

TEACHER QUALITY AND STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: CURBING SOCIETAL AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

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Abstract

Unacceptable behaviours and unethical issues have in recent times affected the process of organizational outcomes. Such outcomes are gradually becoming challenges to organizational management. The school which is a formal organization is not an exception. School administration has been characterized in some quarters by numerous abnormalities which has negatively impacted on the academic outcomes of students across many levels, and also poised societal issues. This paper focused on two important aspects of school administration which can help mitigate some of these educational and societal challenges. They are teacher quality and students' discipline. In school administration, teacher quality refers to the attributes of teachers that reflect their competence for effectiveness in the teaching and learning process while discipline is the ability to obey school rules and regulations through the use of self-control and self-restraint. The paper emphasized and concluded that some of these challenges can be greatly minimized, and students can achieve educational objectives, with productive outputs if the quality of the teaching staff and the place of discipline is not overlooked in school administration. The paper therefore suggested that teacher qualification, adequate knowledge of subject matter and experience, coupled with re-enforcing acceptable behaviours and punishing unethical behaviours in students should not be compromised.

Keywords: Teacher quality, Students' discipline, Effective school administration, Societal and educational issues

Introduction

With the advancement of societies and human interactions, unethical issues and unacceptable behaviours have in recent times affected the process of organizational outcomes. Such outcomes are gradually becoming challenges to organizational management. The school as a formal organization is not an exception. School administration has been characterized in some quarters by numerous abnormalities which have negatively impacted on the academic outcomes of students across many levels, and as seen in recent times that academic standards have fallen below societal expectations, and the change in society and educational systems is becoming very evident (Igwele, 2020).

Negative issues in school administration across all levels on the part of teachers include quackery, absenteeism/lateness, all forms of sexual relationships with learners, extortion, lack of professional training which ultimately leads to unprofessional behaviours, and on the part of students are examination malpractices, bullying, indecent dressing, fighting, use of profane languages, stealing, assaulting teachers and fellow students, among others (Agabi, et al, 2013). These issues have become not just educational problems, but also posed societal challenges. It has been noticed that the productive output of students, who are the main reasons why schools exist, in terms of their performances has been greatly affected, which has also impacted negatively on the society where these outputs are expected to serve.

The process of educational administration is multifaceted and interrelated, buttressing the systems approach of educational management (Walson & Asawo, 2024). One process, often leads to another

for effective school administration. Two important aspects of school administration which this paper focuses on, to help mitigate some of these educational challenges are teacher quality and students' discipline. In school administration, teacher quality refers to the attributes of teachers that reflect their competence for effectiveness in the teaching and learning process while discipline is the ability to obey school rules and regulations through the use of self-control and self-restraint. If students must achieve educational objectives, the quality of the teaching staff and the place of discipline cannot be overlooked. The place and importance of these two concepts are the focus of this paper, for the purpose of leveraging certain educational issues.

Teacher Quality

The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN, 2012) defines a teacher as a person who has undergone approved professional training in education at appropriate levels capable of impacting knowledge, attitude, and skills to the learner. The teacher is the representative of the content and the school. Teachers play very significant roles in educational attainment and are ultimately responsible for translating policies into actions and principles.

As stated by Olaleye (2011), quality always requires value judgments. The classroom teacher is the main source through which knowledge, skills, competences and information is passed to the students and as such, the productive output of the students is greatly reliant on the teacher. Teachers are the major factor that drive students' achievements in learning. The performance of teachers generally determines not only the quality of education, but the general performance of the students they train. The teachers themselves therefore, ought to get the best of education, so they can train their students in the best of ways, because the most important factor in students' learning in the classroom is the teacher quality. It is a known fact that the quality of teachers and quality teaching are some of the most important factors that shape learning, social and academic growth of students.

