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Authority Decentralization as a Tool for Effective Management of Secondary Schools in Anambra State

By

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to look at Authority Decentralization as a tool for effective management of secondary schools in Anambra State. It was a survey design that was carried out in 261 government owned secondary schools in the state. The population for the study was 5,800 teachers, 3522 females and 2278 males in the 21 LGAs. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to get a sample size of 4380 teachers, 2940 females and 1440 males, 2 research questions that were answered using mean and 2 hypotheses that were tested with Z test statistic at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. A 25- researcher's developed instrument named "Authority decentralization tool in effective management of schools (ADTEMS)" was used. At the end of the study, it was found out that although there are departments, administrators in Anambra State do not decentralize authority to their subordinates because of fear that it will diminish their managerial ability, lack of trust on the subordinates etc. It was also found out that the impacts of decentralization on effective management are that it leads to the improvement of cordial relationships between the head and the subordinates, reduce the use of information from the grape vine etc. It was recommended

among others that workshops, seminars and conferences be organized by the government for administrators on the need for decentralization of authority as an effective tool in effective management.

The strength of any organization is so much dependent on the administrator's ability to plan and implement policies and willingness to delegate functions to subordinates. Delegation means decentralization of authority by the superior to the subordinates to ensure effectiveness of the organization. It is also a systematic distribution of functions and powers from superior to subordinates in an organization to ensure effectiveness. It also means authority retained by the administrator is to make major decisions on policies while the rest of the organizational authority may be delegated to other staff. To Fayol (2001) decentralization of authority means disposal of decision making process to all the levels of the organization. One may say that it means everything that increases the role of the subordinates and decreases the role of the superior. Nwachukwu (1992) opined that an organization is said to be decentralized, if authority to make decision is delegated to managers at the lower ladders of the organizational hierarchy. It is an organizational process that permits the transfer of authority from superior to subordinates. Delegation of authority empowers a subordinate to make commitments, use resources and take actions in relation to duties assigned to him.

Management on the other hand is the job of getting things done properly in an organization through the co-ordinated efforts of both human and non human resources to achieve pre-determined organizational goals. In an organizational setting of any kind, for an administrator to effectively discharge his duties, decentralization of authority is imperative. This imperativeness will lead to the dedication of all and sundry, it will also make the work of the administrator less cumbersome. To this end, one may wonder whether today's administrator actually knows the impacts of involving subordinates in decision making process and active delegation of duties have in effective management of the organization.

Practicability of Decentralization of Authority in Organization

In organizational settings, some administrators believe that if the authority is decentralized, the status of the administrator will cease and their position would be eliminated. One wonders whether the administrator will be able to carry out all the burdens on his shoulder alone without involving his subordinate in decision making process. In our educational sector, organizational structure provides for many departments but the full powers to exercise authority being delegated to the departmental heads are restricted. Nwanne(2001) was of the opinion that in most cases, managers prefer to withhold authority and make all decisions by themselves. This goes a long way to show that most superior officers do not decentralize functions. In other

words, if the subordinate does not get a chance to decide and act dependently, it will not develop their skill and capacity.

In a related review, Fashanya, (2001) stated that there is no diversification of activities in that most of the administrators are not involving their staff in decision making process. Nwanne also added that in a typical Nigerian organization, the principle of decentralization is not commonly used, in the sense that administrators think that when authority is delegated, it might be a treat to their position and therefore do not want any rivalry. Ugboaja (2002) added that some administrators do not believe in the principle of decentralization as being important, they find it difficult to delegate duties to their subordinate because of ego. Nwanne (2001) also added that although they have various departments, in the school, but that all are echoing to their administrator's voice which means that there is no absolute decentralization of authority in their school. Nwachukwu (1992) added that in most organizations, managers do not decentralize authority because of "I can do it better myself fallacy; fear that delegation diminishes managerial ability, and lack of confidence in subordinates". A superior who refuses to delegate, frustrates his subordinates as he denies them the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction derived from accomplishing a task.

Impacts of Decentralization of Authority

The gains of decentralization of authority in an organization cannot be overemphasized. Researchers like Ugboaja (2002) have really concluded that decentralization of authority will speed up operational decisions, and help in taking major decisions about issues relating to the organization. In a related view, Sharma (2006) added that authority decentralization will lead to improved line of communication as well as more skills for teachers in the school management. It is also believed that the greater the decision is lowered down the management hierarchy, the more functions affected by decision made at the lower level and the less checking required on the decision.

