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Development of an Institutional Culture: A Prerequisite for Performance Management in Schools

Nickson Moseti Ongaki

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

Abstract:

Culture is a set of beliefs, attitudes and orientations which serves as a normative guide for behaviour within a group. As individuals engage in social interactions, they develop common conceptions of desirable and acceptable behaviour. Common values arise to define ideal states of affairs and social norms develop that prescribe what individuals should do under different situations and establish the consequences of deviations from those expectations.

Performance management according to the Government of Kenya, (2005:5) is the systematic process of planning work and setting expectations, continually monitoring performance, developing the capacity to perform and periodically rating performance.

Performance management involves taking desirable and effective actions that serves as a critical link between a school's work output and outcomes aimed at facilitating achievement of efficiency and effectiveness.

Performance management works best when it is an integral part of a school's culture, is seen to be fair and open, understood by everyone and based on shared commitment to supporting continuous improvement and recognizing success (Godia, 2000:19). Target setting, monitoring and evaluation arrangements are well established in some schools. Aduda (2004) argues that there is high competition for form one places in few performing schools with tract records of good performance. It is believed that these schools produce high quality graduates. There is no doubt that these schools have developed a culture of good performance over the years. Those that have not sustained the culture are trounced by those that have realized that they need the culture. It's often common to hear of stakeholders say that the good results are as a result of hard work between the teachers' parents and students.

Performance management is a way of helping schools improve by supporting and improving teachers work; both as individuals and in teams. It sets a framework for teachers and their team leader to agree and review priorities and objectives within the overall framework of schools development plans. It focuses attention on more effective teaching and leadership to benefit pupils, teachers and schools.

The ministry of education conceives performance based management as the current thinking which places emphasis on measuring performance of staff at all levels. The document proposes that at the beginning of each year, staff will draw work plans specifying the actual targets to be met. It will require that all staff regardless of their position is accountable for the implementation of agreed work plans.

This paper therefore seeks to show how an institutional culture is a prerequisite for performance management in schools and will propose that schools develop a culture of good performance if they want to excel. The paper also discusses in details the performance management process.

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition of School Culture

The concept of "culture" generally refers to a group's shared beliefs, customs, and behavior. School's culture includes the obvious elements of schedules, curriculum, demographics, and policies, as well as the social interactions that occur within those structures and give a school its look and feel as "friendly," "elite," "competitive," "inclusive," and so on. According to Sergiovani (1987) Culture is a set of beliefs, attitudes and orientations which serves as a normative guide for behavior within a group. As individuals engage in social interactions, they develop common conceptions of desirable and acceptable behavior. Terry Deal and Peterson (2002) defines School culture as underlining set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, and traditions that make up the unwritten rules of how to think, feel and act in an organization. Every organization has a conscious, predictable part of the rules and procedures and so forth, but the school's culture is often below the stream of consciousness and is really what affects how people interact in an organization. It is the unwritten rules about interaction and problem solving and decision-making. They continue to argue that all schools have a set of unwritten rules about a variety of things. In some cases there are unwritten rules about how to interact in a faculty meeting. Some faculty meetings are very cordial, collegial, and encouraging, and those are the rules of engagement. In other schools, the rules of engagement are more like, as one teacher said it, are more like Sarajevo. She said that her faculty

meetings are where people attack any new idea that's presented and are more than willing to be critical of anything that lacks of curriculum instruction or student learning. So unwritten rules are part of the culture and they shape interactions and faculty meetings. According to small schools researcher Raywid (2001) A school is also a culture, and has a personality of its very own. It has, hopefully, some cherished traditions, unwritten rules, unspoken expectations, a proud heritage or past, and a sense of spirit. It may have a special song, symbolizing what is important. It may have special traditions and meanings that are uniquely its own. In other words, it has a unique personality of its own.

1.2. Definition of Performance Management

There are a number of definitions of performance management. Davies (2002: 2) defines performance management as an ongoing communication process that involves both the performance manager and employee in:-

- Identifying and describing essential job functions in relation to mission and goals of the organization.
- Developing realistic and appropriate performance standards.
- Giving and receiving feedback about performance.
- Writing and communicating performance appraisals.
- Planning education and development opportunities to sustain improve or build on employee work performance.

Rodger (1999:85) defines performance management as a management process designed to link the organization's objectives with those of the individual employee in such a way as to ensure that the individual and corporate objectives are as far as possible met. Performance management according to the government of Kenya, (2005:5) is the systematic process of planning work and setting expectations, continually monitoring performance, developing the capacity to perform and periodically rating performance. Performance management involves taking desirable and effective actions that serves as a critical link between a school's work output and outcomes aimed at facilitating achievement of efficiency and effectiveness, (Godia 2005:22).

