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LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the leadership challenges facing school principals in managing vocational technical education in Anambra State, since vocational technical education contribute greatly into self-reliance and National growth and development. The study discusses the leadership of school principals, aims and objectives, philosophy of vocational technical education, conceptual issues, classroom application of vocational technical education, importance of skill acquisition, challenges of skill acquisition, challenges of teaching and learning of vocational technical education and Techniques / Measures of promoting teaching learning effectiveness of vocational technical education and suggestions for improvement were made.

Keyword: Challenges, Principal, Leadership, Management Implantation and Vocational Technical Education

Introduction

Organization is nothing without people; its ultimate success or failure is attributed to the effort of those working. The success of an organization according to Castetter (1979) is dependent on the collective performance of its individual administrators. Consequently, in the case of a school, the individual administrator who happens to be the principal needs to obtain the voluntary cooperation of everybody in order to effectively play his role between role playing and the corresponding legal consequences is largely dependent on the definitional analysis attached to roles.

Ndubuisi (2008) maintains that a status if distinct from the individual who may occupy it and represents simply a collection of rights and duties. A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status. The individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it in relation to other statuses. There without roles without statuses and no statuses without roles. Therefore, role is a set of or pattern of behavioural expectations in a system of social relationship resulting

there in a role set which is the totality of the incumbent's interaction with the different kinds of individuals occupying other or similar status within or outside the given system. It follows, then, that the way incumbent perceives his role is of crucial importance in determining the resultant outcome of such relationships (Ofojebe, 2008).

The concept of leadership is a major one in organizational studies. Inyang (2004:121) defines leadership as a process which "involves the use of non-coercive influence to shape a groups or organization's goals, motivate behaviour towards the achievement of those goals and help define group or organization culture".

Education is a vital tool of the nation's development. The educational achievement, economic, political and socio-cultural status of the individuals in the society enhances a nation's growth and development. Education is also a process of changing or transforming behaviour an individual in the desired manner a process of socializing into the norms, values, practices and attitude acceptable by the society. It involves the individual's adaption of his or her behavioural pattern or style of life to that of the societies accepted standards. Nweke and Ughamadu (1997) in Idialu (2012) view as a systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and develop skills in individual IJNESCO (2007) see education as human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human right. This definition simply that, no one should be denied access to education, it is tool vital for anybody to be isolated from it.

Education is seen as a relevant to human and National growth and development as well as human empowerment. It can be described both as a social and private investment that is capable for yielding benefits that have some externalities. Education and training are the main instruments available to government and the community to prepare individuals for a rapidly changing increasingly demanding world, it is a mechanism for achieving social mobility and improved employability.

Vocational Technical education is primarily concerned with the development of skills that are useful for employment. This explains why the philosophy of vocational technical education focuses on skill acquisition development for the nation. The aspiration of government and people of Nigeria, was to use this system of education to fight unemployment, economic recession and shortage of skilled manpower (Olaitan 1996). The National Policy on Education (1981, 1998 and 2004 revised), define vocational technical educations as that aspect and type of education given in

institutions providing both scientific knowledge, attitude, interest and practical skills required for a specific trade, profession as craftsmen, technicians, technologists, scientists and engineers. It is the education that has to do with acquisition of practical methods of doing things. Ezeji (1995) in Tayo (2012) stated that vocational technical education is aimed at improving the welfare of individuals families, a group of people and the society at large through the cultivation of basic scientific and practical approaches and developing skills necessary for survival. He believes this form of education does not only prepare one for specific occupations and functional roles in the society, but also to improve the living standards of the society. It is therefore the planning of programme of courses and learning experiences that begin with exploration of career options, support basic academic standard, leadership, and preparation for industry define work, advanced and containing education (CTC 2009).

Nuru (2007) indicates that change in country's economy is required to prepare young people for the jobs of the future and technical education has important roles to play in this process. He believes that vocational technical education can be a mechanism for facilitating the acquisition of practical and applied skills on an individual. The type of education has been integral part of national development. The youth must be given this aspect of education which leads to the acquisition practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is in this direction that arose the need to improve our education system (Adaralesbule, 2001). Vocational education is one of the most relative concepts. Several authorities have addressed the concept of vocational education in diverse perspective.

