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Teacher's accountability in Nigerian education system: Perceptions of teachers and administrators in Delta State

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This study attempts to ascertain teacher's accountability in Nigerian educational system as perceived by teachers and administrator. Three hundred and forty three teachers from secondary schools in Delta State participated in the study. Simple random sampling technique was used for their selection. The teachers and principals responded to the questionnaire titled "Accountability in Nigerian Educational System Perception Questionnaire" (ANESPQ) to give their views based on the research questions. The items on the questionnaire were rated with a four point Likert type scale to elicit their responses. Percentages were used to analyze the research questions. The major findings of the study were no significant differences existed between the perceptions of the student administrators and teacher's accountability. To enhance accountability in the system, all hands should be on deck. The operatives in the educational industry both on macro and micro levels should contribute immensely in the implementation of effective accountability in Nigeria educational system.

Key words: Teacher accountability, educational system, perceptions, teachers and principals, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Education as an investment in human capital has become a matter of priority for both government and individuals. The general belief is that, education helps to enhance the well being of the individual and the society at large. With this socio-economic satisfaction, education in Nigeria is seen as a big industry with large investment. As an investment, there are problems associated with its financing. One of the factors that have contributed to these problems as identified by Ogbodo (1995) is the widening perception of education as the key to upward economic and social mobility. This has implication in expecting that education should be able to yield dividends in line with the need of the nation. Therefore, on societal grounds and from economic perspectives, great investments were found on societal grounds, whereas from economic perspectives, great investments in education can be justified because of its expected generous returns.

The demand for education from kindergarten to tertiary levels is ever increasing. The government, communities and individual are craving for it because of the accrued benefits. This situation is almost reaching an alarming stage. Ukeje (1986) describes the ever-increasing demand for education in the face of scarcity of resource as a crisis of demand and supply. Education from the investment point of view is an input-output process. The process in terms of desirability is a function of cost-benefit, cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness analysis, which is measured in terms of utilization of real resources. The cost-expenditure in education is escalating. This trend has bugged the minds of many investors in education because of the deficiency seen in the educational products. The products of the three levels of the nation's educational system are seen as depicting a negative trend when compared with the huge direct and indirect costs vested into it. In other words, the standard is falling and this is a thought provoking issue. Aptly put, Lessing (1974), an accountability-leading proponent said that our schools have failed to educate our children because not every child has competencies in the basic

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skills. Proponents of negative returns in Nigeria education system also hold this view. For example Okobiah (1999), believed that there is problem inherent in the process and the product of the education system. Schools are not making any noticeable impact in achieving the set goals and objectives as well as on the nation's socio-economic development. Thus, most parents and other benefactors of education products are disenchanted with the outcome of the school to the extent that they now seek substitute for their children's education even in the face of free education programme. In fact, citizens are fast losing some of their blind faith in education as an instrument for achieving social awareness, political astuteness and economic as an instrument for achieving social awareness, political astuteness and economic prosperity (Eferakaya, 1988). Billions of naira is budgeted and directed into our education system without corresponding outcome. The much-needed quantitative, qualitative, productive, efficient and functional graduates in line national goals seen elusive. It appears that the system has failed dismally to live up to expectation.

In addition the decline in the rate returns amidst high cost of education also shows the administrative inefficiency and incompetence in the management of schools.

Statement of the problem

Over the years calls for accountability have become imperative because of the demand for constructive changes in our education system. In the schools, administrators and their subordinates have been said to neglect this essential ingredients in the performance of their administrative functions. The effect is that there are neglect returns and wastages in the system. Wastage of real resources, human, fiscal and materials, is now rampant in the system, some resources are misallocated and misused. Huge direct and indirect loss involved, is of great concern to investors. Obviously, administrators are confronted with enormous challenges as regards matter of accountability during their managerial function. They ought to ensure that they account for their teachers' performance in the course of discharging their duties. Therefore, what is the role of administrators in ensuring teacher accountability in the nation's school system in Delta State?

