

PRINCIPALS' DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES IN KWARA STATE PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

BY

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Abstract

It is strongly believable that decision making practices of school principals determine the level of attainment of school objectives and goals. This paper is therefore designed to look into the challenges and prospects of principals' decision-making practices in Kwara State public senior secondary schools. It focuses on theoretical framework, principals' decision-making practices, dimensions of principals' decision-making practices in Kwara State public senior secondary schools, characteristics of good decision-making practices of principals in Kwara State public senior secondary schools, stages or steps involved in decision-making processes of principals in Kwara State public senior secondary schools among others. Based on this, it is concluded that, school management decision-making practice of school principals is complex, multi-faceted, uncertain and risky. It is a major aspect of every school administrator's work or responsibility to ensure that effective decision-making practices are improved upon.

Introduction

Teachers are needed assets that play a huge role in the achievement of goals and objectives in the educational sector and their commitment play a major role in how they perform their duties as teachers (Alsiewi, Omar & Agil, 2024). Teachers' commitment is a strong belief in and the acceptance of school's goals and values, their willingness to exert effort, invest personal resources into teaching task and remain teaching profession (Yildiz, 2017). In the same vein, Sharma (2019) explains that teachers' commitment is usually determined by examining their commitment to the school, the students they teach and the teaching profession they belong. Ogunyemi and Ayodele (2014) noted that it has however been observed that most teachers especially in secondary schools tend to show low job commitment and some of the teachers often come late to work and tend to be frequently absent from work by abusing sick leave which causes loss of valuable instructional time due to ineffective substitute teacher or class cancellation (Adegbola, 2019). Subsequently, these teachers are only interested in their own success rather than the organization's success which invariably affects their involvement to provide quality education and their ability in helping students towards academic achievement. This persistent low job commitment among teachers often appears in the minds of psychologists, educators and researchers as they try to unravel factors that could be the cause through ineffective decision-making practices of school principals (Oladosu & Adenike, 2015).

Teachers' commitment has been observed to be grossly inadequate in public secondary schools. This is reflected in form of rampant absenteeism, late coming, failure to assess students' work in time, part-time teaching in more than two schools to top up their salary, need, and satisfaction, negligence in examination malpractice by students and low performances among others, have always raised a public concern. Similarly, it also influences negative perception of all stakeholders towards the schools as a whole. Consequently, the desire and the ultimate goal of education in secondary schools seem to be in jeopardy. To avoid or overcome this, steps must be taken to ensure that the teachers are committed to their job. In every school of learning in any country, proper principal decision-making practices are extremely important in order to make teachers satisfied and committed to their work for better performance. However, some principals try to avoid making decisions, manipulate their teachers' minds and control them under the umbrella of leadership and collaboration. Teachers are also often neglected in the decision-making

process and even when they are involved and consulted, the decisions are not properly evaluated and implemented. Although there are other causes for the low job commitment among teachers, principal decision-making will be taken as upper hand in predicting job commitment of teachers.

Decision-making is the process of selecting the most suitable choice from among the probable alternatives to the solution of a problem in order to attain goals and objectives (Shorouk & Abdulrasheed, 2018). Principals as school managers are in charge of the decision-making in a school which involved several styles of decision-making (Olcum & Titrek, 2016). They include but not limited to - participation decision-making, decision-making consultation, spontaneous and avoidant decision-making. Ayoro and Onyeike (2020) noted that school administrators' decision-making practices influence teachers' job satisfaction on the basis of participation decision-making, decision-making consultation, spontaneous and avoidant decision-making on teachers' job commitment.

Participation in decision-making is essential for school programs to work effectively and achieve their goals. Effective decision making appears to be a major challenge most principals in secondary schools in Kwara state are facing today as there are lots of line-up duties and activities to be performed within a limited time. Principal of public school in Kwara state have been found of lack of principal decision-making practices. They often confused when it comes to decide quality decisions that would benefit the school. It has been observed that the most common difficulty encountered by some principals of secondary schools in the Kwara State is inability to organize and plan their work properly and effectively which resulted into teachers' low productivity. Teachers who imparted lesson to students were not invited and consulted to the problems facing school. Teaching and learning occur in the school when there is mutual cooperation between the management and teachers (Nwagwu, 2003; Abidin, 2015). Promoting quality decision making is a chief factor in the improvement of education (Harris & Sass, 2011; Gerritsen, et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2017).