Perceptions Regarding the Concepts

BEN (2005) highlighted the following perception about the vocational technical education

1. During the pre-colonial era, vocational education as education meant only for the physically and mentally disadvantage handicap individuals. Vocational education then was given to the handicapped to enable them be useful to themselves and the society in which they lived.
2. It was also misconceived as education for the delinquent. These groups of people were often given vocational training so as to make them useful to themselves, get them busy and divert attention from attention from delinquent dispositions.
3. Vocation education has been termed education for the training of the mind and for activities not concerned with brain and mental activities. This is quite wrong because without intellectual exercise the hands cannot coordinate

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well. A successful vocational educational requires habit of correct thinking.

4. Education for the non-descript. Vocational Education is conceived as education for the deadened and dropouts. This is wrong because VOCED believes that everybody is worth educating
5. Education for the low socio-economic class. The public believes that VOCCED is primarily exclusive for the children of the poor who cannot afford their fees in grammer schools.
6. VOCED has been concerned as education for those who are not interested in elaborate programme of studies that involves much mental activities but VOCED believes on graded programme which are content and skill laden. A number of authors and authorities have defined vocational education from a varied number of positions. A few of such and most relevant definitions are analyzed herein.
7. Okori (2001) defines vocational education as a kind education with the main purpose being that of preparing one for employment in recognized occupation. On analysis Olume (2001) in Ben (2005) is of the view that VOCED is education that provides the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupation.
8. Anyakoha & Oranu (1992) in Ben (2005) view VOCED as that aspect of the general education process which involves the study of technologies and related Sciences as well as the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to various occupations. Here vocational education is seen as an aspect of education designed to develop skills abilities understanding, work habit and appreciation emphasizing knowledge and information needed by the workers to enable them make progress in employment in a useful and productive basis.
9. The international labour Organizational (ILO) defines as activities which essentially aim at producing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for employment in a particular occupation, group of related occupations or a function in a field of economic activity including agriculture industry, Commerce, hotel, and tourist industries public and private services etc.
10. In the National policy of Education, 1981 (revised) the definition of vocational education is not quite embracive. What appears as the concept of vocational here focused mostly on the vocational technical education. Since there in no other official document where the working concept of vocational education is given emphasis, it is generally assumed that the term technical education here is synonymous to vocational education. Here vocational education and / or technical education is defined as that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and

acquired skills as well as basic scientific knowledge.

Although the terms vocational education and technical are often interchangeable used to refer to some type of education, there is a marked distinction. Technical education is a post-secondary vocational education in which more Mathematics and Science are required in the training programme. The curricula of technical education include general, general technical procedure and skills of general technical theory.

Objectives of Vocational Technical Education

Vocational Technical Education is that form of education which emphasizes the development of occupation skills needed as preparation for work. (Olaitan, 1996). This form of education is known to promote skills acquisition and dignity of labour as it emphasizes work as its goals of education.

The National Policy on Education (2004), outlines the following as the aims of vocational technical education.

- To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional grades.
- To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.
- To give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
- To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

These objectives are job oriented and are all about developing skills. It is believed that the graduates of vocational technical education acquire skills, abilities and competences of contribute to the development of their society.

Constraints to Effective Vocational Technical Education Teaching and Learning

According to Ukeje (1976) in Idialu (2012) defines education as a body of organized knowledge that deals with the following questions such as;

- ❖ What should be taught?
- ❖ Why should it be taught?
- ❖ How should it be taught?
- ❖ To whom should it be taught?

'What' in the above question refers to the curriculum? 'Why' refers to educational aims / philosophy; 'the how' refers to the methodology and 'the who' refers to the child. All these are the focal points on which the school operates. The study is concerned with 'the what' and

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'the how' of the education of the students as to enhance the realization of vocation technical education goal.

