TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES: THE IMPERATIVE FOR GOAL ACHIEVEMENT IN BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The educational sector in Nigeria has been experiencing increasing change. So, school reform and restructuring efforts in past few years have been emphasizing the imperative of new and more collaborative forms of school leadership as the public expectation in quality teaching, school accountability and divergent input became more challenging and complex. Therefore this paper examines transformational leadership practices on the goal achievement of basic education in Nigeria. The transformational leadership practices used in this paper were anchored on the Kouzes and Posner, transformational leadership practices which are challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way, and encouraging the heart, which can be used by the school leaders to attain the goal achievement of the basic education. The implication of this paper is that the school head teachers should ensure that their leadership performance is always kept high to have a significant relationship with the goal achievement of basic education through better engagement of school teachers' as well as better academic performance of the pupils. It is therefore recommended that school head teachers should adopt Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices and utilize such knowledge to shape their behaviours and professional growth and consequently, increase their effectiveness in the schools.
Keywords: Transformational leadership Practices, Basic education and Goal achievement

Introduction

Important changes in the educational system; the technological advancement, economical, social, political, and pedagogical shifts; and the diversity of student populations require public school leaders to be well-grounded to meet the challenges of the 21st century (Tatlah, *et al*, 2014), particularly in terms of leadership disposition of basic education school leaders. School education helps community of people make sense of the changes as well as engendering sustainability, including through lifelong learning. The wise use of knowledge is of great importance as well as its creation, acquisition, and communication. All in all, the most important investment by society is education which is increasingly demanded by people, it is important to note that society suffer in the absence of good education and prosper in its presence when it is handled by dextrous and visionary school leaders particularly at basic level which is the foundation of all levels of education. In this epoch of high expectations of each nation-state's educational provision, those leading schools have an enormous responsibility. It is no wonder that the "school improvement movement of the past 20 years has put a great emphasis on the role of leaders." (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD0, 2001b, p. 32).

School leadership is the second most important factor after class instruction in a student's achievement level (Dutta & Sahney, 2015). A transformational leader motivates teachers by establishing clear direction and identifying what is of value to the school (Sergiovanni, 2007; Shahrill, 2014) for student achievement to occur (Quin *et al*., 2015; Shatzer *et al.*, 2014). Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003) defined the term transformational leadership "as an adaptive leader who makes changes by making sense of the challenges leaders and followers face and responding creatively to these complex tasks". Leaders who display a transformational leadership style are successful administrators (Underwood, *et al*., 2016). Transformational leaders are unselfish and places others' needs ahead of their own (Ewest, 2015) by

communicating the school's vision, establishing norms, developing an individual's strengths by changing attitudes, and encouraging risk taking from staff (Anderson, 2017; Underwood, *et al*., 2016).

Goal achievement in education is one of the top on the agenda of many national governments. The provision of quality primary education is key in pursuing this agenda and relies heavily effective school leaders. This article explores the potential contribution of transformational leadership practices of primary school principals in promoting goal achievement. It is argued that primary school head teachers who exhibit the transformational leadership characteristics motivate school teachers towards commitment and see to the academic performance of the students thereby contributing towards goal achievement. Goal achievement in education is a key factor in the development of the education system. It is the duty of national governments to ensure that they maintain growth economically, socially and environmentally. This growth can only be achieved through the provision of quality primary education which is dependent on effective school leaders particularly the transformational school leaders. Primary education constitutes the foundational building block of education, and is the most important stage in the formal education of a child (Hamid, *et al*., 2013).

Basic Education is a type of education that is given in the first stage of child education in both quality and content. It is however varies from one nation state to another. In Nigeria, basic education is meant for six years of primary schooling and the three years of Junior Secondary School. Therefore, basic education also known as Universal Basic Education (UBE) is conjured up to enclasp formal education up to age 15, which is also include adult and non-formal education viz-a-viz education of the marginalized groups in the society within Nigeria. UBE is a policy reform measure of the Federal Government of Nigeria that is in line with the state objectives of the 1999 constitution which states in section 18 that...

> Government shall eradicate illiteracy; to this end, government shall as and when practicable provide a free and compulsory. Universal Primary Education, free secondary education, and free adult literacy programmes.