Research question

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Do teachers show responsibility to their students through the teaching of the curriculum content?
2. Are teachers regular in school attendance?

3. Do teachers carryout effective classroom management?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and administrators on responsibility of teachers to the students in the teaching of the curriculum contents.
2. There is no significant difference between teachers and administrators' view on teacher' regularity to school attendance.
3. There is no significant difference between teachers' and administrators' views on teacher's effective classroom management.

REVIEW

Accountability systems strive to affect the school quality by protecting students from incompetent teachers. However, because nearly all teachers are at least minimally competent, the accountability system directly affects only a very few teachers who are not competent. Thus, if our goal is to improve general school quality, and we use only those strategies that affect a few teachers, overall school improvement is likely to be a very slow process.

Management according to Kokach (2006) is the acceptance of personal accountability determined by measurable results. He further sees management as the process of taking many diverse elements, people, money, materials, equipment and ideas and turning them into a product or service that people need. It is a process of coordinating variety of resources, human and non-human, who is manipulated to process desired result measurable terms. These imply that accountability is a measure of the extent to which all available resources in a productive system are used for greater efficiency and productivity. Therefore, Hultt (2000) sees accountability as aiming at the setting of goals for action and ensuring that they are achieved, while Lessing (1974) says that accountability comes into being because the manager had a right to require an accounting for the authority and power delegated and tasks assigned to a sub-ordinate. The sub-ordinate on the other hand must respond to the manager with regards to the responsibility given to him.

In the operational level, there is a form of reciprocity relationship between the super-ordinates and the sub-ordinates. The super-ordinates delegate power and authority to the sub-ordinate. The sub-ordinate in turn assumes the responsibility and is accountable to the superior. The relationship can be represented thus, that is, relationship between superior and sub-ordinate in terms of power and authority delegated (Figure 1).

