

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE CENTRALIZATION OF THE PERSONNEL FUNCTION IN TANZANIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

This paper reviews, the personnel management function in the Tanzanian education system. Recruitment and selection, staff training and development, appraisal and promotion, compensation, transfers and terminations are major components that have been analysed. These are undertaken centrally at ministerial level. As a result teachers have been made to feel more accountable to ministry officials rather than their Headteachers. The Training needs of teachers are also determined centrally, as a result not much of the teacher needs are addressed. Hence the unprecedented teachers' exodus. Power to promote teacher's are in the hands of the (Teachers service Commission) and the procedure is cumbersome and creates lots of delays.

Teachers' salaries are processed at the Ministry headquarters. But the salaries are extremely low and often delayed, thus leading to increased demoralization. Although transfers are usually initiated by heads of schools they are not always honoured. Heads may recommend termination of teachers but in many cases the teachers are either transferred or left at their work stations. It is recommended that heads of schools should play more active role in selecting and recruiting teachers. More powers and resources should be vested on heads of schools in order to facilitate reward schemes at school level. Effective decentralization of powers be made to the heads of institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Education in Tanzania has remained highly centralized despite the fact that the country it is so vast and the issues to be addressed in the education system are so complex. In 1972 there was an attempt to decentralise some activities of the central Government. Decentralization affected the Ministries. Normally the MEC handles all matters pertaining to the management of education, the teaching personnel, and supervises the quality control institutions namely NECTA and TIE. It also has the inspectorate and controls the

Teachers service commission (TSC) which deals with the welfare of teachers.

According to Paisey (1981), Campbell et al (1983), Hoy and Misket (1991) schools are systems of social interaction because they are composed of individuals who interact together and whose relationship binds them organically. Thus, education systems need effective and efficient management of both material and human resources. The staff personnel component in education include the teaching staff and the non-teaching (support) staff who, directly or indirectly, facilitate learning. But also, the learners are active participants in the whole process of teaching and learning.

This paper examines the implications of continued centralization of the personnel management function in the Tanzania's education system. It analyses and discusses problems related to recruitment; selection; training and development, evaluation and promotion, compensation, transfer and termination, with a view of arguing for the decentralization of the function to the regions districts local authorities and other operation units. It is submitted that much as it serves the Ministry of Education and culture (MEC) to control some functions centrally, yet the practice does not empower heads of the institutions to perform their duties effectively and with confidence. The paper contains two major sections. Section one consist of the background information and a theoretical framework, and section two discusses the personnel function in Tanzania's Education system, in view of existing theories, knowledge, studies and related literature.

Acritique of the current practices in education system is provided. The last section contains conclusions and some practical implications.

AN OVERVIEW

Centralization of Education system

African Countries which achieved independence in the 1960's sought to build new education systems that were consistent with their desired national goals. The countries inherited complex systems which were established by colonial authorities and which maintained inequalities among different classes and racial groups. Thus one of the early steps in the process of educational reform was to make the education system more equitable by subjecting the curriculum, examination, and personnel regulations to the control of central authority. But recent thinking about reform has indicated the need to shift many managerial responsibilities to lower levels of the education system, and therefore decentralising the reform process.

In Centralized Education Systems, teachers and education officers have failed to adopt the flexibility, adaptability, sensitivity and speed which is greatly required in most operations. The teachers and officers appear constrained, undertrained or perhaps unanticipated to take up these tasks. Educational administrators in Ministries of Education have also been slow in responding even to routine support tasks and responsibilities.

Managing Human Resources

Human resource inputs, supply organisations and systems with different talents and creativity. Therefore, the managerial task which deals with management of the human resources is crucial. Scholars like Koontz and O'Donnel (1976), Gluek (1979) have established the key aspects of the personnel management function. They argue that the personnel management function involves manning the organisational structure through appropriate and effective selection, appraisal and development of personnel to suit the designed roles. Personnel management deals with the effective management of people at work, examining what can be done to make them more productive and contented with their working life. Stoner (1982) adds that it deals with recruitment, placement, training and development of organisational members, and Gupta (1990) emphasizes that it involves defining manpower needs, recruitment, training, compensation and separation. Koontz and O'Donnel (1976); Glueck (1979), Stoner (1982); and Gupta (1990) all agree that the personnel management task should promote effective utilization of human resources in order to achieve organisational goals and employee satisfaction and development.