1.3. How School Culture is related to Performance Management

The notion of a school culture is not new. References to a school culture go back to the 1930's and beyond. Colleges and universities such as Yale and Harvard evoke very positive images of tradition and culture. In Kenya, Schools such as Alliance, Mang'u and Starehe have always stroke people's minds every time best performing schools are mentioned and pictures of students in these schools celebrating their performance is always common in newspaper headlines when examination results are announced.

The culture is a very, very, powerful part of what goes on in school. I have to say finally, that there are unwritten rules about curriculum instruction and testing. Just as culture is critical to understanding the dynamics behind any thriving community, organization, or business, the daily realities and deep structure of school life hold the key to educational success. Reforms that strive for educational excellence are likely to fail unless they are meaningfully linked to the school's unique culture. For small schools newly born from large high schools, creating a unique school culture will be an important component of success. School culture is variously defined by:

- Rituals
- Expectations
- Relationships
- Curricular focus
- Extra-curricular activities
- Decision-making processes
- Graduation requirements

And any other aspect of "the way we do things here." Because these aspects of culture are primarily formed through teacher-student interactions, classroom culture is an intrinsic part of school culture. The *Discipline Approaches* section further explores this connection and introduces methods for restorative practices in classroom discipline.

Terry Deal and Peterson (2002) argue that there's no question that the culture of the organization is a key factor in productivity and success. Without a culture that supports and recognizes the importance of certain kinds of learning goals; changes and improvements just won't happen. Culture affects what people focus on. "What's important to pay attention to?" Culture affects motivation. Motivation affects productivity. And, finally, culture affects the willingness of staff members, students, parents, and administrators, to put time into continuous improvement and refining their craft. So, culture is key to productivity. They further argue that if schools will not have a positive, collegial, professional community and strong culture, productivity is just going to flounder. They further argue that having a positive culture is quite essential having visited schools with truly toxic cultures- cultures where productivity is damaged by a negative approach to teaching, learning and relationships. If you don't have a positive, professional culture, you are not going to have a productive school.

1.4. Characteristics of Schools with Positive Cultures

The following are pointers of schools with a positive culture.

- There is a widely shared sense of purpose and values that is consistent and shared across staff members. Without this, you have fragmentation and often times, a conflict.
- Secondly, we find that there are group norms of continuous learning and school improvement that the group reinforces the importance of staff learning and a focus on continuous improvement in the school.

- The third one is kind of an interesting one, which is a sense of responsibility for a student's learning. And, I think we always assume that the staff really believes and feel responsible for student learning. But, in some schools they blame the students for not being successful. In a positive school culture, staff really feels a sense of responsibility for the learning of all students.
- Fourth, we find collaborative and collegial relationships between staff members. People share ideas, problems and solutions, they work together to build a better school.
- Finally, in more positive school cultures there's a real focus on professional development, and staff reflection, and sharing of professional practice. These are places where people interact around their craft; they improve their teaching; and they do it as a shared collaborative.

In toxic cultures, a term that Terry Deal and Peterson (2002) coined, you find almost the opposite. You find almost a sense of depression and frustration in the school. There's no shared sense of purpose. The school is fragmented. There are negative norms around improvement and learning. They really don't believe that they can improve what they do. They don't believe they can bring the school up to a higher level. In toxic cultures, they blame the victim. They believe that it's the students' fault for not learning. Somehow they are not doing things right. Some people believe that the parents are not sending their best kids to school, but they are. They blame the community for not having better students. In toxic cultures, also, you find little celebration of success. There are few traditions that reinforce positive and supportive aspects of the school. In the positive cultures, in contrast, you find schools where there are traditions and ceremonies, celebrating student successes, recognizing teachers who have worked hard and brought new ideas into the classroom. There is a sense of positiveness and hopefulness. You know, you go to a school with toxic culture and you can almost feel it. Staff often times get in there barely before contract times, there's no sense of energy, you often hear teachers yelling at kids, and, that kind of toxicity in a culture can be very, very damaging. Not only to student learning, but also to teachers own sense of possibility and hopefulness. And, it really is important that the teacher leaders and school principals address the negativity in toxic cultures, but at the same time, they have to spend time working to reinforce and nurture the positive parts of the culture.