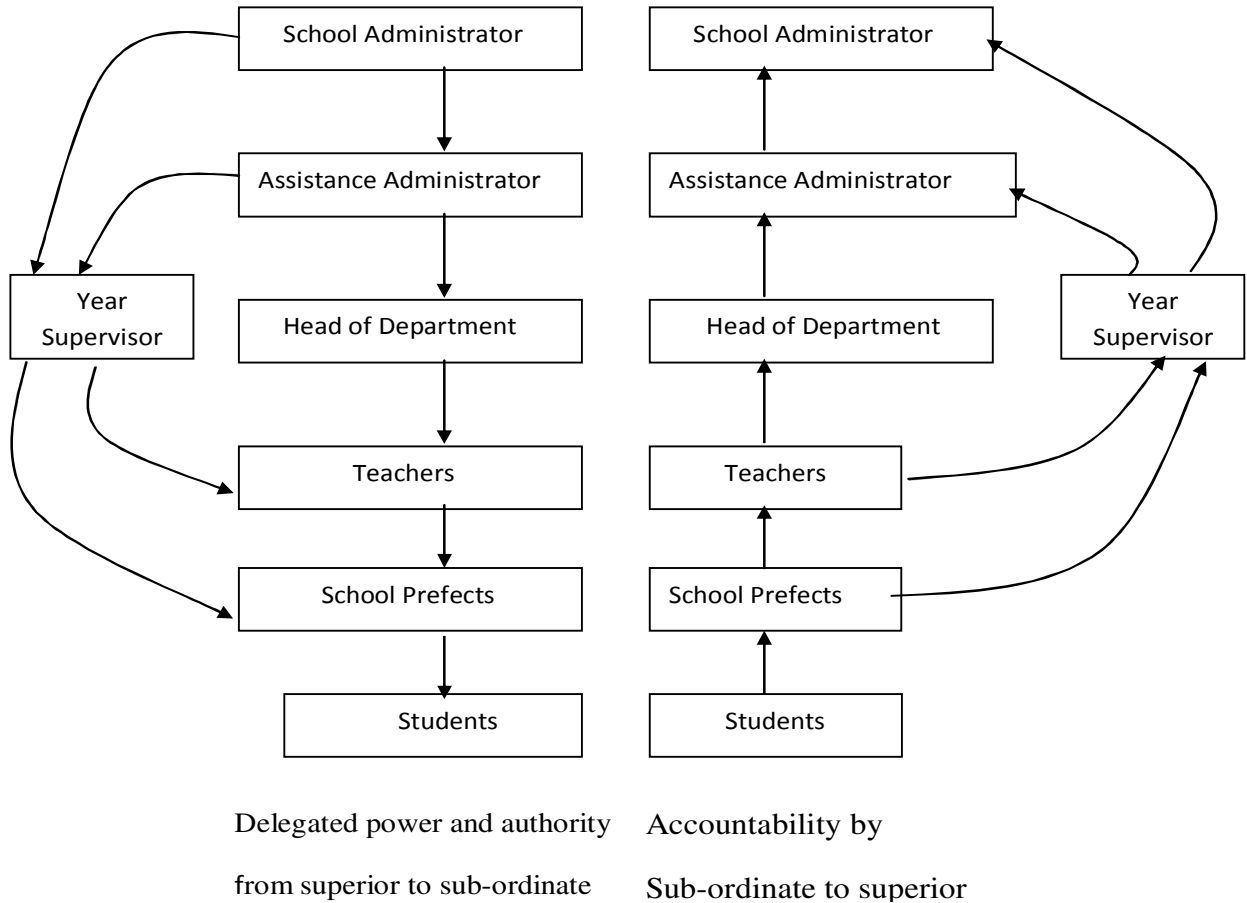


Figure 1. The superior and sub-ordinate relationship in accountability in the school system. source: From Researcher’s field experience (2002).

In any organization, there must be a delegation of power and authority by the superior to the personnel on the lower level and lower level personnel will be answerable to the superior by being held accountable.

Accountability tends to ascertain that performance is related to the organizational goals. It is therefore a goal-oriental activity viewed from the input perspectives. It is measures of how well resources are integrated to produce high output. This brings out the leadership dimension of accountability. The organization members are the most valuable assets of an organization. This is a known fact. There is no doubt that managerial decision on such intervening variable as motivation, communication, effective interaction, conflict and decision-making to a great extent may enhance or deplete employee morale and productivity (Ogbodo, 1995). Based on this and for the achievement of organizational goals, accountability should be able to measure the extent to which sub-ordinates’ activities are harmonized. Okobia (1999) says that for the educational administrator to be able to perform these activities without conflict he must be vested officially with authority and accountability.

Accountability in the management process

Pine (1976) says that educational management is the application of the process of planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, controlling and evaluation of human and material resources. These elements are not mutually exclusive. They are cyclical or sequential in practice. Accountability as a management principle can have a place in the cycle as can be represented in Figure 2.

The integration of accountability in the management processes will help to control indiscipline in the organization thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the system. The administrator should see it as essential ingredients that will gear his sub-ordinate to the responsible and responsive to the organizational needs.

Accountability in the school management process

The main objective of accountability is to increase productivity of educational outputs in response to societal