THE PRACTICES AND IMPLICATION IN THE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

Recruitment

Recruitment deals with the development of a pool of candidates commensurate with human resource plan. An organisation should therefore design a set of activities which attract the candidates with the appropriate abilities and qualities, who are required to enable the organisation achieve its goals. The recruitment process starts with an attempt to get employees who possess the abilities and attitudes that match the organisational tasks. It is followed by people's response to the recruitment efforts depending on their attitude towards the tasks and the organisation. Recruitment matches the preferences and goals of individuals with the needs and preferences of the organisation. Therefore, it is important for both the individual and the organisation, to operate with realistic information in order to prevent the eruption of conflicts or frustrations amongst employees as a result of unrealistic expectations. (Porter et al, 1975; Stoner, 1982), Personnel manager becomes an easy tasks when the right people are selected. But in many systems the process or recruitment is not always rational. It is, therefore, important that the personnel manager has a say in decisions concerning recruitment. This is particularly crucial to schools and the education systems where recruitment decisions are made centrally at ministerial level.

Recruitment can be done internally or externally. Internal recruitment provides for greater career opportunities to teachers, minimises costs and enhances better selection decisions. However, external recruitment is a major source of manpower for many organisations, and the most popular techniques are; advertisement, recommendation of existing employees, labour contracts, recruitment at gate and employment exchange.

Selection

Selection on the other hand is: "The process by which all candidates are divided into two groups, viz, those selected and those rejected" Dwivedi (1984: 103). Selection is the most critical factor of personnel management because during selection, organizations obtain employees who most likely satisfy their performance standards. However selection is most successful when several people are involved; enough information is provided to the selecting team and personnel managers are given more say in it, as people who are more conversant with work the requirements in the organisation, Moore (1966); Clueck, (1979).

The selection criteria should be very explicit and objective in terms of job specification. This includes details on education, experience, physical and personal characteristics, because factors like organisational environment, its size and complexity, nature of the labour market, technology and Government requirements affect selection. Gueck, (1979) and Stoner (1982) have stipulated the steps through which applications pass. At each step a few more applicants are screened until the required number of those expected to meet the organisation's performance standard are selected. According to Moore (1966) the more the steps the more reliable candidates are selected.

The process of selecting staff is usually a combination of a written application with a personal statement about competence, experience, career ambition and any special expectation and personal interview of short listed people, matching very closely the needs of the job listed and the ability specification. In addition to an interview a multiple assessment process may also be adopted for the selection of a candidate. The process involves a group of candidates taking part in a variety of activities set by a team of trained assessors, who jointly evaluate a number of pre-determined job-related abilities.

When there is scarcity of manpower in the labour market, sometime an organisation may relax the criteria, by ignoring some of the laid down steps in order to keep their activities going. This has led governments like that of Tanzania to centralise recruitment and selection procedures. Mwapachu (1983:244); testified for example that;

"In Tanzania, organisational recruitment and selection politics are not completely independent of national governmental manpower policies for the simple reason that demand far exceeds supply, and that government has concentrated at the centre, power for manpower allocation"

Recruitment and selection of teachers for public Primary and Secondary Schools in Tanzania is done by the Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with the Central Establishment, Regional Development Directorates and City or Municipal Council.

Usually Form Four and Form Six leaves who are interested in teaching are asked to choose for further education or training at the end of the year respectively. Those who perform well in their final examination are either selected for a certificate or diploma course in education others proceed to University where they undertake a B.A. (ED), B.sc (ED) or B(ED) degree course. Successful graduants are thereafter posted to public Primary and Secondary schools or teacher's Colleges accordingly. A few others go to places which offer better compensation packages.

According to Word Bank (1991) a study conducted in Morogoro Region in 1989 only 118 teachers out of 174 teachers assigned to that region actually reported. According to Levira and Mahenge, in 1987 the total teaching force was 95,503 teachers. But by 1991 it stood at 98,174 an increase of only 2,671 teachers. Since posting of teachers is done by the Ministry of Education and Culture often without any consideration of recipient needs or of the teachers trainee preference, many

teachers rejects such postings and opt out of the profession. Thus excessive overcentralisation of deployment and recruitment of teachers has become a major source of inefficient utilisation of human resources.