Much of the literature on school culture draws on and extends several descriptive studies of organizational culture in the corporate workplace. Educational researchers such as Davis (1989), Deal (1987), Deal and Peterson (1990), and Sergiovanni (1987) have found very close parallels between the ways effectively managed businesses operate and the ways effectively managed schools function. Although no single, universally accepted definition of school culture has been established, there is general agreement that school culture involves, in the words of Deal and Peterson (1990), "deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have formed over the course of [the school's] history." Over time, a school leader can, in conjunction with other stakeholders in the school, change its culture by discarding old values and beliefs, establishing new ones, or modifying elements that need to be changed. Deal and Peterson (1989), describing culture building in organizations in general, characterize it as a fluid process: Groups tend to work out ways of getting along among themselves. They arrive at certain shared understandings regarding how, when, and where activities are to occur. Above all, they specify the meaning, the value, and the purpose of these activities. In particular, thoughts and perceptions about what is worth striving for are a critical feature of any culture.

Thus, a principal interested in establishing the motivation to learn and academic achievement as central features of a school's culture must first persuade everyone—students, teachers, parents, staff, and school board—that goals related to those areas are desirable, achievable, and sustainable. The goals can ultimately become important enough to take on a life of their own, to become invested with meaning that reflects the basic purpose of the school and its reason for being. They can become part of the value system in which each participant in the school willingly and enthusiastically participates.

Performance management works best when it is an integral part of a school's culture, is seen to be fair and open, understood by everyone and based on shared commitment to supporting continuous improvement and recognizing success (Godia, 2000:19).

This means:

- Raising standards by looking at the way schools work to provide the best possible education for their pupils and planning the best of individual teachers.
- Continuous professional development to promote professional growth and identifying teacher's individual development needs.
- Involvement by encouraging teachers to be fully engaged in school planning and self-development.
- Manageability of the process so that performance management is regarded as an integral and essential part of school policy.
- Equity to ensure policies and processes are open and fair while respecting confidentiality of individuals.

The new millennium has ushered in the performance based management which seeks

- A systematic planning of work
- Setting expectations
- Continually managing performance
- Developing the capacity to perform by employees
- Periodic rating of performance
- Rewarding good performance.

Gray (1991: 39) comments that most schools and colleges are now required to produce formal plans. The planning process has become an important component of management tasks of head teachers and other managers in the education service.

The ministry of education conceives performance based management as the current thinking which places emphasis on measuring performance of staff at all levels. The document proposes that at the beginning of each year, staff will draw work plans specifying the actual target to be met. It will require that all staff regardless of their position is accountable for the implementation of agreed work plans.

1.5. Characteristics of Schools with a well developed School culture- The Kenyan Experience

These characteristics include but are not limited to:-

- Students doing things out of their own initiative i.e not being reminded of what they ought to do. For instance waking up in the mornings and going for preps
- There is time for everything and time management is observed
- Systems run, people know their work whether the Principal or any authority figure is around or not.
- Students are focused, responsible and self disciplined
- Targets are set early in the year and everyone works towards their achievement e.g completion of the syllabus early to give enough time for revision
- Existence of a school song/anthem to constantly remind them of their aspirations and motivate the students and staff.
- Celebration of examination results by all stakeholders and a feeling of ownership and responsibility even when the results are not so good.
- Other schools usually visit these schools for benchmarking.

1.6. How principals shape culture through their daily interactions

Principals shape the culture in all of their daily interactions. Every interaction with a staff member or a student is a chance to reinforce the culture. Every time you step into a classroom, it's a chance to not talk about the ceiling tiles that need to be replaced, but to talk about student learning, and curriculum and instruction. What principals often times don't realize, is that every interaction with someone in the school, whether it's a student, a parent, a teacher, or community member, is a chance to reinforce the core value of the school. So, 200 interactions a day are 200 opportunities to shape the culture. In summary, I just want to reinforce how powerful culture is to the learning of students and the productivity of the school. We are living in a time of intense accountability, and the use of data, and a focus on building structures for school, but we can't forget the importance of school culture. If we don't have schools with the kind of heart, soul, and spirit, that our kids deserve, we are not going to have the kind of productivity that we hope to achieve either. It's critically important to be able to understand the school's culture and shape it in everything that you do. School improvement emerges from the confluence of four elements: the strengthening of teachers' skills, the systematic renovation of curriculum, the improvement of the organization, and the involvement of parents and citizens in responsible school-community partnerships. Underlying all four strands, however, is a school culture that either energizes or undermines them. Essentially, the culture of the school is the foundation for school improvement, a view summarized by Purkey and Smith (1982):

Giving shape and direction to a school's culture should be a clear, articulated vision of what the school stands for, a vision that embodies core values and purposes. Examples of core values might be community building, problem solving skills, or effective communication. These value commitments vary from community to community; what is important for school leaders to know is the role of values as the fuel of school improvement. If core values are the fuel, then school culture is the engine.