To add to the problems identified, principals have been found of make decisions without considering the teachers who will make to be effective in the school which resulting in low morale, poor implementation of policies, and ultimately, hindered student learning outcomes. As Kwara state public schools are facing dearth of teaching aids, inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and capacity development for school leaders but principals are still facing indecision on which of these to be implemented based on little fund provided by the government. Poor school community relation and poor physical resources management has been attributed to dearth of ineffective decisions making in the school. In fact, most of these principals are autocratic in nature because teachers were adequately invited by the school principal on what should be done to improve quality learning. Barsi, e et al., (2013) submitted that when teachers are not invited in the decision making in the school, it might affect tone of the school as well students' performance. This is because they are the one who interact with the students in the classroom.

Apart from the stated scenario, many principals tend to run schools with little or no involvement of teachers in decision-making. It has been discovered and it is even common to some principal to say that teacher that wait your turn. This resulted in Kwara state public schools teachers being less satisfied with their teaching work and students' poor performance. Teachers have been neglected in the school and some school principals sometimes refuse to disclose the money generated. Thus, many researches have been carried out on decision making schools but on different aspects. Take for example, Araoye (2006) investigated communication and decision-making about reproductive health issues; Murtala, et al., (2018) worked on participative decision-making and staff productivity; Ezinwa (2023) looked into principals decision-making strategies and teachers' productivity and Onwuagbaizu and LongJohn (2024) conducted study on influence of information system on decision making by secondary school administration but neglected the practices the school principal should internalize for the growth and development of the schools. Therefore, this necessitated the need to investigate principals' decision-making practices in Kwara state schools. This serve as a gap to be fill in this study.

Underpinning theory used for the study

This current study used of human relation theory as the underpinning theory. Theory is the set of accepted belief or organized principles that explain and guide analysis (Roe & Drake, 1980). In the same vein, theory is a term used in research to explain phenomena based on systematic observation in a way that can be tested and corrected (Razavich, 1985). Elton Mayo developed the theory that would explain decision making practices and it could be used in formal organization like school (Omolawal, 2021; Kasar, 2025). Elton Mayo is known as organizational psychologist and founder of the human relations movement. He was the first to realize that worker output and satisfaction were linked to social factors such as the way employees were treated on the job (Siadari, et al., 2024). The theory developed to examined the effect of social relation, motivation and employees interaction and satisfaction on organizational productivity. Elton Mayo see decision making practices as a tool that can be used to enhance productivity in an organization (Omolawal, 2021; Pokhrel, 2022).

According to the human relation theory, teachers should be expected to participate in the decision-making process because they are the orchestration of teaching and learning. According to Lisa (2019) submitted that when teachers participate in the decision-making process, they have many opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings, and current conflicts, disagreements, would be identified and reduced. The theory further articulated that principals who invited teachers to make an input in the decision making play an important role in school success. As the popular adage say "two good heads are better than one" and "you never know all". This means that ideas can be shared between the principal and teachers within the school organization to improve learning. It is a way to measure school performance that can lead to better decisions and better understanding (Lisa, 2019). The lesson learnt from this theory is that principals of public school in Kwara state should interact freely and gather opinions from the teachers for the purpose of decision making. Occasionally, principal should plan for interaction forum in the schools on the course of action which would help them to forge a positive bond. The principals should incorporate the human relationship theory to foster teachers' relationship, reduce conflict, promote job productivity and create a favourable working environment. Ossai (2023) pointed that the role of decision-making in schools is require as the relationship between teaching and learning needs to be improved. When education leaders (principals) engage in dialogue with staff (teachers), there are many opportunities to share ideas and ideas that lead to better decisions (Glueck, 2006). Oduro (2024) expressed that good decision making is a product of good leadership, cooperation, unity, openness and discussion. All in all, in schools, Principals should employ decision making practices so that the school can achieve its goals and meet the needs of school members as well as society as a whole.