If heads of public schools had powers to recruit and select staff for their schools, teacher's work performance would improve, and teachers would respect the power and authority of their heads of schools. Currently teachers feel more accountable to the Ministry of Education and Culture officials who are recruiting and selecting authorities. They do not perceive any difference between themselves and their heads of schools because they are all recruited, selected authorities. They do not perceive any difference between themselves and their heads of schools because they are all recruited, selected and employed by the same authorities. This situation effects the extent to which a head of school is accepted and respected by fellow teachers. The relationship between the teachers and the level of authority of heads of schools, in public schools, seems to be undermined by the centralised system of recruitment and selection. Mwollo-Ntalima (1981) Hoy and Miskel (1991), Fiedler (1867) maintain that the quality of relationship between the leader and the led is an important factor in determining his or her influence. A head of school would have more control and influence when he or she has the means to employ, reward or punish.

Heads of public schools in Tanzania are denied these effective means of control and influence over their staff. The situation is compounded by the way the Ministry of Education and Culture ignores selection procedures such as initial interviews, testing, indepth interviews and reference checks. For example for a considerable period of time now, the two years probation period set by the MOEC has just remained a mere talk. The moderation panels which used to be conducted at the end of the final year's teaching practice for certificate and diploma teacher trainees no longer exist since

the abolition of block teaching practice in 1993.

Training and Staff Development

Training is a systematic process of changing the behaviour of employees toward the achievement of organisational, individual and societal goals. Kiwia (1991), Glueck (1979) outlines four steps in determining the training needs of employees. These include organisational analyses, job requirement analysis, survey of personnel and performance evaluation. Personnel managers should provide on the job and or, off-the job training courses after the training needs have been determined, on the basis of individual trainee's needs and ability. This imply that a head of school is the one who can rightly the training needs of his/her teaching personnel according to the factor under consideration.

In the Tanzania's education system training and development needs of teachers are determined by Ministry of Education and Culture. Heads of schools can only make recommendations to the Ministry. The teachers apply for training on their own initiatives. Successful teachers seek release from the Ministry of Education and Culture. After training, the MOEC has the liberty of posting the same teacher to the same school or elsewhere. In a research by Mwollo-Ntalima (1981) it was revealed that although 90.4% of teachers interviewed had wanted to attend inservice training courses, only 17.89% had chances. Just 26.02% had attended workshops and 38.21% had attended subject seminars. Malekela (1992) also discovered that only 12% of secondary schools teachers who deserved inservice training got an opportunity through the centralized procedures. The problems identified as hindering staff development programmes include, lack of adequate budget and heavy reliance on foreign donors, heavy teaching load, lack of emphasis on teaching performance in career advancement, lack of incentives and fear of appraisal. This practice

has resulted in some teachers leaving the teaching profession. Thus lack of the powers to determine training needs and get teachers trained, undermines the ability of the head of schools to motivate and retain good teachers.

Staff Appraisal and Promotion

Promotion, is an upward change of position with different duties; and increased responsibilities and privileges. It acts as a motivator when based on merit. In order to ensure fair and effective promotion, explicit and continuous records of performance appraisal should be kept and used by involving several people, especially the immediate manager, supervisors, peers, subordinates and outsiders. According to Nungu (1995) depending on the agreed circumstances the following can appraise; the immediate line manager, peers, subordinates, personnel specialists, external parties and appraisee.

One of the objectives of appraisal of staff is to improve each member's performance in the present job and also to see what potential each may have for other jobs in the institution. Performance should preferably be appraised by the staff member's immediate superior, and criteria should be as objective as possible. In the case of teaching staff, performance may also be appraised by students and peers. Appraisal of performance functions well when the staff member himself participates in planning the goals for self improvement and specific actions that will develop his/her abilities. Setting performance standards is a complex task, and the purpose of standards specification is primary to motivate staff to perform well. Both the staff and the evaluator should agree on standards which are the minimum conditions of acceptable performance. Appraisal should help in the process of raising norms of performance which generally considered acceptable in the education system.

In the Tanzania's education system, heads of public secondary schools evaluate and

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In the Tanzania's education system, heads of public secondary schools evaluate and

recommend their fellow teachers for promotions. But, they do not effect the recommended promotions. It is the jurisdiction of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). According to a World Bank (1991) study, it was discovered that promotion is considered a guaranteed entitlement and teachers are usually promoted regardless of efforts or competence. Since 1989 promotions of teachers in public secondary schools in Tanzania have been so uncertain that teachers are not sure when to expect one. Many times teachers of the same calibre are promoted at different times. This practice leads to frustration, abscondment or high rates of absenteeism for those who are delayed. Sometimes, teachers who are known to be poor work performers are promoted together, or, before the hard working ones. It would seem that the regulation that requires heads of schools to inform teachers who have been awarded "E" grades to appear for "self defence" encourages some heads of schools to give every teacher a high grade so as to avoid interpersonal conflicts. Consequently, even the ineligible staff get promoted.