Performance management is a way of helping schools improve by supporting and improving teachers work; both as individuals and in teams. It sets a framework for teachers and their team leader to agree and review priorities and objectives within the overall framework of schools development plans. It focuses attention on more effective teaching and leadership to benefit pupils, teachers and schools.

Performance management is a strategic process because it is forward looking and developmental. It provides a framework in which the school management team can support staff members instead of dictating to them. Its impact on work outcomes will be more significant if its regarded as transformational rather than as an appraisal process.

There is a strong evidence that where schools and individual teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to achieve, standards rise.

There are two major benefits of performance management:-

- First, the pupils will benefit because their teachers will have more sharply focused picture of what, with encouragement, support and high expectations, their pupils can achieve.
- Secondly, teachers will benefit. Teachers have the right to expect that their performance will be regularly assessed and that they will have a proper opportunity for professional discussion with their team leader about their work and their professional development.

The key characteristic of a successful structured system of staff development and performance management include:-

- A clear definition of the attributes, knowledge and skills necessary to achieve success.
- Remuneration and reward mechanisms.
- Individual acceptance of responsibility for learning in a timely manner that link to current and future success.
- A focus on evaluation and application of outcomes.
- Personal and team performance contracts and agreements
- Use of self assessment
- Quicker recognition of and management of underperformance (Liston, 1999:86)

According to Davies (2002:87) a performance management process that is operating effectively should produce the following results.

- Clear objectives for the organization and the process for identifying, developing measuring and reviewing them,
- An integration of corporate objectives set by senior management with the aims of the individual employees.
- Greater clarity about the schools' organizations, aspiration and objectives.
- The development of a performance culture in which results are given greater priority than conforming to standard procedures.
- Establishment of dialogue between the management and the employee.
- Greater emphasis on individual development needs and encouragement of self development.
- An organization which makes things happens and achieves results.

Target setting, monitoring and evaluation arrangements are well established in some schools. Aduda (2004) argues that there is high competition for form one places in few performing schools with tract records of good performance. It is believed that these schools produce high quality graduates.

Existing best practice in schools is characterized by:-

- A commitment to the attainment and welfare of pupils at their school
- An appreciation of the crucial role that the teacher plays.
- An atmosphere of trust between teacher and team leader which allows evaluation of strengths as identification of areas for development.
- Encouragement to share good practice and
- The integration of performance management with the overall approach to managing the school.

All schools need a written and agreed performance management policy so that everyone in the school community understands how performance management works and what their responsibilities and rights are within. Schools need not start from scratch for they can draw on arrangements already in place for setting targets, monitoring and appraisal.

This paper describes the key steps in performance management. It will be for the governors and head teachers to agree in the school policy exactly how it will be put into effect. Head teachers and governors should involve all teaching staff in developing the policy so that they know how it will help them do their job well and raise their standards. The policy should set out clearly where responsibilities lie for individuals' performance management.

However, the policy should be fair, treat all teachers consistently and be simple to operate and implement.

1.7. Performance Management Process

Davies (2000:87) proposed a four cycle performance management process

There are four main stages:

- Planning performance
- Managing performance
- Reviewing performance
- Rewarding performance

1.8. Planning Performance

Planning process consists of the following three elements:

- Objectives: - These are goals to be achieved set in sufficiently detailed and precise terms to enable others to identify whether they've been achieved.
- Actions: - specification of the activities required to meet the objectives.
- Resources: - identification of what and who will be required to achieve the objectives and an indication of the time scale.

The first step in the introduction of performance management in schools is the clarification of the primary reason for introducing performance management and a clear view of what it is expected to deliver in terms of results. There has to be a strong commitment from the participants i.e. managers, supervisors and staff (Makotsi 2000, 4). This is to ensure there is support from the upper and lower echelons of the school and adequate allocation of resources to achieve the desired results.

This is followed by the setting up objectives. There are typically derived from organization's/ministry's overall direction and strategy and from the broad statements of intents, which will be gradually refined, cascading down the school until they are translated into individual targets. However a bottom – up approach can be adopted where the priorities and targets would be identified by the staff in line with overall objectives of the school and the parent's ministry. It should be noted that when setting targets for individuals, it should be borne in mind that those individuals will have aims that are not just work related.

Their priorities are much more likely to revolve around such issues as promotion prospects, pay, recognition, time off, relations with colleagues and the boss.