Defining Principals' Decision-Making Practices

Principals' decision-making practice inherently covers a dynamic and complex set of processes (D'Angelo, 2011) often requiring the participation of many stakeholders, not just the manager, and a compendium of various characteristics and strategies. Principals' decision-making practice can be characterized as the process of coping with contradictions and inconsistencies that emerge over time from different sources (Eranova & Prashantham, 2016). Principals' decision-making practice describes the manner in which people make decisions, react to problems, handle information and interact with others (Boulgarides, 2019). In the educational domain, for example, principals' decision-making practice refers to the method employed by school principals in certain administrative tasks when faced with a situation that necessitates choosing between two or more possible choices or actions in order to arrive at a conclusion. In the decision-making in schools, one of the most investigated topics is the link between decision-making, on the one hand, and leadership and personality traits, on the other.

Güçlü, Özer, Kurt and Koşar (2015) found that school principals' personality traits and leadership styles had an effect on their decision-making style. Ercan and Altunay (2015) found that there was a positive relationship between school principals' personality traits and decision-making styles. With regard to certain other variables, such as ex-

perience, Nixon (2017) revealed that seniority in principalship and previous work experience influenced the way principals made decisions. Halama (2020) determined that high self-regulation increases vigilant thinking and eliminates maladaptive ways, such as procrastination or buck-passing.

The school principals constitute the administrative staff that have to make decisions concerning the running of schools. The functions of principals is to do the planning, organising, leading and monitoring required in order for schools to function and must deal with a range of diverse situations (Hoy & Tarter, 2020). While undertaking these tasks and managerial responsibilities, and when dealing with situations, school principals need to make decisions by considering both internal and external factors. At this point, the system within which school principals have to make decisions seems to be the determining factor regarding decision-making. Therefore, the decision-making practices may be affected by a variety of factors, most of which are elements of the centralized system-wide structure, and certain internal and external factors in the decision-making process. Among the internal factors are teachers' views and suggestions, vice-principals' views and suggestions, and the instructional goals of the school. The external factors are reported to be laws and regulations, the views and suggestions of school-parent associations, the general education policy of the country, and the demands of the top management. School principals' perceptions, and the participants in the study did not therefore count themselves among the influencing factors.

Principals' decision-making practice is a significant management process and stands out as one of the most critical responsibilities of managers. It involves choosing the most reasonable view or alternative from a variety of views and alternatives related to an issue, and making a judgment in order to attain the desired result (Şişman, 2020). Principals' decision-making practice is the heart of management, arguing that it serves as an axis for other management processes. In all organisational settings, including educational organisations, decision-making is an essential management task (Clayton, 2017), as people who hold administrative positions have to make decisions in order to accomplish their daily responsibilities. School principals are among the main actors responsible for decision-making in the daily running of schools. Principals' decision-making practice is necessary for the organization to achieve its goals. Principals' decision-making practice thrives when all members of an organization, regardless of age, qualification or experience, participate in decision making. This means that problems are better resolved when two or more people give advice. School leaders should involve teachers in the decision-making process to ensure that management policies are implemented. Teachers should participate in and encourage discussions on issues related to their work.

Based on literatures synthesized above, the principal of Kwara state public senior secondary schools should bear it mind that effective decision-making practices can lead to school success. Principal should be able to call teachers for dialogue and sharing of ideas on what can transformed school to the next level. Roy (2016) noted that the rational decision making made by the principals is a logical, multistep model for choice. Collective effort of both the principal and teachers of secondary school in Kwara state would reflect on the students' academic performance. Schools are considered more efficient when teachers are independent and involved in school decision-making. Indeed, schools would improve if teachers were more involved in decision making. When teachers are involved in the decision-making process, they can play an important role in the overall success of schools.

Principals' Decision-Making Practices Strategies in Kwara State Public Senior Secondary Schools

The strategies of principals' decision-making practices in Kwara State public senior secondary schools include the following according to Ibara (2020):