When the performance evaluator is a person who cannot affect or withhold any promotion it is possible for some teaching personnel to lobby or corrupt key people who possess that power. Even the promotions based on seniority may culminate into a dysfunctional consequence, in that it hinders creativity, innovativeness and enthusiasm. Teachers simply wait for their turn, and when delayed for too long they start demanding for promotions as a right. The system then tends to reward low performers instead of high ones. The following problems have been identified Nungu (1995) with regard to performance appraisal in Tanzania generally, and in the education system specifically. There are no targets set between the appraiser and appraisee. Simply there is no dialogue. Performance appraisal are strictly confidential i.e. there is no openness. Performance appraisal are conducted once per year thus making them ritualistic exercises. Most performance appraisals are linked with

pay or remuneration. As such performance appraisals are used to assess an employee's right or otherwise of getting an annual salary increment. Because of the strict confidentiality surrounding performance appraisal "character assassination" cannot be ruled out.

Staff compensation

Compensation is part of a transaction between an employer and an employee which leads into employment. Its major objective is to create a system of rewards which satisfies both the employer and employee, such that the employee is attracted to the job and motivated to perform highly for the employer Chopra, (1989). Mutahaba (1980) according to (in Glueck, 1979), for a compensation policy to be effective, it should be adequately balanced, cost effective, incentive providing, equitable, secure, and acceptable to the employee. It plays a crucial role in determining employee's motivation to work, although it is not an absolute determinant.

Lack of an appropriate staff management system results in poor promotion and retention policies of good staff. High demand from economically better off organisations and enterprises within or outside the Country has caused the education sector suffer "brain drain" as well as brains going down the drain. Staff turnover is high in science subjects and business administration where industry pays higher salaries.

Money is among important motivators for many people as evidenced by over-time working Stoner, (1982); Cohen et al, (1977). It has been pointed out elsewhere Kiwia (1994), that it is a widely held fact that people do not work for money only. There are other factors that motivate them, which are not necessarily financial. For example a job assures a person some security, and it is a common reason for working with a particular institution. Teacher's salaries in public secondary schools in Tanzania depend on teachers' academic qualification and experience, which determine

their grades as well. The salaries are centrally decided by the Teacher's Service Commission. The corresponding annual increments are automatic, and one is entitled to two annual increments following a successful completion of not less than nine months in-service course (staff circular No. 8: 1991).

Heads of public schools in Tanzania, however, have nothing to do with their teachers' salaries sometimes some teachers receive bigger salaries than those of their heads of schools depending on entry qualifications and experience. Heads of schools are not allocated funds for purposes of motivating teachers. Unless one's school operates a highly viable income-generating projects, the salaries themselves are absolutely meagre. The prevalence of tuition classes, over indulgence in side-income generating projects and the strikes by teachers almost all over the country was a clear manifestation of dissatisfaction with the compensation schemes for teachers. It is also one of the reasons behind teachers exodus (Mwollo-Ntalima, (1991). (1981) Mwakilemba, (1981) Muze, (1987) World Bank. (1981). Not only that the salaries are low but also, teachers have very little opportunities of earning monetary or material benefits, besides their salaries which are often not paid and if paid they are very much delayed. The outcome is increased demoralization and ineffective heads of schools.

Transfers

Transfers are used to fill vacancies in an organisation in order to increase efficiency. They are also used when separation seems undesirable or unfair or when middle level managers have saturated available position and there is no room for others to rise to the top. Paisey (1981) Gueck (1979) advise that in schools, transfers need to consider existing and required labour force to avoid overstaffing or understaffing.