Teacher quality refers to the attributes of teachers that reflect their competence for effectiveness in the teaching and learning process which encompasses their professional qualifications, knowledge of subject matter and years of experience. It could also include academic ability, classroom practice, or adding value to students' academic performance. Teacher quality refers to all teacher-related characteristics that produce favorable educational outcomes such as student' performance on standardized tests or supervisor rating (Musau & Muola, 2013). Teacher quality is an important factor that impacts significantly on students' outcomes. Quality teachers have positive impact on the success of students. Where the students have quality and effective teachers, the students make learning gains while those with ineffective teachers show decline. Outstanding teachers possess and exhibit many exemplary qualities. They have the skills, subject matter, and pedagogy to reach every child. They help equip their students with the knowledge and breadth of awareness to make sound and independent judgments.

Summarily, Teacher's quality is a set of inputs which include certification, teacher's test, scores and degrees that serves as indication of who will be successful in the classroom. It implies that it is not just what the teachers have in terms of training and certification, rather also what they do in the classroom that indicates quality.

Stronge (2012) recognized five characteristics that reveal teacher quality: (a) experience, (b) program preparation and degrees, (c) type of certification, (d) coursework taken in preparation, and (e) teachers' test scores. There are three important components of teacher quality.,they are: teacher certification and qualification, knowledge of subject-matter and experience.

Teachers' Certification and Qualification

The basic skills and abilities of the teaching learning process are developed in a teacher through professional qualification. Likewise, professional qualification can be termed as the preparation for life long journey in to the teaching profession. A qualified teacher is one that is well trained

professionally and academically for the teaching job. The issue of professionalism and qualification in teaching has been on course for quite some decades ago. Nigeria educational system requires that all teachers in all educational institution nationwide should be professionally trained. This is the view of enhancing teacher's commitment to the teaching profession. Hence, FRN (2004) stipulated that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE). It is therefore on this fact that government set up the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) under Act 31 of 1993 to control and regulate the practice of the profession. According to the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, (2012) other acceptable qualifications are degrees in education B.SC.Ed, MEd. PH.D in education. It is emphasized that those with degrees/diplomas in non education fields must possess post graduate diploma education (PGDE) or Technical Teachers Certification (TTC).

Some scholars argue the necessity for skilled teachers for effective learning. Ngada in Firestone (2014) emphasized that the success or failure of any educational program rest majorly on the adequate availability of qualified professionally competent and decided teachers. Teacher's professionalism is essential as it is the quality of the teacher that will inevitably be seen in the citizens. Teaching is a conscious behavior that makes learning more probable and more efficient and teachers are and will forever remain architects of all professions. On the quality of teacher, Itotoh (2000) said that quality of teachers is important in any meaningful presentation of educational transactions. Quality of teachers is essential to the achievement of the great National aspiration. This is corroborated by Obasi (2010) who noted that the concept of education cannot be properly defined or conceptualized without reference to those who impact the knowledge. Therefore, since teachers are the pillars and life wire of the education sector, deliberate care should be taken when recruiting them into the teaching profession.

Knowledge of Subject Matter

The mastery of relevant knowledge is one of the most important attributes of the teacher. Knowledge or mastery of subject matter refers to the teacher's personal understanding of concepts involved in the subject matter while competence refers to the teacher's skillful management of his knowledge or mastery of subject matter towards the effective learning by learners. Knowledge of subject matter greatly influences teacher's quality and students learning outcomes. Students will definitely understand lessons more and with keen interest when taught by a teacher who masters his subject matter very well. A teacher that masters his subjects matter teaches very well, and is able to perform his duty efficiently and effectively because he is capable of developing and implementing the curriculum. Mastery of subject matter, lesson presentation and educational methods are in most cases, related to ensure teachers' competence in subject matter. In education as well as other disciplines, effective subject matter transmission is not an independent activity. Apart from other components such as teacher's qualification, teacher's professional commitment, teacher's self concept, teacher's lesson plan, teacher's classroom management skills, teacher's motivational skills (Adepoju, 2008) and teacher's method of lesson presentation, the teacher needs to take into consideration other professional needs. He needs also to be efficient in terms of personal ingenuity such as communication skills and record keeping. The teacher must advertise the subject matter as a product in a way that the interest of learners who are the buyers must be captured. He should also be predicated with sound knowledge of underlying psychology, the history, sociology and philosophy of the overall aim and objectives of the subject matter, and the needs of the learners must be taken into consideration (Esu, 2001). These assist the teacher to present their subject matter in the proper perspective. In the presentation of subject matter, the teacher needs to understand the age, the environment and the needs of the learner and that of the society. This must be emphasized to enhance competence in subject matter transmission for effective interest capturing and learning by learners.