Objectives should conform to what have been described as "SMART" criteria. They should be:

- Specific – as precise as possible and relating to only one identifiable output
- Measurable – to be easy to identify when they have been achieved.
- Achievable – to enhance credibility and boost the morale of the participants.
- Results oriented – it must be related to the end result, which is to be achieved.
- Time related – should have time scale to give guidance on priorities (Makotsi 2000: 89).

Objectives should be set in all the important areas of the job and the priorities should be made clear. Those, which should be given the greatest priority, are the ones, which will have the most significant input on the school and give the greatest competitive advantage. However, objectives should not be too numerous to the extent that it dilutes their impact and divert the individual's attention away from the things that really matter (Godia, 2000, 25)

Another important aspect of the objective is whether it takes into account an individual's personal development. This is for the sake of individual's interest and also the organizations. The more highly motivated and skilled employee contributes more to the organization as integrating individuals' aspirations with the aims of the organization are likely to contribute the best results given the provision of necessary resources.

The overall aim in the performance planning process should be to ensure that teachers are not only doing things in the right way but, more importantly, that they are focused on the right things.

The balanced score card devised by Blandford (1997) seeks to identify the key drivers of organisational performance in order to minimize the problem of setting too many diverse objectives. The four key measures they suggest are:

- The customer perspective (How do customers see us?)
- The internal perspective (What must we excel at?)
- The innovation and learning perspective (Can we continue to improve and create value?)
- The financial perspective (How do we look to share holder's) (In this case our stakeholders)

1.8.1. Competency Based Objectives

It is suggested that in the jobs whose outputs are not at all that clear, performance management scheme should develop more behaviourally based competencies. They have to be framed in such a way that:

- They must be worded in such a way that they can be objectively assessed.
- They must be relevant to the job.
- There should be a common core of competencies for jobs operating in the same environment.
- They should not be numerous.

Consistency in performance management can be determined through strategic planning and operational planning (Bland Ford 1999: 77).

Strategy is a broad statement, which rotates to the overall approach and direction of the school towards the achievement of its mission. Developing and maintaining a strategy involves establishing a framework within which an operational plan can take place (Bland Ford 1997)

Strategic planning within the context of school development plan (Ellison 1992: 16) involves a process of developing shared visions into activities so that the school's product and service match the clients' wants and needs. By going through its process clear objectives can be developed which relate to achievement of the school mission.

Vision and mission statements are critical to the effectiveness of strategic and operational plans. The vision moves the organization (School) forward from where it is now to where it would like to be. It should be precise and more desirable in many ways than that which currently exists. Vision is achievement/result oriented. An effective school according to (Godia, 2005) is that which the staff are able to work towards achieving the school vision i.e. working towards a shared set of values and beliefs. School vision must therefore be clear and comprehensive to all education stakeholders. Vision and mission statements provide a clear sense of direction and purpose.

These according to Owens (1995: 300) are a means to creating school development plans – objectives or targets to be met by members of the school community.

When determining objectives be SMART, (TUCKMAN, 1985).

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Timed

Having determined the school development plan, managers need to consider how the plan will be put into operation. This involves tables, timeliness and targets: who does what, when and how? It aims to achieve a particular set of objectives within a given time.

Bland Ford (1999: 80) advises that developing a school's vision statement and development plan should be collaborative. Studies point out that managers who spend time planning on their own will feel resentful when other people become involved and spoil what was a good plan.

1.8.2. School Development Plan

All schools should have a school development plan (Bland Ford, 1997: 81). A school development plan provides a framework for strategic planning in which the schools can identify long and short-term objectives to manage itself effectively. A school development plan is a plan of needs for development set in the context of the school's aims and values, its existing achievements and national goals and initiatives (Bland Ford, 1997).

Sergiovanni (2000) state that the school development plan should:

- Demonstrate involvement
- Provide focus for action

- Provide means of presenting the plan
- Provide a means of assessing progress.

In that sense School Development Plan (SDP) should be: realistic, achievable, drawn up by methods involving the whole school community. The SDP will identify existing achievements and needs for development.

1.8.3. Action Plans

These are detailed plans, which involve the managers and staff deciding on the way forward to implement the action plans. The action plans usually involve: -

- The agreed priority areas
- The targets – specific objectives for the priority areas
- Success criteria against which progress and achievement can be judged
- The tasks to be undertaken
- Allocation of responsibility for tasks and targets
- Resources required (Bland Ford, 1997: 87).