- i. **Authoritative Decision-Making Practice:** Authoritative decision-making practice is decisions made in response to authoritative communication from a superior officer. This implies that the decision flows from the superior to the subordinate 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. This is to say that principals of public senior secondary school use authoritative decision-making practice for development of the schools.
- ii. **Consultative Decision-Making Practice:** 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 (Ololube 2013). This imply that principals of schools in Kwara state should consult teachers and allow their ideas and suggestion in the decision-making process which in turn lead to teachers' productivity in the long run.
 - iii. **Delegative Decision Making Practice:** Delegative decision-making practice has to do with delegating the responsibility of making decisions to one or more subordinates. For example, when the principal assigns the duty of decision-making to teachers. This type of decision-making practice is usually adopted by a leader who is confident of the capabilities of his or her subordinates. This is to say that effective delegative decision to subordinate making process would enhance effective performance of teachers. Tijani (2020) asserted that when teachers are involved in the decision-making process, they can play an important role in the overall success of schools.
 - iv. **Facilitative Decision-Making Practice:** 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 practice. It is regarded as all-inclusive or participatory in nature. The risk of making wrong decision is often very low or minimized.
 - v. **Routine and Strategic Decision-Making Practice:** These are decisions that are everyday and often made decision in school management. These kinds of decision 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 (2021) is more difficult decision as it affects the goals and objective 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 of school head makes them.
 - vi. **Tactical and Operational Decision-Making Practice:** 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.
 - vii. **Organizational and Personal Decision-Making Practice:** 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.
 - viii. **Major and Minor Decision-Making Practice:** 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
 - ix. **Individual and Group Decision Making Practice:** 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.

Conclusively, principal of public schools in Kwara state need to integrate the strategies identified for the successfulness of school goals. The school management should ensure that implementation strategies are followed for the goals realization. In fact, the result of this strategies in decision making is to teach and learn in a serene and harmonious environment. In order to get a good education in secondary school in Kwara state, principals need to think, see, be patient, unite in integrity, care and decide on the

course of actions need to in the school. These strategies are just to guide the principals on the various mechanisms that can lead to active teaching and learning. By doing this, principal would be given glory for the good development that occur in the school.

Characteristics of Good Decision-Making Practices of Principals in Kwara State Public Senior Secondary Schools

Principal leadership in Kwara state schools is a complicated role that require good assessment skills. They faced countless daily decisions that can impact your teacher productivity, student's learning as well as success. In order to be successful in the school administration in Kwara state public schools, principal must be aware of what constitute characteristics of good decision-making practices. Making good decisions in the schools requires knowledge, experience, and critical thinking skills of a principals. Here are the characteristics of Good Decision-Making Practices of Principals to be aware of in Kwara State Public Senior Secondary Schools

- i. 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 desire development with available resources. This is necessary in order to avoid non-implementation of decision in the school system.
- ii. A good decision must be geared towards school goals and objectives. Every good decision must reflect the predetermined educational objectives.
- iii. 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 et al. (2017) maintained that good decision-making practices of principals in Kwara State public senior secondary schools 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; and It should be concerned with the morale and satisfaction of the employees and students.

Decision-making Style of Principals in Kwara State Public Senior Secondary Schools

- i. **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 make if there is no other reasonable course of action. As the effects of these decision can be felt for a long time to come, irreversible decisions are generally only make when there is no other option. Tijani (2020) opined that leadership exhibited by principal lead to teacher productivity.
- ii. **Reversible Style:** These decisions are not permanent. They can be changed if need be. Ideally, reversible decision-making permits one to acknowledge a misstate beforehand and after the nonconductive instead of ending the worst consequences. Yusuf (2023) The efficacy of the school system is hinged on principals' possession of skills needed for smooth operation.
- iii. **Delayed Style:** Delays occur naturally in decision-making problems. Many corporations face regulatory delays which need to be taken into account when corporation make decisions. Delayed decision can be implanted only after a certain amount of time elapses. For example, after paper work and regulatory requirement have been satisfied. 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 of delays, a true leader always approaches decision assertively and is fully in charge of the decision-making process (Reunanen & Kaitonen, 2017).
- iv. **Quick Decision Style:** These are decisions that are speedily taken. Quick decision can only be done by an experience and capable decision-maker, if the objectives are to be achieved as determined. Abdulrasheed (2018) was opinion that good decision can fast-track school development.
 - v. **Experimental Style:** In this style of decision-making, the final decision is not made until preliminary results are available and are positive (Ubom, 2016). In this approach, a decision is not finalized until results prove themselves to be as pleasing as desired.
 - vi. **Trial and Error Style:** In this style of decision, a course of action is selected and tested (Johnson, 2019; Temitope, 2018). 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 final commitment is made. Badmus, (2022) explained that when decision making process is not properly structured it could lead to absence of teachers' participation in the decision-making process and as one of the key problems that promotes inefficiency. This should be use for every stage of decision-making process.
 - vii. **Conditional Style:** these are decisions that permit or allow school head to keep all options open. That is, multiple options are kept and considered backups so that one can react quickly to the ever-changing scenarios inside and outside competitive markets. This is why Olaifa et al. (2023) expressed that Participatory decision-making is a process that involves the active involvement of various stakeholders in decision-making processes