Experience

Experience can be referred to as length of years of service related to one's job performance or any endeavour. Teachers who have spent more years in teaching, usually feel self-assured in their skill to use instructional and assessment tools. These teachers are able to reach even the most difficult-to-reach students in their classrooms. They also have greater confidence in their capability to control the class and prevent incidence that might make the teaching and learning process difficult. Their experience makes them much more patient and tolerant than their counterpart with few years of experience. Novice teachers progressively gain and develop teaching and classroom management skills needed to make them effective teachers. They spend time learning themselves - trying to understand fully the job they have entered. The teachers who have spent more years teaching have gained a rich store of knowledge which the less experienced teachers will be trying to build. Teachers' sense of effectiveness is generally associated with good attitudes, behaviors and interactions with their students. This is something the experienced teacher has already acquired. These explain why more experienced teachers are usually more effective teachers than the novices.

Akpo (2012) stated that experience is a process of gaining knowledge or skill. Experience as an event or series of events that is painted in or lived through. In most organizations, employers believe that employees with high level of experiences perform better than those with less experience, thereby emphasizing that experience is related to performance. Experience is one quality which cannot be over emphasized in the teaching profession. This is because in climbing the ladder, the teacher would have held different positions and responsibilities, and acquired enough experience to be able to lead other people in leadership, trust and teamwork. This is why supervisors of school are selected from experienced teachers and principals (Obannaya, 2017). Job experience leads to accumulation of relevant skills and abilities for effective performance of a particular job. Years of experience comes with training and working on the job.

Students' Discipline

Discipline is the system of guiding an individual to take reasonable and responsible decisions and actions, to maintain an established standard of behaviour. It is an accepted behaviour that is manifested in the application of self-control, restraint, and respect for constituted authority and others. Ainwumiju & Agabi and Longman in Agabi, et al (2013) respectively defined discipline as consistency in the exhibition of behaviour that conforms to acceptable norms and values in any society; and as the practice of making people obey rules and orders, or the controlled situation that results from this practice. Bua (2020) noted that discipline entails conformity with laid down rules and regulations or abiding by the standards expected of an individual in any given setting. Discipline is generally intended to create an atmosphere where organizational members willingly adhere to established rules and standards.

In school administration, discipline is the ability to obey school rules and regulations. Igwela (2020) defined it as a required set of actions determined by school authorities to remedy inappropriate actions by students. Therefore, any behaviour that deviates from established rules and standards can be referred to as indiscipline and can culminate into disciplinary problems. Indiscipline which is the violation of school rules and regulations is capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system.

The objectives of discipline according to Aminu in Bua (2020) are to:

- maintain industrial peace and harmony within the school organization
- ensure consistent adherence to the organizational rules and regulations to enhance coordination
- maintain standard of conduct and performance for individuals within the school organization
- assist in ensuring fair treatment for all individuals within the school organization

The causes and types of indiscipline vary from place to place and from school to school. Signs of students indiscipline in school include: general unrest, deliberate breaches of school rules, peaceful or violent demonstrations, mass disobedience, truancy, bullying, laziness, stealing, persistent lateness,

delinquency, absenteeism, drug abuse and drunkenness, destruction of properties, profane language, sexual offenses, cultism, examination malpractices, etc. These disciplinary problems can be caused from the home, teachers, school and the larger society. Inadequate basic necessities of life, authoritarian methods of administration, ineffective teacher/teaching methods, bad staff behaviour, harsh school rules, poor examination results, examination leakages, unsatisfactory curricular, influence of home or society, peer pressure, harsh school prefects, poor communication between school head, staff and students, etc., can contribute to students indisciplined behaviours.