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991: 65) identify the activities required to make the plan work as:

- Sustaining commitment during implementation
- Checking the progress of implementation
- Checking the success of implementation
- Overcoming any problems encountered
- Taking stocks
- Reporting progress
- Constructing the next development plan

1.8.4. Departmental Development Plan

Sergiovanni (2000: 320) found out that, whether a pupil achieves or under achieves is largely dependent on the quality of planning, execution and evaluation that takes place within departments. Departmental plans usually reflect the aims of the school development plans and provide an operational framework for implementing the action plans emanating from school development plans. To make it effective, SDP should be placed in the context of the school and national planning.

It should therefore contain the following.

- A summary of the department aims and objectives
- The method of achieving the aims and objectives
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Such plans enable staff to work together towards a common goal. The plan gives a sense of direction and purpose, the central aim being to improve the quality of teaching and learning within each area of responsibility.

Points for consideration (Bland Ford 1997: 87) are: -

- Aims and values
- Schemes of work
- Policy documents
- Assessment and reporting
- Special education needs
- Equal opportunities
- Resources
- Evaluation
- Outcomes

1.8.5. Weakness in Development Planning

Development planning may not always be effective Hargreaves (1995: 224). These are some of the reasons:

- Getting started – if staff are not fully behind the idea, their level of involvement will be limited and difficult to monitor and evaluate.
- Plans and priorities – when too many priorities are adopted it prevents plans from being monitored and evaluated in depth.
- Action plans – they're often vague and unspecific, without associated success criteria. This is related to limited guidance on what evidence to collect, success criteria and how to judge the quality of implementation.
- Implementation and evaluation – development plans need evaluating. This should be build into the plan to facilitate monitoring and taking corrective measures.

1.8.6. Priorities

Determining priorities is central to performance management (Godia 2005)

The government reforms reflect clear priorities for education, which aims to raising standards in schools. This can be achieved if :

- Each school should take responsibility for achieving high standards, and should account for its performance to parents and local community against standards set by National Curriculum Body. It should set targets for improvement and review its performance against them annually.
- Within that framework, schools should have as much freedom as possible to make their own decisions, spend their own budgets, and plan their own future.
- Schools should use its freedom to build on their distinctive strength, responding to the needs and wishes of local parents to provide more choice and diversity.
- This will give a better match between what schools offer and what parent's want; which is good education suited to their child's individual ability, interests, needs and ambitions.

1.8.7. Measuring Performance

The aim of the government has been to improve the quality of provision in Education while obtaining better value for the money spent. Given that schools must improve quality and provide value for money, measuring performance, monitoring and evaluation practice has become integral element in the management of schools. Management is central to the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation process.

According to Bland Ford (1997: 165) the monitoring and evaluation process should not only inform about the quality of what is being offered in school, it should actually promote raising of standards.

1.8.8. Measuring Performance in Schools

School managers are not to measure performance in their schools according to performance indicators (Bland Ford, 1997). The impact of performance indicators can have a marked effect on school practice. Blandford (1997) explains that "It will be the task of all concerned with the education service to design a system of performance indicators in collaboration with each other that reflect the educational outcomes which schools in particular see as important and aim to help in understanding how to attain those educational outcomes.

The approach should be collaborative, fair, and mature aimed at interpretation not judgment. Many stake holders judge schools in the basis of location, leadership, national examination council results, and test results as other social economic factors. Other parents selected the schools on the basis of a balanced education including personal and social development of their children. They place greater emphasis on their children being happy and enjoying lessons than they did in examination results.

On the other hand teachers offer feel that they have a under view of what constitutes good education. Though these include examination results, attendance figures, discipline standards, material endowment, and entry behaviors. (What do other stake holders see in education?)

The focus on management performance has created dilemmas for seminars management teams. Efficiency or value for money in education is a controversial attribute. Issues to do with cost per student and outcomes as an indicator is not clearly defined.

Brand ford (1997: 167) further complicates the issue by pointing regarding contract ration and student teacher ratio as process indicators, others include teacher turnover, reward/ sanction system, homework policy etc.

Though performance- related assessment is possible, measuring it can be problematic. Michael Ruther (1979) used five measures of outcome:

- Attendance
- Academic attainment in public examination
- Pupil behaviors
- Delinquency
- Employment of the graduates

While 1, 2 and 5 are measurable, 3 and 4 are judgment based and therefore very difficult to quantify. Quality approaches may help with these issues.

1.8.9. Use of Indicators

Colleen (1999:86) confirms that performance indicators are used to demonstrate the extent to which school's operational units (academic as well as non-academic departments) are achieving desired results.

Three dimensions of indicators are proposed to be considered contextually. These are:

- Appropriateness of indicators (directly relating to the core business and function of the institution.).
- Efficiency (monitored in terms of actual use or resources given a fixed allocation). The aim being improvement in performance against effectiveness indicators while using no more (and preferably less) than targeted resources (performing better with less.)
- Effectiveness, this is the quality of outcomes, the impact of what has been done, in the context of planned objectives.