Stages to use in the Decision-Making Processes for Principals in Kwara State Public Senior Secondary Schools

However, Umass (2018) explained that decision-making process is a step-by-step process that can help you make more deliberate, thoughtful decision 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. Based on this submission, Umass (2018) suggested seven stages of decision-making process for principals of public secondary schools, Kwara State. They include the following:

- i. **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 (Umass, 2018; Elmelegy, 2015; Karpinski, et al., 2021). 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, teachers' welfare package and many more.
- ii. **Gather Information:** This has to do with gathering information that are connected to the decision or problems at hand (Umass, 2018; Karpinski, et al., 2021). This will help or aid the school head to make a rational conclusion.
- iii. **III. Identify Alternatives:** When all the critical information are gathered or assembled, the school head identifies the suitable line of action among the options or alternatives (Umass, 2018; Karpinski, et al., 2021).
- iv. **Weigh the Evidence:** This is the school head select the alternative that has the highest and acceptable potential for success (Umass, 2018; Elmelegy, 2015; Karpinski, et al., 2021). This can be done by prioritizing and weighing the various options.
- v. **Choosing among the Alternative:** This is a situation where the school head selects the alternative or options placed considering the potential risks involved (Umass, 2018; Karpinski, et al., 2021).

- vi. **Act:** 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 implementations, finding out if the problem has been solved, if not, repeat of the choice of alternative(s) and source for more information (Umass, 2018; Elmelegy, 2015; Karpinski, et al., 2021). 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.
- vii. **Review the Decision:** the ability to evaluate and asses the results of the decisions made in order to determine the effectiveness of the decisions made (Umass, 2018; Elmelegy, 2015).

Challenges facing Principals' Decision-Making Practices in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

The decision-making practices of principals determine the success of any schools. The roles played by the principals in the schools are countless in the goal achievement. In Kwara state, these principals are facing many challenges which resulting low productivity of teachers and poor academic performance of students. Based on this, Ibara (2010) and Oghogu (2023) jointly provided challenges faced by the principal.

- i. **Personal Biases:** School administrators who feel very strongly about an issue may not be able to consider alternatives without bias. Baporikar (2017) maintained that personal biases has been the major obstacle that affect decision-making process. 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 decision taken by some school heads becomes effective is because of having personal interest abandoning the general interest of the school (Ibara, 2010; Oghogu, 2023). It is important that school leaders leave their personal biases, weakness and pitfalls aside when making crucial school decisions.
- ii. **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 (Ibara, 2010; Oghogu, 2023).. The deadline set by others could cause hasty decisions as they limit the time available to properly consider all option.
- iii. **Factors in Decision-making Environment:** Factors in decision-making environment such as the level of risk involved, the degree of uncertainty and the conflicts to be encountered can affect the decision (Ibara, 2010; Oghogu, 2023).. Sometimes, they hold institution 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
- iv. **Corruption:** corruption is the hydra-headed epidemic bewitching educational planning in Nigeria (Wali, 2014). Wali, (2014) further described that 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 and its implementation. These stagnate the entire system and create and unfavorable atmosphere. It is pertinent to note that decision-making to be effective in school
- v. system, the school 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. In Kwara state public schools, corruption and accountability have been the issues facing most the principal. It is believed of some principals that when they get to that position is to embezzle the school fund. This is why, they would say wait for you own time.
- vi. **Political Interference:** Political interference occurs when political leader(s) interface 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 (Ibara, 2010; Oghogu, 2023; Haile & Smit, 2021). 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 (Ibara, 2010; Oghogu, 2023). Nigerian politicians interfere with the decision-making process in the school unnecessarily. Whereas, they know that decision-making in a school 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.