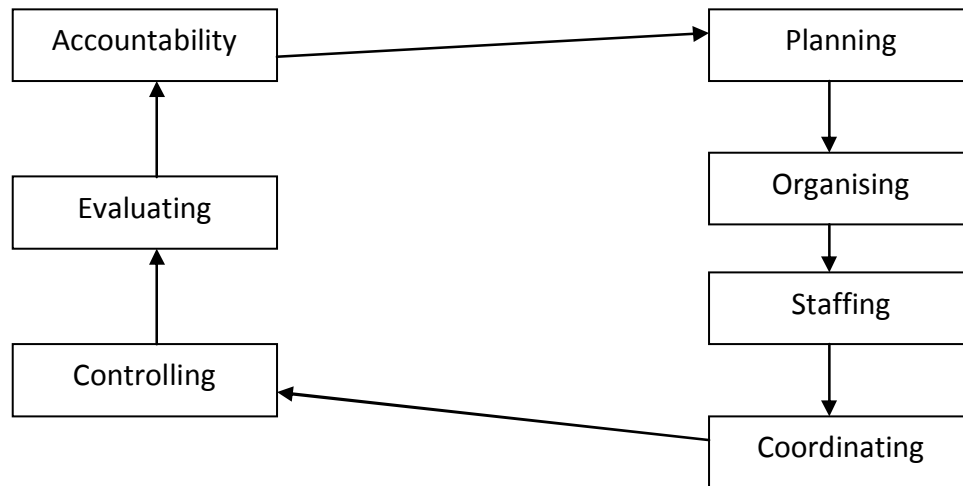


Figure 2. Accountability in management process. Source: From Researcher's opinion (2002).

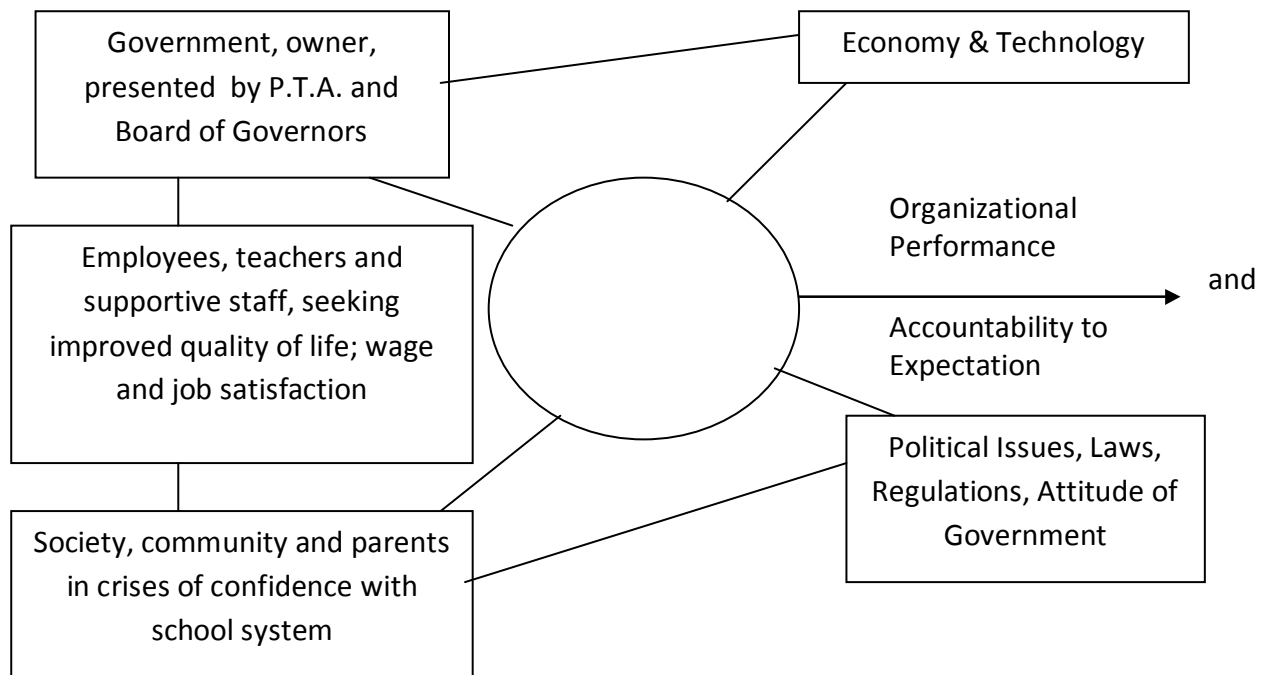


Figure 3. Accountability in the school management process. Source: Management by Robert Litewatha and Gene Newport (1982). Business Publication Inc. Texas.

needs. This economic concern for productivity and the social concern for responsiveness have relationship with the school performance.