Liston (1999) found out that indicators are key to quality improvement in educational institutions. He proposes that each operational unit within schools should be responsible for identifying its own performance indicators, bench marks and targets to clarify the gap between current and desired practice.

Indicators are sign posts which indicate something about performance (Godia 2005). They are both qualitative and quantitative and can provide information on efficiency and effectiveness.

However, he cautions that though a focus in outcomes may be important it is unwise to be too narrow when making judgments. This may be because the quality of inputs and process is important too. These inevitable vary, depending on contextual considerations, diversity of programmes, students and staff.

Indicators however can be used to identify good practice, select benchmarking partners and share the best practice information for the benefit of the whole sector.

Liston (1999:91) points out that there are limitations in the current indicators that look at outcomes and proposes that additional indicators should be developed. There can be systems and objectives indicators that address missions and goals or an activities approach which seems to be preferred.

However such indicators must be accurate and consistent. An indicator comprising those related to more specific efficiency measures e.g.

1.8.10. Productivity Ratios

- Output
- Return on input
- Cost of output
- Economy of output and input ratios

Other indicators according to Liston are;

- Indicators that can provide evidence for rewarding excellence and innovations in teaching and learning.
- Indicators for the quality of student services e.g. housing, health care etc
- Efficiency indicators can also be used. These illustrate the extent to which each department/ school meets the measurable components of its objectives (outputs). It relates inputs to outcomes without focusing on activities.

1.8.11. Performance Review and School Indicators

Definition of performance review;

The LMS initiative (1990:102) defines the fundamental questions for performance review as:-

- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?
- How are we going to get on?

Performance review should emerge from school development plan to provide the structure within which these questions can be answered. It is suggested that each school design their plans to meet its own needs. Since it will not be possible for a school to review all activities each year, it should be limited to a number of priority areas that relate to the key aims and objectives of the school. Areas of concern that arise during the academic year should be examined.

Given the difficulty of measuring performance in education, performance indicators, which are not exact measures of performance, are used. According to Branford (1990:166) performance indicators are measures which are thought to have relationship and therefore be indicative of the aspect of performance in question, they can only be approximations or proxy indicators.

Though performance indicators can be open to misinterpretation and rarely conclusive, they are a powerful tool for internal school management. It can affect identify the strengths and weaknesses of the performance of a school and its efficiency and effectiveness.

1.8.12. Indicators of Performance

In practice managers should compare where the school is to where it should be. A spectrum of indicators both quantitative and qualitative that are likely to demonstrate performance can be used.

These may include;

- Economy (i.e. measure the cost of resources used having regard to their quality)
- Efficiency (i.e. relationship between the output of the service and the input of resources used to produce it.
- Effectiveness (i.e. relationship between the output of the service and the desired outcomes for it, (Bland ford 1999:168).

Three aspects central to efficiency and effectiveness are:-

- Inputs i.e. the resources consumed in running the school.
- Processes (i.e. the way resources are organized to provide the quality of provision for the educational exercise.
- Outputs i.e. the achievements of the school.

1.8.13. Inputs

They are generally quantitative and include teaching staff, physical facilities and equipment. It also includes measures of pupil-staff ratios (for teaching and non teaching staff) and total units cost i.e. cost per pupil.

Process (Quality of Provision)

This relates to the education process experienced by the learners. They include:

- The learning processes in terms of the styles of teaching, level of interaction with learners and teacher expectations.
- The curriculum offered in terms of its relevance, balance and breadth and the range of options possible.
- Extracurricular activities offered.

- The ambiance of the school in terms of its physical appearance, atmosphere and the altitude of staff – teaching and non-teaching.

The above processes are however difficult to measure or define calling for qualitative judgments. This can be achieved through (colleen, 1999)

- Self – assessment by staff and the learners
- Internal review by senior teaching staff.
- External review by experts or peer groups in other schools.

1.8.14. Achievements (Outputs)

Critically, outputs will be the basis on which the school is able to market itself to potential parents and learners. These outputs include:-

- Success in terms of children’s learning and development (value to the learner)
- Success in other activities
- Development of positive attitudes (e.g. initiative, confidence, enthusiasm to learn).
- Standards of behavior (e.g. punctuality, levels of truancy)
- Post school destinations (e.g. employment Further and higher education or training and the views of those destinations of the ex-pupils they receive /recruit

However schools must set performance in context of external factors and the need to balance success in one area of development/achievements against failure in another.