Curriculum according to Kelly (1982) in the very foundation of any educational system. National policy on education (FRN, 2004) outlines schools subjects for primary, secondary and different levels of tertiary institutions are the subject relevant to the lifestyle and occupation of the groups being considered. The school curriculum is not tailored to meet the needs of the nomads.

The curriculum does not enhance their functionality and productivity upon graduation. Such a curriculum cannot provide the students with neither can it improve their economic survival.

Challenges in The Teaching and Learning of Vocational Technical Education

There are series of factors militating against the effective teaching and learning of vocational technical education in Nigeria Institution of Learning, they are:

Institutional challenges

This includes inadequate provision of equipment's and facilities for teaching and evaluating the skills and competences acquired by students. The 3rd edition of the NCCE (2002) listed the equipment's and facilities which colleges offering vocational technical education should possess include: -

- Two standard laboratories
- A standard school farm complex containing;
- Mechanical/tools workshop
- Livestock of elected farm complex animals
- Fish pond
- Individual student plots
- Experimental plot for research and
- Arable crop farm
- Staff offices; each senior staff should have a comfortable furnished office, there should also be an office for support staff with relevant equipment's such as computers and printers.
- Library with books, there must be enough books to cover all the areas of the subject to the ration of one student to ten volumes of books, current journals in vocational technical education and other relevant fields are also required in the same ratio.
- Other facilities;
- A tractor with complete coupling implements, and other items for effective class room, laboratory, field practical and workshop practices. Sad to note that in most colleges, it is common for institutions to provide few of these facilities only when they are preparing for accreditation exercise. Okoh (1998) asserts that, the consequences of not providing these facilities for teaching and learning process means that:
- Little or no facilities are available for teaching the skill contents required of practical vocational technical education

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- Student lack the necessary practical skills they need to be self-reliant
- Practical skill classes are conducted in the classroom under alternative to practical arrangement.
- Most teachers no longer take up practical lessons completely since the law of discussion has set in.
- The worse situation is when inspectors of education pay visits to schools, more often than not they are only concerned with the number of structures that are put in place or the number of teachers at the expense of the quality of instruction given the students (Allen and Tanner 2003).

Other challenges are as follows:

a. **Teacher centered challenges:**
Teachers aspire to have all their students learn, this aspiration of reaching all students spans discipline, age levels, and all different institutions. Most teachers do so out of a genuine love for their discipline and a desire to share the wonder of their chosen field with others. Vocational technical education teaching is not different from other disciplines, in this respect however; teaching is yet to be recognized as important in this country. teacher personality at all levels of our educational system is yet to be desired, sometimes when a teacher dresses, one can hardly differentiate them from field workers, of course go extra mile to discourage the students from taking teaching with the seriousness that is required, Dinette in 1976 stated that job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotion state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or exoertise which is hardly found in teaching. Lack of job satisfaction thus makes the teacher sort for other means of living to meet up with his needs to the detriment of effective teaching. A student will become significantly more interested in learning if his teacher is really engaged in teaching the subject matters. If a teacher finds a way to engage his students in an interesting yet informative manner than all other teachers, students will certainly develop a thirst for learning and acquiring knowledge.

The quality of Nigerian teacher is to stake, the national minimum standard for NCE programs clearly state the category of academic staff who would implement the vocational technical education curriculum; they are supposed to possess a minimum qualification of masters degree, although first degree holder with not less than second class than second class (honors) lower division can be engage in the training process. It also has it all classes of NCE (NCCE 2021) as is currently found in most colleges of education, apart from this, most of the teachers without professional training, regard teaching as a stepping stone where they start while searching for better jobs thus, they lack the dedication, commitment, competence and professionalism required for effective and successful