Discipline plays a crucial role in students' academic progress, as it encompasses the strategies and techniques used to manage their behaviors and promote a positive learning environment. Effective discipline is essential for creating a safe and orderly school climate where students can focus on their studies and engage in learning activities. Thus, discipline forms an integral part of an effective school administration.

The Need for Teacher Quality and Students' Discipline in School Administration: Curbing Societal and Educational Issues

Given the clarifications of the concepts of teacher quality and students' discipline, its importance and place in school administration cannot be over-emphasized. Scholars have advocated for teacher quality and the need for students' discipline not just for positive learning outcomes, but that they can contribute to mitigating certain educational and societal issues which has become rampant in contemporary times.

The Need for Teacher Quality

Teacher qualification/certification, knowledge of subject matter, experience, classroom organization, communication skills, proficiency, pedagogical skills, training and development, etc. are all dimensions that projects the quality of a teacher. Stakeholders have in recent times suggested that teaching is seen as a dumping ground for any unemployed school leaver, irrespective of their area of specialization. Such persons handle the teaching job as a bye-pass venture to their desired ends. Thus, their input on the job is mostly unsatisfactory as it lacks the dedication needed. Furthermore, the technical knowhow which provides the qualification and certification is not obtained. The resultant effect on both students' outcomes and the society where the students go to work becomes catastrophic, which will ultimately culminate to a decline in the national technological growth. Since it is also not enough to accept or describe someone as a teacher merely because a certificate is presented, the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (2012) posited that teacher trainee must be well equipped with professional and academic knowledge and skills in the art of teaching. It is equally required that adequate and appropriate characteristics, with updated knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences be sourced to enhance teacher quality.

Darling-Hammond (2000) established that the most significant forecaster of student achievement is a state's quantity of certified teachers. Students who were more frequently taught by certified teachers surpassed those who were taught by under-certified teachers. Eggen and Kauchak (2001), asserted that there are three dimensions under which a teacher's knowledge of subject matter can be measured, namely: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge of content and general knowledge. The implications of these dimensions are that a teacher cannot teach what he or she does not know. Adediwura and Tayo (2007) further emphasized existence of high correlation between teachers subject knowledge and what they teach students. In line with these finding; they further accentuated that the ability of a teacher to teach effectively depends on the depth of knowledge the teacher possesses. Therefore, a teacher whose understanding of the subject content is thorough uses clearer expressions comparative to those whose backgrounds of subject matter are weaker.

Teacher experience has a significant effect on both student's output and organizational outcome because experienced teachers have a richer background to draw from and can contribute insight and ideas to the course of teaching and learning. Cubbons (2014) suggested that teachers' experience and student academic performance are positively correlated as students taught by more experienced

teachers achieve at a higher level, because their teachers have mastered the content and acquired classroom management skills/expertise to deal with different types of classroom problems. Professional teachers are considered to be more able to concentrate on the most appropriate way to teach particular topics to students who differ in their abilities, as a result of knowledge and background.

Many occupations recognize employee's years of experience as a relevant factor in human resource policies including compensation systems, benefits packages and promotion decisions. The idea is that experience gained overtime enhances the knowledge, skills, and productivity of workers. Experience of teachers accommodates knowledge, skills, and attitudes on teaching learning process. Teachers differ in terms of the knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes, and values they bring to their classrooms. They also differ in their teaching experience (Anderson in Rice, 2012), Hoy and Miskel (2015) found out that as one's years of experience increased as a teacher, his or her job performance increased as well.

Quality teachers are a critical determinant of students positive outcomes and societal development.

