Building Blocks for Good Governance in Cameroon Schools: Survey of Government Secondary Schools of Garoua 1 Sub-Division, North Region of Cameroon

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Abstract: South East European University in Macedonia in 2010 introduced five key words (building blocks) for good governance which can be applied in any organization (participation, strategic vision, performance, accountability, transparency). These key words were validated by the United Nations Development Program and veted to be good governance assessment methodology. This methodology provided the tools for assessing the governance in the education sector. This study titled “BUILDING BLOCKS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN CAMEROON SCHOOLS: SURVEY OF GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF GAROUA 1 SUB-DIVISION, NORTH REGION OF CAMEROON” endeavor to find out whether these key words listed above are applied in Cameroonian secondary schools for good governance. To come out with the findings, 4 government secondary schools were selected randomly out of 6 in the Garoua 1 sub-division. In each school, one vice-principal and one discipline master, fifteen teachers, and 5 students where conveniently selected making a total of seventy three (73) participants of the study. Following the survey, statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data using frequencies, tables and percentages. To corroborate the findings, an interview schedule was generated and was administered to the Divisional Delegate of Secondary Education for the Benoue Division and the Regional Delegate of Secondary Education for the North Region of Cameroon. The main finding of the study shows that most schools surveyed use mainly participation and performance which in the most part were epileptically used. The researcher concluded by recommending a more versatile approach in school governance using all the key words (building blocks) and recommended regular seminars and workshops, production of leaflets regarding the key words for school administrators and teachers on how they can be effectively applied in governing schools.

Keywords: Building blocks, good governance, secondary schools Cameroon.

INTRODUCTION

PERPECTIVES ON THE MEANING OF GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION

Experience shows that emphasis to governance is crucial for education system to fulfill their essential education function. In education governance means all the actions and decisions policy makers and implementers take to achieve laid down objectives. All the actions and decisions of ministers of education, directors in the ministries of education, principals, vice principal, senior discipline master and dean of studies in their various domains are involved in governance. Education governance encompasses institutions and linkages among citizens, government officials and education service providers. Ideally, good governance in education should have the traits of performance (responsiveness), accountability, transparency, and the capacity of state actors (central and local government decision makers) to design and implement policies in the education sector.
In Abdullahi (2019), governance is the process by which government makes and implements policy decisions that influence the finance and delivery of education to citizens of a nation. It also implies the way and manner of how power is exercised through a country’s economic, political, social and civil society to use the country’s resources for socio-economic development which have an impact on each household, individual or nation. Abdullahi went further to say good governance is a set of responsibilities and procedures exercised by an institution or government to provide strategic direction to ensure educational objectives are achieved through effective and efficient use of resources, accountability, and participation of people in decision making. Good governance in education is concerned with how a school system composes policies, produce funds and expends funds, teacher preparation for teaching, scheming curricula and administration of school population. This means school governance is responsible for school effectiveness, quality, and accountability.

In Abdullahi (2019), we see that several studies have been carried out in the area of good governance and education. Yusuf and Afolabi (2014) conducted an investigation on the effective management of tertiary education in Nigeria as a panacea to good governance and national security. Muhammad, Farooq, Farhan and Shazia (2015), conducted a content analysis of education and good governance in public schools of Pakistan. Amanchukwu (2011), carried out the challenges of quality education and good governance in a developing economy. Israr and Muhammad (2014), investigated the effective management of education through good governance in Pakistan. A sample of 66 head of institutions lecturers, administrators, planners and examination experts, and 60 students from 3 universities were selected for the study. The findings show that there is a relationship between transparency and management of higher education.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIVE KEY WORDS (BUILDING BLOCKS) FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

PARTICIPATION
Indicates that all men and women should have a voice in decision making either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their intention. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

STRATEGIC VISION
Leaders and the public have a broad and long term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.