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teaching and this is a serious setback to the process of teaching and learning agricultural education as well as other subjects. It is important that it is not the mastery of the subject but the acquisition of the relevant techniques for imparting the knowledge that matters, also in some cases; some of the teachers themselves were not exposed to adequate practical exercise during their training. They cannot formulate feeds, administer vaccines or even carry out simple soil analysis. Excess workload on the teachers is another matter of concern where there are few teachers in the department, and then they may be over loaded with excess work load. This usually does not allow the teacher to put in their best. This is because they will not have time to prepare adequately for their lessons; this affects the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

b. **Poor Students' attitude to Learning TVE**

The interest of students in agricultural practical is affected by a number of factors, Okorie in 1979, said that factors that influence a person's attitude to practical agriculture are those that prevent individuals from entering into the occupation, he stressed that; nature of preparedness, job remuneration, returns to the occupation, motivation, incentives, technically involved in the occupation and the status of the job, similarly James (1995) enumerated factors that affects students' performance in agricultural education as level of exposure to career occupation, quality of teaching agriculture, returns to agricultural projects influence of teaching and training facilities available. More often than not, the attitude of students towards practical activities, a such are not interested when involved in such activities, most of them will not want to 'soil' their hands and look at field practical a dirty job. They often neglect the demonstration plots given to them to work on until when they are to be assessed.

c. **Lack of Exposure to Practical Teaching**

The dominance of lectures and direct instruction, especially at the high school and under graduate level, in an attempt to transmit the large body of accrued scientific knowledge efficiently, has created a relative monoculture of teaching styles, thereby making learning difficult to learners. It is in this light that the agriculture education curriculum in Colleges of Education is designed to give opportunities for both theory and practice, but from experience more time is usually allotted to theory. This may be probably due to lack of necessary facilities for the practical training or the teacher deliberately do not want to expose the students to practical activities, it is in this vein that the NCE minimum standard was reviewed (NNCE, 2002). The review has shown

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the desire of the implementers to adapt the evolving main theory as advocated by Ogunnde (1991). Thus, the inclusion of practical and field trips in year 1 & 11 agricultural education curriculum is a clear indication that theory alone is adequate in providing all the learning experiences needed by the students for skill acquisition.

d. **General Societal Perception**
The society has not seen any reason why some people be trained agricultural education, that to be an agriculturist, one does not need to undergo any formal training since it is only the cultivation of crops and rearing of farm animals. Most parents would prefer their children become lawyers, accountants, medical doctors, administrators' etc. hence students' attitude to agricultural education and interest for learning is often very low. The consequence of this often is a neglect of seriousness on the course which will affect productivity of the student after graduation.

e. **Inadequate Funding**
Inadequate funding of most programs is another serious problem militating against the effective teaching of practical agriculture. Most of the implements are purchase by the students, most schools now do not bear the burden of taking students for excursions, it is the students that now pay for their field trip which present a serious setback.

Techniques/Measures of Promoting Teaching and Learning Effectiveness in Vocational Technical Education

The teaching and learning of vocational technical education and consequently the students understanding of the subjects will be promoted following methods should be adopted:

1. **Proper Lesson Planning/Preparation**
Adequate preparation of instruction by the teachers had been emphasized by Okorie (1979), proper planning for instructing learners is important as it makes drawing out of units and topics from the scheme of work to be taught easier. In doing this, the teacher is to identify the needs of the students; the objectives to be achieved determine the appropriate content to be taught, the appropriate instruction method to use and how to evaluate the outcome of the teaching-learning situations.
It's important to note that the objectives and content should not be too long, small or too much for the learners, also to be able deliver the content, the teacher should master the lesson properly.
2. **Participating of the students**
Learning is more meaningful when the learners participate actively in the learning process, when students are allowed to be involved in classroom activities; it is often easier and more interesting to learn than they remain passive. This assertion is buttressed by Saylor et al (1981) who said that learning is far more effective when

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learners interact with the teacher and the environment in which they are taught. When students are taken out for excursions, or are encountered to organized and to actively participate in exhibition, workshop seminar, debate and even from young farmers clubs, they can understand better already learnt concept.