There are many forces that act on the management of the school. Right across the spectrum from the parents to the courts, the management of the school is subjected to both external and internal control and evaluation. Many agencies want to determine what the institution is doing or it ought to do. Figure 3 depicts this assertion.

In Nigeria, call for accountability may just be to control education by government in order to minimize cost. It may not necessarily be to increase responsibility.

The principalship and accountability

The School administrator is the head of the school with clearly defined functions based on a hierarchy of

authority as prescribed by Weber. The prudential and judicious management of the available resources rest on his leadership acumen. His relationship with accountability is clearer when the administrator is viewed from both leadership and management position. Banye (1992) says that leadership is a process of coordinating the activity of individuals in a social system, which is usually geared towards the attainment of the goals and objectives of such a system. While management on the other hand is viewed by Okobia (1999) as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting with acronym POSDCORB. The two concepts have many theories and definitions. It is obvious from these definitions that the leader utilizes management process to harness available scarce resources to attain organizational goals and objectives. In this wise, accountability as a management process is a function of leadership. Organisations need men with high integrity to function as chief executives, leading the sub-ordinates to cooperatively work for the attainment of the organizational goals. According to Eferakeya (1988), accountability demands an effective leader that is able to mobilize, motivate and utilize subordinates to achieve organizational goals.

In its leadership perspective, accountability implies that the school administrator must be perceived as a principal actor in management processes. He measures the performance of the organizational by establishing targets with which to measure both performance of the organization and that every person in the organization. He analyzes, appraises, and interprets performance and communicates the outcomes to the sub-ordinates, colleagues and superior. He should be able to initiate strategies and provide direction to all and sundry in the institution. These strategies should be geared towards cost benefit, cost efficient and cost analysis in terms of utilizing men materials for operation of the education system. The focus of accountability is on effectiveness of the leadership in facilitating the release of human potentials in order to synthesis and utilizes the available resources to achieve the organizational goals without wastage. Rational decision-making is a leadership trait that can affect effective accountability. Administrator should be held accountable for the aspects of the students learning decisions.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This is a survey research, direct to find out the views of teachers and school administrators on human resources accountability in Nigeria Education System.

Population

The population of this study comprised all teachers and administrators of the 31 public secondary schools administrators

and 1372 teachers in the area of study. There are 31 public secondary schools in the area of study. Based on this, there are 31 administrators in the public secondary schools.

The teachers in the Local Government Area are 1372 in number during 2001/2002 academic year. They are made up of male and female of different ranks and grade levels, ranging from Grade level 07 to 15.

Sample and sampling techniques

Out of the 31 public secondary schools in the local government area, 10 secondary schools were selected. Through sample R.S.t. the sampling technique used was simple random sampling. The sample size for the study consists of 10 administrators and 25% of the total population of teachers, which are 343 teachers.

Research instrument

The research instrument utilized for this study was questionnaire and it was designed by the researcher. The instrument was labeled Accountability in Nigeria Education System Perception Questionnaire (ANESPQ).

The questionnaire was made up of 5 sections as follows; Section A sought for the respondent's personal data in respect of age, sex, qualification, years of experience position held, status, number of teachers and students in their schools. In Section B, respondents were required to indicate their opinion about the curriculum content teaching in schools. Section C required them to give their views about regularity of teachers to school. Section D required them to give information on how effective classroom management were being carried out by the teacher, while items in Section E, were seeking information on respondents' views about professional growth and accountability.

Validity and reliability of instrument

In order to determine whether the instrument actually measured what it intends to measure, the researcher sought the assistance of some experts in the discipline. These experts were used to ascertain whether the items in the instrument were relevant and clear. The validity was reviewed in its face and content value. The reliability was carried out using twenty (20) respondents not included in the sample with a split-half reliability method, using the odd items for one and the even numbered items for the other (Kokach, 2006). The test was scored separately and the correlated. The Spearman Brown prophecy formula was then used to calculate the reliability coefficient which was established at 0.75.