PERFORMANCE/RESPONSIVENESS
Institutions try to serve all stakeholders. Effectiveness and efficiency is absolutely necessary for better results that meet the needs of all stakeholders.

ACCOUNTABILITY
Decision makers and implementers are accountable to the public as well as to the institutions stakeholders. Academic institution are accountable to the educational community.

TRANSPARENCY
Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Information should be accessible to those concerned with them. Information provided should be understood and monitored at all times.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK
Abdullahi (2018), cited parson(1977) who postulated the system theory adequate for this research. The system theory postulated, viewed the system as a collection of elements unified to
accomplish an overall stated goal and objective. If one part of the system is missed or removed, the others are changed as well. System focuses on the relations between parts and how they work together as a whole. A system has various inputs such as raw materials, money, people, technologies, processes (through planning, organizing, directing, motivating, coordinating, controlling), outputs (products, profits, satisfaction services) are secure by transformation through the managerial function of service providers and feedback (realized quality of life or productivity for clients). Feedback is what allows a system to attain its desired state. There are two types of feedback. This theory can be applied in the school system in that, a school as a system also has various inputs that are processed to produce outputs with feedback as represented in figure 1:

![Figure 1: theoretical framework of the general system model. source: adapted from abdullahi (2018)](image)

Every school system requires money and other resources such as buildings, desks and chairs, textbooks, black or white boards, water, and electricity. These are among the inputs that the school use in their daily operation in order to be able to function. In most cases, the government is responsible for supplying these inputs through the agency or a provider organization dedicated to education. Education service providers (principals, teachers, and school) process school inputs by transforming the available resources, most especially students for future services (educated children), which becomes the output of the school. Information regarding feedback and environment will concern the outputs and external environment of the school.

This study is based on the system theory. This is because, effective management of education depends on the availability and management of resources, accountability and participatory decision-making (good governance) towards the realization of educational goals. Good governance is one of the key for achieving educational objectives because it comprises the responsibilities of government (policy makers), educational leaders, education service providers, students, parents, and citizens. Policy makers jointly determine the policies, goals, and funding for education. Education leaders (minister), may be charged with the responsibility of achieving the goals of education and be held accountable for meeting the goals. In this regard, education leaders then put the wheel of bureaucracy in motion to allocate the resources needed and to implement the programs required to realize the stated educational goals and objectives. Principals and teachers are those that will process the input and be held accountable to parents, governing bodies, and the ministry of education among others. The system theory is therefore applicable in this study because good governance cannot be over emphasized in the effective
management of secondary schools as an open system.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out whether the five principles enshrined by south east European university and validated by the United Nations development program has been impacting on secondary school leaders in Cameroon.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to create awareness of the need for regular follow-up of the work of school leaders regarding good governance in our schools. The keywords acting like building blocks illustrate a guide to all policy makers and implementers to see the magnificent role researchers can play in enhancing educational practices and policy formulation.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Two research questions were formulated to guide the study:

Research question 1: Do principals of government secondary schools effectively use the five principles (participation, strategic vision, performance, accountability and transparency) for good governance in their daily tasks of running schools?

Research question 2: what can be done by policy makers to enhance the use of these principles by school heads for better governance of secondary schools?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

General Hypothesis

Principals effectively use the five principles for good governance in their daily administrative tasks

SPECIFIC HYPOTHESIS

Specific hypothesis 1: principals do not use the five principles for good governance in their daily administrative tasks.

Specific hypothesis 2: policy makers can organize biannual seminars or workshops for principals regarding how to use the principles and also control its applicability regularly

METHODOLOGY

Methodology brings out the type of research, site of research, population of the research, sample and sample procedure, instruments to gather statistics, and method of data analysis.