Transformational Leadership
James Mac Gregor Burns coined the term transformational leadership in his book, Leadership, to define a process where leaders and followers work together to advance motivation and morale (Burns, 1978). According to Burns, transformational leadership is a style of leadership that transforms follower attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, to a higher realm of motivation where the leader inspires followers to be motivated to rise above and beyond current levels of achievement and performance to even higher levels of achievement and performance. Burns (1978) defined a transforming leader as one who: '(1) raises the followers level of consciousness about the importance and value of designated outcomes and ways of reaching them; (2) gets the followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team; (3) raises the followers level of need on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, from lower level concerns for safety and security to higher level needs for achievement and self-actualization' (Bass, 2008, p. 619). In other words transformational leaders are capable to motivate their followers beyond self-interest and using more than extrinsic motivators.

The concept of transformational leadership used by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) included transactional behaviours and encompassed the following components: "Building school vision and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; symbolizing professional behaviours and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; developing structures to foster participation in school decisions; staffing; instructional support; monitoring school activities; and community focus" (p. 114). A transformational leader on the other hand is capable of delivering performance beyond expectations(Bass, 1985, p. 16) by (1) raising followers level of awareness of the importance of achieving valued outcomes and the strategies for reaching them, (2) encouraging followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the team, organization, or a larger cause and (3) developing associates' needs to higher levels in such areas as achievement, autonomy, and affiliation, which can be both work related or outside work related. Bass explains this performance beyond expectations through the fact that followers are motivated by the sacrifices the leader is making to achieve the mission and at the same time personally identify with the mission set forth by the leader (personal identification process) (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Transformational leader in a school system is a commitment to the vision of a school and a form of leadership that motivates, inspires, and challenges followers to take risks as practices a transformational

leader uses to promote innovation, creativity, respect and trust from subordinates by considering individuals' development (Stein, Macaluso, & Stanulis, 2016).

An Overview of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched by the Federal Government in September 1999 under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo for the purpose of achieving compulsory, free and universal basic education. Universal Basic Education in Nigeria evolved from the 1955 Universal Primary Education Scheme which operated in western Nigeria. It was also Nigeria's response to the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015 and in extension response to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030. The UBE programme, as a policy reform measure targeted at correcting inconsistencies and misshaping in basic education delivery in the country as well as for the government to take charge of basic education in the formal and non formal sectors. The UBE is aimed at enabling all children in the Nigerian society to participate in the free 9 years of schooling from primary one to junior secondary school (JSS) three classes. The UBE is thus intended to be universal and compulsory. According to Obayan (2000), these terms imply that appropriate types of opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school going age.

Objectives of Universal Basic Education Policy in Nigeria

The followings are the objectives of objectives of UBE according to FRN (2013):

1. developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
2. the provision of compulsory, free and Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age;
3. reducing drastically, the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
4. Catering through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the promotion of basic education, for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling; and
5. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral, security and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

There are three major components of the UBE. These are:-

a) Formal basic education encompassing the first nine years of schooling (primary and Junior Secondary Education)
b) Nomadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen.
c) Literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school youths and illiterate adults (Nigeria, 2004).

Transformational Leadership Practices for Basic Education Goal Achievement

Simola, *et al*., (2012) define transformational leadership as a type of leadership in which interactions among interested parties are organized "around a collective purpose" in such a way that "transform, motivate and enhance the actions and ethical aspirations of followers." Because school leaders have a significant impact on teacher and student performance, transformational leadership traits should be prioritized in order to influence vision formulation, high student accomplishment, group goal setting, and professional growth (Balyer, 2012). According to Christiansen and Robey (2015), school leaders' involvement in setting the tone for the culture allows schools to convert into environments that prioritize teacher and student learning, teaching, and operational support systems. Creating a learning culture through regular communication of the mission, vision, values, and goals; approaching curriculum with a focus on student learning and quality instruction; empowering teachers to see themselves as leaders; providing teachers with needed information and staff development to make decisions that promote learning; and facilitating systems that enable collaborative work focused on teaching and learning are all examples of transformational leadership behaviours (Woods & Martin, 2016). Administrators establish high learning requirements and encourage individuals to work together to attain their goals.

Transformational leadership entailed actions in which administrators actively engaged and recruited team members to participate in analyzing the school culture's requirements for transformation by creating a common vision and mission (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). The transformational leadership practices serve as guidance for school leaders to accomplish their goal achievements or to get extraordinary things done

(Kouzes & Posner, 1995). These practices are: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, 2002).