Bland Ford (1999:170) argues that any measure of a single aspect of performance is of limited value and can be misleading. Achievements should be placed in the context of quality provision, which is dependent on resource empowerment in the school. The resources the school commands, the achievement of learners and nature of community of each school serves, determine the achievement.

A record of relevant indicators kept over several years can also help the school assess whether it is moving in the right direction and with what speed. This past performance however is of value if the processes influence future planning.

Bland Ford proposes factors to be used to guide development and use of indicators as:

- The importance to the school of the objective or activity to which the indicator relates.
- The perceived usefulness of the indicator as an effective signal of performance.
- The ease and cost of collection of relevant data
- The validity of the indicators over time
- Comparability with indicators used by other schools locally and nationally
- Existence of recommendations from quality assurance

1.8.15. Sources of Information

These will include

- Inspection results/quality audits
- Appraisal results
- Surveys of views of pupils, parents and external bodies.

It is therefore clear that indicators help the school to judge how well it is doing compared with what it seeks to do, they also help to identify areas of the school’s activities that require closer examination. This makes it an important tool in school planning, as a means of monitoring and evaluating school practice. Indicators can affect behavior as well as measure it.

1.8.16. Performance Monitoring

Monitoring is an ongoing process, integral to teaching and learning. Hageaves (1995:221) suggests that two questions a school leader needs to ask are:

- Who is monitoring what, in which ways and with what effectiveness?
- Who is responsible for adjusting what, in which ways, when and with what effectiveness?

Monitoring enables managers as teachers to obtain the best results from available resources, achieved and lead their team towards agreed objectives. It is therefore imperative that objective are made clear and agreed by all members of the team.

Monitoring can be used to provide the basis for evaluating practice. Departments/teams are able to measure and compare their performance against agreed criteria. According to Hageaves (1995:224) monitoring can be used in planning of staff development by providing insights into the strengths and weakness in their departments/teams, provide frame work in which staff can reflect on their own practice and enables the schools to follow the school development plan.

1.8.17. Performance Evaluation

This is an overall check on whether objectives are achieved within the planned time table. Bland Ford (1999:175) cautions that evaluation apart from being cooperative must focus on success and identification of areas which need improvement. The appraisal of teachers is a key factor in the evaluation process. Senior and middle level managers are required to provide evidence to support the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and management.

The purpose of evaluating school development plans is to:

- Examine the success of the implementing of the plan
- Assess the extent to which the schools aims have been furthered.
- Assess the impact of the plan on pupils' learning and achievement
- Decide on how to disseminate successful new practices throughout the school
- Make the process of reporting easier (colleen 1999: 167)

According to Hewton (1992:4) teacher appraisal should seek to bring about:

- Improved development and distribution of talent within the teaching force
- Help for teachers to develop their strengths and improve their weaknesses
- Identification of the most promising teachers for promotion
- Identification of those who require guidance, counseling and support
- Retirement or dismissal of those whose performance fail to improve

Through the evaluation process, managers will determine the need to change objectives, priorities and /or practice, (Hopkins and Hargreaves 1991).

1.8.18. Managing Performance

Performance management process is to ensure that plans that are set are acted on and the required results produced. It involves.

- Giving any necessary practical support e.g. resources
- Ensuring that employees are clear about the results required and giving advice.
- Giving employees the necessary training and development to ensure that they are able to achieve their accountabilities.
- Adjusting targets, priorities and performance measures according to changes in organization priorities, Government policies and stakeholders requirements (Davies. 2000: 93)

The management helps to develop a performance culture in which results are perceived as more important than traditional convention of behaviour within the organization. Employees are also expected to take responsibility for one's own performance both the managers and subordinates. This can be achieved through application of appropriate management styles in any particular situations. This is however influenced by factors such as personality of individual, nature of the task, time scale and organization culture, (GOK 2005: 5)

It should however be noted that a team of professionals like teachers a more participative style is more appropriate. This approach empowers the individuals to make decisions that are within their competence and that give them all the necessary support and encouragement, without compromising the results expected, (Davies 2000: 97)

The school managers have many strategies that he /she can use to manage the human resource in school with the same focus on results that a businessman adapts to obtain profits from his investment. The focus must be on effective service delivery for guaranteed customer satisfaction considering that the school's customers are not academic speculators but prospectors.

Supervision is the key element of performance management. Any process implemented must assure that supervision is carried out effectively and systematically. Availability of qualified staff to administer a performance management process is essential so is the need to continuously training of personnel. Phasing in the implementation of the performance management process should be considered as current reforms in education sector are resulting in different demands and requirements between teachers and school managers.

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