The Need for Students' Discipline

As already noted, discipline is indispensable in human/social interactions, especially in the context of school management. To neglect discipline is to expose the school community, and by extension the society to waywardness and unwholesome behaviour.

Firstly, discipline can affect students' behavior and engagement in the classroom. A well-disciplined classroom is characterized by clear expectations, consistent enforcement of rules, and respectful interactions between students and teachers (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). When students know what is expected of them and understand the consequences of their actions, they are more likely to behave appropriately and participate actively in learning activities. Also, discipline can influence students' motivation and attitude towards learning. A positive disciplinary approach that emphasizes encouragement and positive reinforcement can help motivate students to succeed academically (Brophy, 2006). Conversely, a punitive disciplinary approach that focuses on punishment and coercion can lead to resentment and disengagement among students (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Therefore, it is important for educators to use discipline as a tool to encourage positive behavior and promote a supportive learning environment. Additionally, discipline can impact students' academic performance by shaping their social and emotional development. A well-disciplined classroom can help students develop important social skills, such as cooperation, empathy, and self-control (Jones & Jones, 2016). These skills are essential for academic success, as they enable students to work effectively with others, manage their emotions, and make responsible decisions. Moreover, discipline can also affect students' self-esteem and confidence, which can in turn impact their academic performance (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, discipline can influence students' academic performance by creating a culture of respect and responsibility. In a well-disciplined classroom, students learn to respect themselves, their peers, and their teachers, and to take responsibility for their actions (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015). This can lead to a more positive and supportive learning environment where students feel safe to express their ideas, take risks, and learn from their mistakes.

Moreover, discipline can also impact students' time management skills, which are crucial for academic success. A well-disciplined student is more likely to prioritize their time effectively, set goals, and manage their workload efficiently (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). This can lead to improved academic performance, as students are better able to stay organized and focused on their studies. Additionally, discipline can influence students' ability to cope with challenges and setbacks. A well-disciplined student is more likely to have the resilience and perseverance to overcome obstacles and continue working towards their goals (Dweck, 2006). This can be particularly important in academic settings, where students may face academic challenges and setbacks that require them to stay motivated and determined. Furthermore, discipline can impact students' relationships with their peers and teachers. A well-disciplined student is more likely to have positive and respectful relationships with others, which can create a supportive and collaborative learning environment (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). This can lead to increased engagement in learning activities and improved academic performance, as students are

more likely to participate actively and seek help when needed. Discipline plays a critical role in students' academic performance by shaping their behavior, motivation, social and emotional development, and sense of responsibility. By using discipline as a tool to create a positive and supportive learning environment, educators can help students succeed academically and develop the skills they need to thrive in school and the society.

Conclusion

The development of any nation is hinged on a solid educational foundation for its citizenry. The teacher plays a crucial role in the educational attainment of students and is ultimately responsible for implementing educational policies and principles for achieving school goals. Therefore, both pedagogical and behavioural qualities of the teacher is important. Also, the behaviour of the students as a result of proper discipline brings with it a learning climate void of any tension. These two, are great assests for educational administration, which will ultimately translate into a productive society. The institution of strong educational structures leads to a society populated by enlightened people, who can cause positive economic progress and social transformation.

Suggestions

Haven x-rayed the concepts and importance of teacher quality and students' discipline in school administration, the following suggestions are made:

1. Educational managers should conciously employ teaching staff with the relevant quality in terms of certification, knowledge of subject matter and relevant experience for the required levels of instruction.
2. Teaching staff in the schools should be given opportunities for trainings and growth to enhance their continous improvement.
3. Different forms of discipline like reprimand, verbal and written warnings, use of punitive assignments, suspension, counselling, flogging, expulsion, etc., should be used by classroom teachers and school management depending on the offence and the category of learners, for the purposes of correction.
4. While disciplinary actions are concouraged in the school for deviant behaviours, rewards and commendations should be given to students with desirable conducts to promote reinforcement of such conducts.

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