Smith (1989) also added that if the whole activities are centralized in the hand of the administrator, it will be burdensome to him, thereby affecting the whole system. Smith concluded that decentralization will go a long way to provide staff with the lower units with sufficient and suitable managerial skills. Moreover, the impact will lead to good working relationship between the administrator and teachers. It will also improve greater work efficiency among the staff and the administrator. Ukeje, Okorie and Nwagbara (1992) observed that administrators, who are afraid of themselves and others, are prone to keep a tight control on everything. Thus programmes planned by such administrators for teachers are likely to fail before they begin. It is also believed that subordinates are not usually happy when they are asked to implement decisions that they were not part of. Sometimes most of these subordinates exhibit deferent behaviours that are detrimental to effective management of the organization. Teachers

have a great deal of power to sabotage any programme they do not approve, regardless of whether it is explicitly democratically administered or not when functions are not delegated.

Problem of the Study

Authority decentralization is a pivotal instrument in the hand of every good administrator in effective management of any organization which school is one of them. In a school system, activities of the administrator are so vast that one of the causes of occupational stress is as a result of work overload. When work is overloaded, and authority not decentralized, definitely there must be stress. Stress is not friendly to anybody, it endangers human life and leads to inefficient management. In some secondary schools visited in South Eastern States, it was observed that most school principals were over stressed with work load of office work and management of entire school activities which involves supervising teachers and students do their daily activities. It was also observed that most vice principals were lackadaisical and nonchallant about the management function of the schools. It was as if to say that they are waiting for their own turn. This ugly experience has led to some non challant attitude on the part of teachers in the discharge of their duties. This non challancy has a multiplication effect in the sense that most students are not checked, indisciplinary behaviours of all kinds are on the increase. These ugly incidents led the researchers to wonder whether authority is being decentralized by principals at all in these areas and also to really find out the impact of authority decentralization in effective management of school in general.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following, two research questions

1. What are the impacts of authority decentralization on effective management of secondary schools in AnambraState.
2. To what extent are authority decentralized, in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis: Two hypotheses that were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. They are:

Ho1= There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the impact of authority decentralization on effective management of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho2= There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which authority is decentralized in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Methodology

Research Design

The study is a descriptive survey design that deals with comparison of variables.

Population

The population of the study comprised of all secondary school teachers in all government owned schools in Anambra State. There are 261 Secondary Schools with a total of 5,800 teachers, (3522 females and 2278 males) in the 21 local government areas of the state.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 schools in 16 L.G.As, while proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to get a sample size of 4380 teachers, 2940 females and 1440 males.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a 25 item researchers developed questionnaire titled “Authority decentralization as a management tool in the effective management of schools (ADMTEMS)”. The instrument was made up of 2 sections. Section ‘A’ where the respondents were made to indicate their opinion on a four point rating scale of very high extent (VHE) 4 points, High extent (HE) 3 points, low extent (LE) 2 points and very low extent (VLE) 1 point. Section ‘B’ for strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (DA) 2 points and strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point.

Validity of the Instrument: The face and content validity of the instrument was done by three experts from the department of Education Foundations and Measurement and Evaluation of NnamdiAzikiwe University, Akwa.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was also trial tested by using 80 teachers i.e. 30 males and 50 females from Abia State that were not part of the study. Richard Kurdson technique was used in testing of the instrument. Coefficients of 0.81 and 0.86 gotten for male and female respectively were high enough and tested for the reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Administration, Collection and Analysis

The researchers made use of 4 research assistants. Total number of 4380 questionnaire items were distributed. 4360 number were fully filled, collected and analyzed and used for the study. That is 2910 for female and 1450 for male. Mean was used for the research questions while- z – test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any mean from 2.50 and above is accepted while a mean below 2.50 is rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One = what are the impacts of decentralization of authority on the effective management of secondary schools.