Administration of instrument

The instrument was administered in person to the subjects and the computed forms were collected at a later date agreed upon by the respondents and the researcher. In all, a period of three weeks was spent in gathering the data which were analysed in the study.

Method of data analysis

Values were assigned to each point on the response scale of the "ANESPQ". The data collected were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The sum and mean scores, and standard deviations of the teachers and administrators were also calculated, and compared with regard to each of the three areas in the school administration examined. A total percentage score of 50% and above of positive response indicate agreement with the item while a

Table 1. Teachers' and administrators' responses on curriculum content teaching.

Subject	Sample (N)	No. that agree	No. that disagree	% that agree	% that disagree
Teachers	343	266	77	77.6	22.4
Administrators	10	7	3	70.0	30.0
Total	353	273	80	73.8	26.2

Table 2. Teachers and administrators' responses on regularity of teachers to school.

Subject	Sample (N)	No. that agree	No. that disagree	% that agree	% that disagree
Teachers	343	230	113	67	33
Administrators	10	6	4	60	40
Total	353	236	117	63.5	36.5

Table 3. Teachers' and administrators' responses on teacher's effective classroom management.

Subject	Sample (N)	No. that agree	No. that disagree	% that agree	% that disagree
Teachers	343	280	63	81.6	18.4
Administrators	10	7	3	70.0	30.0
Total	353	287	66	75.8	24.2

percentage score of below 50% of positive response indicates disagreement.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES OF DATA

Research question 1

Do teachers show responsibility to their students through the teaching of the curriculum content?

The data collected and analyzed on the above questions are presented in Table 1.

It is observed from the data presented in Table 1 that 77.6% of teachers sampled and 70.0% of administrators agreed that teachers show responsibility to their students through the teaching of the curriculum content.

The answers to this question were based on the data collected and analyzed as can be seen in Table 2

The indication from the data presented in Table 2 shows that 67.0% of teachers sampled and 60.0% of administrators agreed that teachers are regular in school attendance.

Research question 3

Do teachers carryout effective classroom management? The data collected and analyze on the above question are shown in Table 3.

In response to the research question, as presented in Table 3, the indication is that, 81% of teachers and 70% of administrators agreed that teacher's carryout effective classroom management.

Effective classroom management

Moreover, the implication of this study also depicts that the

teachers in the schools where the study was carried out have control over their classroom decisions and practices. This finding is in line with Banye's (1992) findings which show that most teachers in both public an private schools agreed that they had considerable influence over classroom decisions and activities. This is in line with the Ministry of Education (2002), which says that successful classroom management involves not only responding effectively when problems occur but preventing the frequent occurrence of problems.

However, the teacher should develop and exhibit high level of managerial skills in the classroom in order to motivate and develop in the students' high standard of discipline and learning abilities so that the teacher's accountability will be made possible.

Findings

The findings were:

1. There was no significance difference in the perception of teachers and administrators on responsibility of teacher on curriculum content teaching. The calculated z-value of 0.813 was less than the table value of 1.96. The, hypothesis was retained.
2. There was no significant difference in the opinion of teachers and administrators on regularity of teachers to school attendance. The calculated z-value of 0.664 was less than the table value of 1.96. The hypothesis was retained.
3. There was no significant difference between the teachers' and the administrators' views on teacher's effective classroom management in the Local

Government Area. The calculated z-value of 1.32 was less than the table value of 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis was retained.

Conclusion

The accountability of human resources is an inevitable and crucial tool for management processes in Nigeria education system. Despite the divergent views as to who are accountable in the education system, both teachers and administrators have high opinion about teacher accountability. The findings revealed that they are in agreement in their opinion. An adequate and proper human resource accountability in our educational system will go a long way to reduce and correct all form of mal-administration in the system. Education business should be taken as a serious affair and not with the attitude of commonplace. Administrators, teachers and all managers of education business should see teacher accountability as an all-encompassing management processes which constitute the basis for attainment of the goals of any organization.

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