3. **Relate Classroom Situation to Real Life Experience.**
   In this regard, the teachers are to begin this instruction from the learner's environment this could be done through the test of the learner's previous knowledge (entry behavior) Offorma (1994) observed that when a teacher relates classroom activity to learners' life experiences; it arouses their interest, motivate them, and facilitates learning. Learning is made easier and more effective when they are engaged in those activities, they are familiar with and do at home.
4. **Conductive and good Classroom Condition**
   For meaningful and effective teaching and learning process to the place, the physical as well as the social environment should be conducive for learning, to have a grasp of the classroom and make it conducive for learning, the teachers must have a sound knowledge of the subject matter, he should know the method strategies of the sound knowledge of the subject matter, he should know the method of the teaching every topic and must have a well-developed sense of vale for time (Allen and Tanner 2003). The teacher should as much as possible avoid time wasting when in class. In addition, the teacher should have an effective class management, and exhibit the following qualities: He/she should be good mannered, friendly, cheerful, honest, patient, kind, fair, humble, firm and ready to listen to his student at all times.
5. **Exposure of Students to Wide Range of Experience**
   Exposing student to a wide range of experiences in learning often brings about multiple learning and encourage teaching for transfer of knowledge, (Offorma 1994), Excursion and education visit expose student to real life experience. Things learnt are not easily forgotten. Also, the use of guest teachers increases the quality of instruction and raises the interest of student as against being taught by one teacher always, also students centered teaching methods should be adopted for effective learning process. The teacher should select and use training/instructional materials and procedure appropriate for the situation. Funding of field trips and excursions should be encouraged to help the student considering their financial backgrounds. There should be functional tractor and coupling units as well as good laboratories.
6. **Communication effectiveness**
   Good communication promote understanding by students when he has good command of English and an

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audible voice; it arouses and sustain the interest of the students, the teacher as a matter of fact must diversify end properly balance his communication methods according to interest of the students, he must have knowledge of the subject content including the meaning and spellings of words, rules of composition and grammar will help the teacher earn the audience.

7. **Student Involvement in Practical Class**
   Learners differ in their abilities, rate of understanding, performance, emotion interest, expectation, needs, and motivation, these differences influence greatly the learner's ability to learn there are fast learners and slow learners, the teacher should as much as possible endeavor to teach his lesson in such a way that learners will be carried along. When individual differences are not taken into consideration, poor teaching and hearing is the consequences.
8. **Student Involvement in Practical Class**
   More theory and less of practical instruction is of the practice in most colleges, this often and usually arise as a result of the fact that the teachers themselves may not perform the practical or there are no required facilities for the practical activities as mentioned. To enhance understanding and the acquisition of the required skills, it is important that agricultural education be taught practically.
9. **Reinforcing Learners' Response and Assignment**
   Constant guided assignment/exercise of what is learnt enhances understanding and remembrance of what has been learnt. A good teacher should always encourage his students; he should often observe his student and their stud characteristics as feedback on their performance (Offorma, 1994).
10. **Application of Instruction Method**
    The aim of teaching is to get the message across to the learners simple, quickly and in a manner they will understand. Various method of instruction are available depending on the topic being treated, therefore the teacher should be able to adopt a particular method for effective delivery of a particular message.

Suggestions for Improvement

Based on the study, the following recommendation are being made:

1. Government should provide appropriate facilities, tools and equipment for effective teaching and learning of vocational technical education.
2. General emphasis should be placed on curriculum, which will teach and evaluate based on the practical skills acquired and competences before certificate.
3. Government at all levels should motivate the teachers by providing the teachers with responsible and attractive salaries and allowance untimed.

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Conclusion

A number of challenges towards the leadership of school principal in the management and implementation of vocational technical education in Cross River State were identified in this paper amongst which include the following; Institutional challenges, teachers centered challenges, inadequate financing and general societal perception of vocational technical education as a course or area of specialization. Similarly, different measures of promoting teaching and learning of vocational technical education have been suggested. If a principal should lead him or her staff in the area of vocational technical education effectively is able to harness the suggestion, therefore teaching, students understanding and skill acquisition in vocational technical education will be greatly promoted and achievable in our school system.

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