Table I: Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Impacts of Decentralization of Authority on the Effective Management of Secondary Schools in Anambra State

S/No	Items	Male Teachers X	Remark	x	Female Teachers Remark
1	Decentralization of authority will speed up operational decisions	3.05	Agree	3.00	Agree
2	It will help in taking some fast decisions that concern the progress of the school	3.50	Agree	3.21	Agree
3	It will go a long way to provide staff in lower cadre with sufficient and suitable managerial skills that will help them grow.	3.61	Agree	3.45	Agree
4	It will lead to improvement of working relationship between the teachers and the subordinates	3.07	Agree	3.01	Agree
5	Improves line of communication and reduces the use of information from the grape vine.	3.60	Agree	3.25	Agree
6	Improves greater work efficiency among the entire staff and for the superiors	3.55	Agree	3.36	Agree
7	Calls for greater involvement and	3.27	Agree	3.01	Agree

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	participation of all and sundry				
8	Makes subordinates to feel belonged	3.25	Agree	3.30	Agree
9	Makes subordinates to be self accountable because they are in charge of their section	3.00	Agree	2.95	Agree
10	Makes the work of the administrator less cumbersome and stress free	3.40	Agree	3.25	Agree
11	Brings quarrel between the superior and the subordinates	2.25	Disagree	2.30	Disagree
12	Makes learners to be serious with their studies because of collective responsibilities of both teachers and principals in the management of school	3.00	Agree	2.90	Agree
13	Makes the administrator redundant because he delegates his authority to others	2.40	Disagree	2.15	Disagree
14	Brings conflicts most times because of non performance of some subordinates	2.30	Disagree	2.40	Disagree
15	Reduces the rate of indisciplinary cases because of collective efforts in the management of schools.	3.51	Agree	3.36	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.12	Agree	3.00	Agree

In table I, 12 items out of 15 items on the impacts of decentralization of authority on the effective management of schools recorded from 2.50 and above. It means that they were accepted by both male and female teachers as the impacts of authority decentralization on effective management of schools. 3 items recorded below the means score of below 2.50. The items are item 11 'Brings quarrel between the superior and the

subordinates”, item 13= ‘makes the administrator redundant because he delegates his authority to others” and item 14= ‘brings conflict most times because of non performance of some subordinates”. They were all rejected as not among the impacts by both male and female teachers.

Research Question Two- To what extent are authority decentralized in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to which Authority is Decentralized in the Management of Secondary Schools in Anambra State

S/No	Items	Male Teachers		Female Teachers	
		X	Remark	X	Remark
16	Principals do not delegate authority because of lack of confidence on subordinates.	3.07	HE	3.01	HE
17	Principals do not involve the staff in decision making, probably for fear of his reputation	3.25	HE	3.00	HE
18	Principals prefer to hold authority and make decisions alone	3.06	HE	3.03	HE
19	Activities are not diversified in this place	3.60	HE	3.21	HE
20	Principals take administrative matters themselves alone probably for fear of rivalry.	3.08	HE	3.00	HE
21	Though we have many departments here, all are still dancing to the master’s tune.	3.10	HE	3.00	HE
22	My principal involves all teachers in decision making process	2.31	LE	2.45	LE
23	I have been allowed to take charge of my departmental affairs	2.01	LE	1.85	VL

24	My principal involves teachers but not on serious administrative matters	2.35	LE	2.60	LE
25	The school is being run by the principal alone and it is affecting his health	3.50	HE	3.08	HE
Grand Mean		2.82		2.78	

In table 2, 7 items out of 10 on the extent to which authority is decentralized in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State recorded above mean scores of 2.50. They were accepted by both male and female teachers as the condition in the management of their schools by their principals. 2 out of the 10 items recorded below the cut off score of 2.50. The items are item 22 = my principal involves all teachers in decision making process, item 23, ‘I am incharge of my departmental affair’. It means that such things are not obtainable in their schools. For item 24, ‘my principal involves teachers but not on serious administrative matters,” male and female teachers disagreed on their opinion about the item. Male teachers have 2.35 while female teachers have 2.60 which means that female teachers agree while male teachers oppose to that.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the impact of authority decentralization in effective management of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Z test Comparism of Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the Impact of Authority Decentralization in Effective Management of Secondary Schools

Respondents	N	X	Sd	Df	Z-cal	z-cri	Prob	Decision
Male Teachers	1450	3.12	0.47		1.78	1.96	p>0.05	Accept the null hypothesis
Female Teachers	2910	3.00	0.58	4358				

Z- Cal <z-cri= Accept

In table 3 above, it was revealed that the calculated value of Z (1.78) is less than the critical value of z (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom 4358. This indicates that the null hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the impact of

authority decentralization in effective management of secondary school in Anambra State is upheld.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which authority is decentralized in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4; Z-Test Comparism of the Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to Which Authority Is Decentralized

Respondents	N	X	Sd	Df	Z-cal	z-cri	Prob	Decision
male Teachers	1450	2.82	0.68		1.62	1.96	p>0.05	Accept the null hypothesis
Female Teachers	2910	2.78	0.71	4358				

Z Cal < z cri= Accept

The result on table 4 reveals that the calculated value of z (1.62) is less than the critical value of z (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom 4358. It shows that the null hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which authority is decentralized in the management of secondary schools in Anambra State is accepted.