- vii. **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 most of the educational programs in the school cannot stand the test of time. In line with the above points, Ololube et al. (2018) explained that the reason for decision-making is to solve problems in the organization. This implies that without adequate information the essence of decision-making will be defeated and abandoned.
- viii. **Poor Implementation of Decisions:** 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 objective goals of the school (Chemwei, et al., 2014; Ibara, 2010; Oghogu, 2023).). Adequate implementation, assessment and evaluation are very much inadequate and sometimes lacking in most school management activities in Nigeria. Sometimes the nature of decisions. It is imperative to note there is need for monitoring and evaluating to help in reducing the abnormalities prevalent indecision-making process in school system.
- ix. **The Capacity of the Decision-maker:** Finally, the capacity of the decision-maker is a notable barrier or challenge in school-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 make effective decision when the need arises. Wali (2018) argued that the charisma to make effective decision when the need arises.

Way Forward to Improve Principal Decision Making Practices in Kwara State Public Senior Secondary School

The prospects to the challenges facing decision-making practices of principals in Kwara State public senior secondary schools are as follows;

- i. **Abstaining from Personal Biases:** school principals need to ensure that others' opinion should be considered before taking concluded decisions on any issue. Ejimabo (2015) postulated that a leader must have the self-confidence to gather and process information make quality decision to solve problems, their personal biases notwithstanding. Olejurulo, (2018) identified some factors that can help the school head to overcome personal biases and they include: work through a group or team will provide needed information, expertise and alternative to make the decision; taking advantage of existing institutional data to guide his/her decision; and determining to take the right decision no matter his/her personal beliefs or pressures.
- ii. **Appropriate Time Management:** Time is an impediment to effective decision-making; most educational managers need to maintain that while making decisions on any issue, time must be set aside to ensure that the aims of the decisions made are attained at the appropriate time. 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.
- iii. **Good Environment:** Effective decision making needs to be carried and determined in a an environment that will facilitate effective decision making practices that could lead to the set goals on the decisions made.

- iv. **Curbing Corruption:** When the school administrators are making decisions on issues relating to educational system, the school heads need to keep away from bribery and embezzlement, distorting of process of decision and its implementation.
- v. **Political Stability:** when the political policies of any country are highly stable and maintained any decisions relating to educational programmes of such country will be improved towards the attainment of educational goals and objectives.
- vi. **Adequate and Available Information:** the adequate and available information on the decisions to be made will determine the direction of any educational decisions made. This is because the school principals need to access and digest the available information on ground before taking effective decisions. That is why Ololube et al. (2018) maintained that a decision the school manager or administrator should be innovative in making decision and should also select from acceptable alternatives when making decisions. Meanwhile, most school head do not go through this rigorous decision-making process.
- vii. **Effective and Good Implementation of Decisions:** The beauty of any decision made is to be highly implemented to the attainment of set goals. That is, the school principals need to ensure that every decision taking on educational issue is highly implemented.
- viii. **Ability and Effectiveness of the Decision-maker:** The school administrator as decision-maker is in the best position to tackle the challenges facing school administration particularly when making school decisions. However, it is most important that an educational leader must 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. Penultimately, principal of public schools in Kwara state need to make use of the solutions to actualize effective decision making in school. Integrating these following ways forward such as abstaining from personal biases, appropriate time management, good environment, curbing corruption, political stability, adequate and available information, effective and good implementation of decisions, ability and effectiveness of the decision-maker. One would see that principals would effective decisions making practices all schools in Kwara state. As stated by the present administration of Kwara state that education to be provided for its Kwara state citizens would be quality but this quality be emanated from principal effective decision-making practices.

Conclusion

School management decision-making practice of school principals is complex, multi-faceted, uncertain and risky. It is a major aspect of every school administrator's work or responsibility to ensure that effective decision-making practices are improved upon. Fundamentals of effective decision-making practices 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 process or steps of decision-making practices. It is obvious that decision-making practice is an integral part of school management. This implies that every decision practice has its origin. It emanates from one source or the other. Therefore, it is worthwhile for every school head to take advantage of this paper to improve on their lapses to bear a lasting sustainable and effective decision-making practices in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

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