This research was a survey research carried out in Garoua 1 sub division north region of Cameroon. The population of the study was all the vice principal, teachers, and students of all public secondary schools in the north region of Cameroon. In order to make the research more realistic and applicable a small size of the population was sought (sample). For convenience and based on the fact that the researcher is resident in Garoua 1 sub division, the study was carried out in the Garoua 1 sub division of the north region of Cameroon. Out of the six government secondary schools in the Garoua 1 sub division, four were randomly selected for the research. in these four schools, one vice principal, one discipline master were purposely selected, fifteen teachers and five students per school were conveniently selected, making a total of seventy three participants for the study. Out of the seventy three participants, three did not return the questionnaire making only seventy valid participants with a participation rate of 95. 8 percent. The instruments used to gather statistics were the questionnaire framed from the five principles (building blocks) from which a question each was tied to each building block for participants to answer YES or NO. researcher also used an interview schedule for two policy officers (regional and divisional delegate) to respond to one questions. Statistics were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) specifically frequencies, tables and percentages. Interview was analyzed using the content analysis procedure according to patton (1990).
### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Building block 1: participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do principals involve teachers, students, and non teaching staff in running schools?</td>
<td>Yes: 70, No: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Building block 2: strategic vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do principals always put in place a strategic vision as a guiding plan in running schools?</td>
<td>Yes: 2, No: 68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Building block 3: performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do principals always put in place strategies to be performant? For example strategies to give good GCE and BACC results?</td>
<td>Yes: 69, No: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Building block 4: accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do principals often show accountability to vice principals, teachers, non teaching staff?</td>
<td>Yes: 3, No: 67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Building block 5: transparency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do principals provide information on amounts received from government in running the school each school year?</td>
<td>Yes: 0, No: 70</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Tables 2, 4, and 5 (building blocks 2, 4, 5): findings from the questionnaire relating to hypothesis 1 that says principals do not use the five principles for good governance in their daily administrative tasks.

Results show that the principals do not use three out of the five principles (block 2: on strategic vision with a 97.4 percent NO response); (block 4: on accountability with a 95.7 percent NO response); and (block 5: on transparency with a 100 percent NO response).

Tables 1 and 3 (building blocks 1, and 3): findings show that two out of the five principles were used by principals; (block 1: on participation with a 100 percent YES response); and (block 3:
on performance with a 98.5 YES response)

Conclusively, results illustrates that principals partially use the five principles in their daily administrative tasks.

Findings from the interview relating to Hypothesis 2 that says policy makers can organize seminars or workshops for principals regarding how to use the principles. The regional delegate and divisional delegate all responded in favour of the hypothesis as follows:

Response by regional delegate regarding hypothesis 2 that says policy makers can organize seminars or workshops for principals regarding how to use the principles:

In responding, the regional delegate agreed with the point of organizing seminars and workshops and went further to say it can be an aspect of continuing education.

Response by divisional delegate regarding hypothesis 2 that says policy makers can organize seminars or workshops for principals regarding how to use the principles:

The divisional delegate on this issue asserted with organizing seminars and workshops and reiterated that seminars and workshops remain the ideal way of educating school leaders.

DISCUSSION

Maureen and Gunilla (2009), in their article to the world bank titled “Governance in Education: Raising Performance”. They insinuated that good governance in education systems promotes effective delivery of education services. In their analysis, appropriate standards, incentives, information and accountability, which induce high performance from public providers. Sound provider performance in turn, raises the level of education output, for example school retention and can contribute to improved outcomes for example improved student test scores. Maureen and Gunilla cited Ackerman (2005), who describe accountability as a proactive process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans and actions, their behavior and results, and are sanctioned accordingly. Accountability requires that public servants have clear responsibilities and are held answerable in exercising those responsibilities, and if they do not, face predetermined sanctions. Ackerman, explain that in education poor governance results in inefficiency in service provision, and in some cases no service at all. For effective service delivery, central public policymakers must have a set of objectives that are clear to lower levels of government, which then translate policy into viable programs that can be implemented by local government and service providers. For instance, (1) ministries of finance and parliaments set budget levels and broad education priorities; (2) ministries of education defines specific educational objectives and translate those objectives into education programs; and (3) depending on whether the education system is centralized or decentralized, central or local government implements by constructing schools, hiring teachers and so on. This process must contain appropriate incentives, performance information, and accountability mechanisms at each level of the education system if the desired performance standards are to be attained and sustained.