Discussion of Results

Results in table 1 reveal that in the management of secondary schools in Anambra States, decentralization of authority is not employed by teachers at all. This was seen by the responses of both male and female teachers. Their responses are that principals do not let their subordinates know what is going on in the schools, do not involve teachers in decision making, prefer to hold authority and make decisions alone, activities are not diversified, teachers are not solely incharge of their departments etc. This is also in line with the findings of table 3 on hypothesis one which indicates that there is no significant difference between the opinion of both male and female teachers on the same subject. All these findings are in line with the work of Nwanne (2001) who concluded that managers prefer to withhold authority and make all decisions by themselves. Fashanya (2001) and Ugboaja (2002) also concluded that no diversification of activities is done in most organizations because most of the administrators are not involving their staff indecision making process.

They also added that most administrators do not involve their subordinates because of fear of rivalry or some are ego centred. Nwanne (2001) also supported that by saying that although various departments exist, all of them are dancing to the tune and command of their master. All these findings reveal that departmental heads exist, majority of them still do not have the power to act and take decisions on their own. All these findings are in line with the earlier work of Nwachukwu (1992), who concluded that managers do not delegate functions because of fear that it can diminish their managerial ability; there is no need for that since they can do it better. Most managers do not delegate because of lack of trust on their subordinates.

In table 2, the rating of both male and female teachers reveals that authority decentralization in Anambra State has the following impacts-it will speed up operational decisions, provide staff in lower cadre with sufficient and suitable managerial skills that will help them grow, improve the working relationship between the superordinate and the subordinate, improve line of communication and reduce the use of information from the grape vine, improve greater work efficiency make subordinate to feel belonged, reduce indisciplinary cases because of collective responsibilities in the management of schools etc. All these findings and many more are in support of earlier work of researcher's like Ugboaja (2002), Sharma (2006) and Smith (1989), these researchers concluded that decentralization of authority will speed up operational decision, and help in taking major decisions about issues relating to organization. They also agreed that when authority is decentralized, it will lead to improve line of communication as well as more managerial skills for teachers etc.

All these and many more are also in line with the following findings of hypothesis 2 in table 4 which concluded that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the impact of authority decentralization on the effective management of schools. All these corroborate the work of Ukeje and Okorie (1990) who added that the freedom of the subordinate to participate in decision making process is regarded as a major factor for developing good leader- member relations. Also in agreement with the works of Anthony (1989), Dublin(1990) and Dike (1989) by adding that it promotes better understanding between workers and the management. It also creates strong feelings of trust of the management by workers, increase employee's feelings of solidarity with the management.

Many researchers like Donald (2008) and Afolayan (1982) have earlier reported that when authority is decentralized and teachers are involved in decision making process, it will contribute immensely to an effective administration, serve social, psychological and emotional purposes by giving staff a sense of belonging to the organization as well as being recognized and respected. It also increases their commitment to the organization. Nwachukwu (1992) concluded that effective

delegation helps managers to spend less time on specific technical activities or routine decision making and concentrate their efforts on other strategic management problems.

Summary

Authority decentralization is a good virtue that should be embraced by all administrators especially in secondary schools. This is so because of the complicated nature of the functions of the administrator. The school administrator, not only deals with files, but also deals with day to day supervision of the activities of both teachers and students. He needs to involve teachers in decision making and delegate authorities because that alone will make them to naturally demonstrate high sense of responsibility in the performance of the assigned tasks.

Decentralization is encouraged in all schools because it promotes initiative and flexibility and helps in the development of subordinates by helping them to participate in decision making.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Workshops, seminars, and conferences should be organized by school administrators on the need to delegate duties to their subordinates.
2. The government should provide all the necessary facilities that will make school administrators carryout their duties effectively.
3. Administrators should be made to know that work overload causes stress that can lead to death.
4. Administrators should be made to know that management of a school is a collective responsibility of both principal and teachers.

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