers (NUT), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASUU). Sometimes, they hold institutional leader and government to ransom by embarking on protest, strike, and unnecessary commotion in the school in case of cultism. Most of these factors are uncontrollable in the school system.

Corruption

According to Wali (2014) corruption is the hydra-headed epidemic bewitching educational planning in Nigeria. He further describes corruption as a deviant behavior of making a private gain at the expense of the public. In Nigerian educational system, school heads sometimes have cases of corruption ranging from bribery and embezzlement, distorting of process of decision-making and its implementation. These stagnates the entire system and create an unfavorable atmosphere. It is pertinent to note that for decision-making to be effective in school system, the school head must render a purposeful and selfless service in his or her duties or responsibilities in the school system. This by so doing can guarantee the integrity of the school head in the school.

Political Interference

Political interference occurs when political leader(s) interfere or get involved with decision-making in school system such as planning decision, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting, as well as allocation and use of public funds. In Nigeria, the educational system sometimes becomes a platform and the politicians want to maintain their faction in it and try to extend their domain in the public administration. The politicization of school system especially in terms of decision-making process can result to negative outcomes, thereby defeating the original aim of decision-making in the school system. In fact, politicians do not allow an autonomous public administration to grow. Nigerian politicians interfere with the decision-making process in the school unnecessarily. Whereas, they know that decision-making in a school system is exclusively the job of professionals in the field of education, therefore, requires no unprofessional hands to interfere otherwise, the essence of decision will not be met. The growing intrusion of the politics into educational system in the area of decision-making has created an open space for corruption and smells of foul play in the decision-making process. The educational institution will remain stagnant and backward as long as such unethical practice continues in Nigeria.

Limited Information

Limited information in decision-making brings high risk of poor decisions which may lead to setbacks or drawbacks in the institutional activities and programs. Limited information means not having adequate information relevant to the decision the school head intends to make. That is why Ololube et al. (2018) maintained that a good school manager or administrator should be innovative in making decision and should also select from acceptable alternatives when making decisions. Meanwhile, most school heads do not go through this rigorous decision-making process. That is why most of the educational programs in the schools cannot stand the test of time. In line with the above points, Ololube et al. (2018) explains that the reason for

decision-making is to solve problems in the organization, but problem identification and diagnosis can only be achieved through adequate information. This implies that without adequate information the essence of decision-making will be defeated and abandoned.

Poor Implementation of Decisions

Ibara (2010) explains that beyond the decision-making process, is the implementation of the chosen decisions. This implies that for the decision process to be functional and active, the implementation must be accompanied by the assessment and evaluation of outcomes (results) to achieve the objectives and goals of the school.

Adequate implementation, assessment and evaluation are very much inadequate and sometimes lacking in most school management activities in Nigeria. Sometimes the nature of leaders (school head) in school management can create poor or inadequate implementation of decisions. It is imperative to note that there is need for monitoring and evaluation to help in reducing the abnormalities prevalent indecision-making process in school system.

The Capacity of the Decision-maker

Finally, the capacity of the decision-maker is a notable barrier or challenge in school decision-making. School heads and school management must understand the need for decision-making. School head without any educational training or background cannot be able to handle the complex nature of school management. However, it is most important that an educational leader must have the required capacity, skills, the will, the knowledge, confidence and the charisma to make effective decision when the need arises. Wali (2018) argued that the portfolio of ministers and commissioners of education are often manned by people or individuals who may or may not have any iota of technical know-how of education. These individuals who occupied these positions in turn appoints their own loyalist who do not know anything regards to education and the chain continues to the grass root that is, the Local Government level. This implies that the education sector is indirectly controlled and hijacked by the incompetent and dubious politicians since they make rules and regulations, school head must obey without demanding for reasons.

CONCLUSION

School management decision-making is complex, multi-faceted, uncertain and risky. It is a major aspect of every school administrator's work or responsibility. Fundamentals of effective decision-making and policies in educational system anchors on the processes of decision-making as one of the means of solving problems in the school management. It also explains the processes or steps of decision-making. It is obvious that decision-making is an integral part of school

management, therefore the paper explained the importance of effective decision-making in the school system, the various type of decision-making, characteristics of good decision-making in school system and domain of decision-making. This implies that every decision has its origin. It emanates from one source or the other. Furthermore, in a school system, there are number of challenges confronting effective decision-making process. These include poor implementation of decision, time pressure, corruption, factors in decision-making environment, many but to mention a few. Therefore, it is worthwhile for every school head to take advantage of this paper to improve on their lapses and bring to bear a lasting sustainable and effective decision-making process.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are made:

- School heads should avoid personal bias and uphold integrity, sincerity and fairness in making decisions.
- School heads should be able to do the appropriate thing by ensuring creativity that is, bringing change and innovation in the system.
- School heads should crave for excellent leadership and decision-making techniques. This will make them handle complex or difficult issues in the school.
- Government should avoid interfering with decision made in the school system, but rather concentrate or focus on funding education and provide necessary materials and infrastructure need for teaching and learning.
- The Government under the auspices of Ministry of Education should provide a uniform standard of education.
- Any corrupt school head should be fished out and made to serve jail terms and this will serve as deterrent to others.
- School heads should at least hold a relevant degree in the areas of educational administration and planning.
- Ministry of Education should always embark on regular inspection and supervision in the school system.

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