In Abdullahi (2019), good governance is a major factor in improving the quality of education. It is common knowledge that all those who have a take in the educational system know too well the crises facing the present day formal education. These issues include political instability in the country since its independence, shortage of funds, facilities such as classrooms, equipments, teaching materials and the likes, brain drain, youth population expansion, the rising cost of education, inadequate information, the politicization of education, shortage of education personnel, students unrest, and examination malpractice among others. Poor governance gives rise to many of the problems in the educational system of developing countries.

In 2019, the centre for educational research and innovation published a work by Claire Shewbridge and Florian Koster titled “ Strategic Education Governance: project plan and organizational framework” where they brought out six interrelated domains each identifying aspirational goals for effective governance :
Accountability: Domain pertains to organizing who renders an account to whom and for what an account is rendered, shaping incentives and disincentives for behavior.

Capacity: Domain pertains to ensuring decision makers, organizations and systems have the adequate resources and competencies to fulfill their roles and tasks.

Knowledge governance: Pertains to stimulating the production of relevant knowledge and promoting its use in decision-making.

Stakeholder involvement: Domain pertains to helping involve stakeholders throughout the policy process in policymaking and practice of governance, in turn building support and increasing relevance and suitability of policy for stakeholders.

Strategic thinking: Domain pertains to balancing short term priorities with long term perspectives in a context in which effective policy strategies emerge and evolve based on new information and system dynamics.

Whole-of-system perspective: Domain pertains to adopting perspectives reaching beyond individual realms of responsibility to coordinate across decision-makers governance levels and policies.

It is worth noting that despite the complexities of today’s education systems, it is still ministries that remain responsible for ensuring high-quality and equitable education. The Strategic Education Governance PROJECT seeks to support countries in this complex environment, helping authorities juggling the dynamism and complexities of today’s education systems at the same time as steering a clear course towards established goals.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing study we can conclude that good governance in education involve many stakeholders. School administrators, teachers, students, parents and the government enabled by the ministers and directors. The impacts of education investments in developing and transition countries are typically measured by inputs and outputs. Missing from the education agenda are measures of performance that reflect whether education systems are meeting their objectives; public resources are being used appropriately; and the priorities of governments are being implemented. Generally, good governance can serve as an entry point to raising institutional performance in the delivery of education services. Crucial to high performance are: enforcing participation, strategic vision, performance, accountability and transparency. Other indicators of good governance include: standards, information, and incentives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following constitute recommendations searched from research works and some reflected upon by researchers:

1. Policy makers and implementers should improve on the principle of transparency and accountability. This goes a long way to provide visibility in schools and open for adequate advise on how to handle some managerial/administrative lapses.

2. One of the difficulties we face in our day to day administrative and management of schools is the issue of corruption. Corruption breeds incompetence, mismanagement, disorder and above all poor running of schools. All stakeholders involved in the business of school should give a distance to this menace.

3. In all countries of the world nothing strives well when there is political disturbances. It institute fear and causes loss of good initiative and ideas to be delivered. All citizens should practice good citizenship in order to instill political stability and peace so that our school system can function effectively.

4. For soo many year now, many researchers in education have been recommending the effective training of school principals in a professional school. This is imperative because
one of the cause of poor governance in our educational system is the issue of untrained school administrators appointed to government schools. They lack various expert knowledge in school management and as a result run schools poorly.

5. These three principles (participation, strategic vision, and performance) need to be monitored in the school. Any administrator/manager with these principles in place must put in place a monitoring/evaluation mechanism to enable a clear understanding whether they are achieving the desired objectives.

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