Model the Way
In modelling the way, school transformational leaders develop and understand their own voice and set their pace in showcasing leadership qualities. This means that schools leaders with transformational stance always go first; he sets examples and builds commitment through daily engagements within the school system. These leaders demonstrate a strong work ethic while modelling a commitment to goals, vision, and mission. They set examples for those with whom they work with. While modelling the way, transformational leaders in basic education cultivate and facilitate a culture where people are loyal and committed to the school organisation. They take pride in their work and the work of their co-workers (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). These leaders show by example that they live by the values they advocate. They believe that the consistency between words and deeds build their credibility as transformational leaders

Inspire a Shared Vision
This is a way of bringing people in any organisation including schools together to engender diligence and commitment to a shared future they seek to create. Transformational leadership of Head teachers passionately believe that they can make a difference by envisioning the future and creating an ideal and unique image of what the school organisation can become. They ginger a vision in their teachers with a positive and hopeful outlook. (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 2002). As Kouzes and Posner (2002a) stated, "To get extraordinary things done in extraordinary times, leaders must inspire optimal performance-and that can only be fuelled with positive emotions" (p. 31). Great leaders use the power of energy and motivation to inspire those around them. They work long hours and sometimes endure personal sacrifice to inspire those around them to do the same in the name of a shared vision. Several researchers have spoken to the idea of shared vision. They describe building this vision with various stakeholder groups including parents, community, students and staff. They talk about the vision informing the direction that the school or organization takes toward continuous improvement (Jarnagin, 2004; Kent, 2004).

Challenge the Process
Transformational leadership of Head teachers in challenging the process involve process of evolving new ideas or recognizing and supporting new ideas. Transformational Head teachers show willingness to challenge the system by altering the status quo in order to turn these ideas into actions and get new pedagogical products, processes and outcomes. They seek out challenging opportunities that test their skills and abilities and look for innovative ways to improve the teaching and learning process. They learn from their mistakes rather than shift the blame on someone else (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 2002). This practice revolves around experimentation and taking risks with any new approach to already existing process. They do not punish failure in attempt but encourage it. Challenging the process involves re-evaluating, questioning, and not accepting what is the norm. As leaders take risks, they encourage their employees to do the same. Leaders must build a commitment to the challenge of reaching new heights while supporting their constituents during the journey (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Enable Others to Act
The transformational leadership practice that espouses enable others to act revolves around engendering of collaboration and empowerment of the school teachers. It means engaging others in the school system in planning and give them freedom of choice in the decision-making process. Enabling others to act allows teachers to do their teaching and learning activities with minimal supervision and to realize their full potential unhindered. Kouzes and Posner (2002a) stated that, "Collaboration is the critical competency for achieving and sustaining high performance" (p. 242). These leaders establish and model a climate of trust and this trust fosters a culture of interdependence.

Encourage the Heart
Teachers in the school organisations often need motivation and encouragement to achieve the goals set by the school authority. Transformational leaders in the basic education level have high expectations for themselves and their teachers. In the process of encouraging the heart, the school leaders attach recognition and rewards to job performance of the teachers. When Head teachers encourage their followers through recognition and celebration, they inspire them to perform better (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 2002). While encouraging the heart, transformational leaders in the school organisations are in tune with the needs, efforts and successes of those around them. With an emphasis on the shared vision and goals of the organization, these leaders celebrate victories and the contributions of others. These celebrations symbolically represent the strength of the organisation and create fond memories that create commitment and loyalty to the organisation and a dedication to those shared goals and vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Conclusion

Research for the past two decades has advanced the use and effectiveness of transformational leadership in school settings. This 21st century, is the era of school leaders with vision with unprecedented accountability for teacher and school performance, and improved students' academic performance. School leaders' responsibilities have expanded to include management and mentoring of school teachers, school finances, and the performance cum achievement standards set by school policy makers. The transformational leadership practices, though not a solution for all school challenges but it has considerable positive impact on enhancing the goal achievement of school settings. It can be concluded from the foregoing that the issue of transformational leadership in education, particularly in basic school, is a great importance issue in the school system. Head teacher transformational leadership style will improve teachers' classroom practices, advances quality of teaching, student learning and engagement and student achievement as learning outcome. Specifically, transformational head teacher leadership style is a significant factor that shows connection to the teacher acceptance, improved performance and increased teachers' job commitment and satisfaction at school.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that school head teachers should adopt Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices and utilize such knowledge to shape their behaviours and professional growth and consequently, increase their effectiveness in the schools.
2. Head teachers should pay full attention to these practices and make them their guide in discharging their leadership roles within the school.
3. Government and those in charge of education in ministries of Education should conduct workshops on best leadership practices based on Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices for practical purposes.
4. The government through the education Permanent Secretaries should use the Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices as yardstick for head teachers' appraisal for promotions.

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