Transfers in Tanzanias public secondary schools are also centralized. They are however

usually initiated by heads of the institution. Sometimes teachers request for them. But heads of schools may solicit transfers for undesired teachers. However, it depends much on the influence the head or the particular teacher has at the MOEC headquarters. Often, the unrealistic appraisals we have mentioned above, may delay the transfer or make them not to be effected at all. This practice leads to some public schools being overstaffed or understaffed. Nyimbi (1991); Muze (1987) and World Bank Mission to Tanzania (1991) found out for secondary schools. As a result most heads of public secondary schools in Tanzania, work with undesirable teachers who are often transferred to their schools or retained in their schools against their wish; and also with understaffed personnel.

Termination on Inept Teachers

Organisation terminate employees due to either one's persistent failure to perform to satisfactory standards, negligence or inadequate attention to job requirements. Misconducts like violation of rules and regulations, alcoholism, fraud, may also lead to termination. Since not all rules and standards expected of employees can be articulated in writings, managers should, however, be very careful not to undertake unfair terminations for their staff. The Basic steps that are followed by managers before terminating an employee; include oral warning, first written warning, second and final written warning, suspension of employee with pay, suspension of employee without pay and finally, dismissal.

Sometimes terminations in the form of lay-off, may result from demographic shifts following economic crises or over-employment. It is, therefore, advocated by Schachter (1988) that in laying-off tenured employees such as teachers, performance appraisal or seniority list should be used. Apparently although most teachers and heads of schools will always react negatively when confronted with lay-off, the performance appraisal method is the most appreciated by both parties.

Termination of teachers in public secondary schools in Tanzania is effected at the MOEC through the Teachers Service Commission. Although it is the heads of school who recommend termination of inept teachers, in many cases the teachers are not terminated as such. They are, instead, transferred or simply left at their work station struggling with the head of school, who may end up seeking a transfer for himself or herself. This may make inept teachers feel triumphant and easily tempt other teachers to emulate their undesirable behaviour.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The preceding discussion has tried to analyse and reflect on the problems facing heads of public secondary schools in Tanzania as a result of centralization of the personnel management function. Inevitably centralization of the personnel function, affect the relationship between the heads of schools and their staff, their ability to control, influence and motivate teaching personnel, and ultimately the effectiveness of their institutions.

Lack of powers in the recruitment and selection process makes teachers more accountable to the recruiting and selecting authority rather than heads of schools. Lack of authority to determine the teachers' needs for training and development, or to effect it, deprives them an important tool of motivation. Furthermore evaluating teachers' performance without the power to effect the promotions requirement, demoralizes teachers due to the delays involved. Similarly the fact that teachers who are graded low should benefited while the head of school does not recruit or select them makes him/her make unrealistic evaluations which may enable underperformers to be promoted like everybody else. This situation demoralises industrious workers and makes it difficult for heads of schools to secure termination or transfers for such teachers.

Ability to affect teachers salaries or their increments is an important motivator. But having no funds to reward high performers demoralizes both the teachers and heads of schools, thus rendering the heads of schools helpless when their teachers resort to income generating projects tuitions, or abscond from school routines. When heads of schools are so powerless, that they are often forced to accept underperformers, misbehaving teachers or to operate with an understaffed establishment.

Lack of an effective personnel management system in the Tanzania's education system manifests in deficiencies inherent in the education system such as; lack of appropriate planning of staff needs in quantitative and qualitative terms, misallocation of staff for different functions as shown by low staff/student ratios and engagement of staff in too much extra-curricular activities, and under-utilization and misutilization of staff time whereby sometime staff are not given enough responsibility to utilize their time properly. As a result teachers have taken a second money earning activity such as private tuition due to the erosion of the purchasing power. Staff turnover is higher in the Science, Maths and Business Administration where industry pay lucratively. Poor working conditions of staff such as unbalanced teaching load, and lack of incentives for professional development has led to a lot of teachers exodus.

Conclusions

In order to minimise such problems heads of schools should play a more active role in recruitment and selection of teachers for their institutions. They should advertise the vacancies in their schools so that prospective teachers can apply. Applicants should undergo a selection process based on the required performance standards, before being accepted as teachers by the MOEC.

A re-warding system with substantial material and financial resources which could be utilized to motivate teachers should be established in

schools. Heads of schools should have final say in the promotion of teachers, and should be vested with powers to terminate underperforming or misbehaving teachers, performance appraisal must be made open, regular and should not be treated as a once per year ritual. If they remain in the present form they will not accomplish any objective. The MEOC should decentralise the power to heads of public schools without undermining its central role in unifying and equalizing the teachers services. A system should be designed to ensure that only academically and professionally able people are appointed as heads of schools.

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