TOWARDS FUNCTIONAL AND QUALITATIVE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA:

A Tribute to

DR. GEORGE AKUME
The Executive Governor of Benue State

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CHAPTER 35
APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO) TO ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS

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Introduction

Management is as old as when men began to live together. It is indeed an ancient activity in human endeavour. Management entails activities involving people and materials. It comes into play when two or more people are involved in shared activity. Management is crucial for maintaining and expanding the relevance, effectiveness and productivity of complex institutions such as government offices, business enterprise and educational or school systems. The survival of these organizations can be dependent upon many techniques among which is Management By Objectives (MBO) which is a practical approach to activities carried out in an organization.

Effective management of any organization requires efficient planning of programmes and implementation to meet its goals. The need to allocate and utilize available resources to achieve a determined goal is the primary focus of planner and administrators. The survival of an educational industry, in the midst of scarce resources, will depend on how well the available human and material resources are utilized.

Management By Objectives (MBO) is a technique that stresses

392
management by 'objectives' rather than by 'drive'. It is a technique where each manager (from the highest level to the lowest) and individuals in the organization have clear functions to perform to achieve specific objectives of the organization (Adeogun 1998). The focus of the paper is to evaluate the application of management by objective as a management technique in education.

MBO Defined

MBO implies Management By Objective. Nwankwo in Adeogun (1998:103), defined "MBO as a process whereby both the superior and subordinate workers in an organization jointly make work plans by identifying common goals and defining each individuals' major areas of responsibility in terms of the results expected of the enterprise". Udoji in Ngu (1994:45) sees "Management By Objectives as a process of identifying goals and objectives, defining managerial responsibility in terms of expected results, and measuring performance and achievement against those goals and objectives". Also, Mullins as quoted by Okwori (2003:3) defines "MBO as a process whereby the superior and subordinate managers of an organization jointly identify its common goals, define each individuals' major areas of responsibility in terms of results expected of him and these measures as guides for operating unit and assessing the contribution of each of its members". Deducing from these definitions, MBO can be seen as a technique that lays much emphasis on individual worker's role rather than on the managerial functions to achieve the objectives of an organization.

Application of MBO to administration of schools

The role of educational administrators or managers to the application of MBO cannot be overemphasized. This is because MBO takes time, effort and commitment from all the participants and requires that a clear view of direction be given by the organization for it to produce the desired effect. In educational setting, the superior managers (the principals) should educate
subordinate managers (the teachers) on the objectives, goal and targets. MBO advantages have led to the application of its philosophy or principles to the various areas of management including project management, financial management, personnel management and educational management to mention just a few.

MBO emphasized persuasion when there is resistance. This can be applied to education where there is resistance against change or innovations. Managers of education should employ avenues for appropriate persuasion. Persuasion if not properly used will lead to the failure of MBO. Odiorne in Nwachukwu (1988: 198) stressed that point when he said that "persuasion has given rise to the failure of many MBO's".

MBO involves the process where goal setting, action planning, self-control and periodic review are followed. In applying the process in institutions of learning, superior managers should organize learning activities, programmes etc following the process. The subordinate managers such as teaching staff should follow the process in preparation of lesson notes and teaching. MBO can be applied or integrated into the process of planning, programming, budgeting system and decision on the allocation of resources in the school. Some of the corporate planning and top level management decisions on long term objectives for the school can be achieved through the integration or application of MBO. MBO can also be applied in the school as a style of management. This is because MBO involves POSDOCRB-(Planning, organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting). It is applied to schools to enable subordinate managers (teachers) to accept responsibilities and make effective contributions to the school and the society.

For the purpose of this study the analyses of how MBO can be applied in the school situation are given in the following areas-planning Staffing, Budgeting, Delegating of duties and school farming activities.
APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO) TO ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS

Planning

The head master or principal can use MBO effectively in planning of activities for school. For instance MBO can be used in allocation of teaching loads. In doing this, the headmaster through his Dean of studies identifies subjects and contents for each class and allocate these accordingly to the available teachers. The teachers thereafter will be told to teach the contents within a period of time or term. The teachers are now given free hands to carry out their teaching within the framework of this allocation. The head master, dean and other supervisors go round to monitor the teachers' performances to ensure the teachers are teaching to meet their target. The teachers too conscious of the time frame ensure they teach the contents allocated to them to enable them meet their target at the appropriate time. In this way MBO can be said to unite and meet the goals and target of the school and at the same time those of the members of the staff. In supporting this practical approach of MBO, Nwachukwu (1988:80) summarized that, "it allows subordinates to help plan and control their own performance, which results in a stronger motivator to do the possible job".

Staffing

The principle of MBO can be used to get staff requirement for a school. For instance, in a school, the principal may set for himself objectives of meeting staff requirement for his school and this target is to be met within a period of six years. This has to be met gradually and the proposal is to ensure certain number of teachers are posted to his school from the state Teaching Service Board each year. Through requisition and lobbying the principal ensures he achieves his target of getting his staff requirement within the target period of six years. In doing this he is applying the principle of Management By Objectives. Thus MBO can help schools define their objectives at various levels and assist each school manager to define his own key results or key effective areas within the organizational framework. That is why Ngu (1994:45) feels by
MBO, "performance and achievement are measured against set objectives".

Budgeting

Management By Objective can as well be applied effectively in the process of budgeting for a school. In fact, budgets at any level take the principles of MBO. In school, the principals, based on the estimated available funds for a year can plan the school budget for a session using this management technique. The school principal identifies programme of activities for the session in form of problems. In order of priorities, the principal establishes his budget by allocating resources around the school activities stating clearly time frame within which such item of activities will be executed. Examples of things that may form items in the budget are student feeding, purchase of sports' facilities, instructional materials, textbooks, building, teaching aids, etc. After building these items into the school budget, the principal ensures their implementation within the school fiscal year. Thus budget plan, which has a characteristic feature of identifying problems and allocating of funds in order to solve such problems within a given period of time, is, in a way, an application of MBO.

Delegation of Duties

Management By Objective can be applied in the delegation of responsibilities in the school. The entire activities in the school are shared responsibilities of all staff of a school. The principal alone cannot carry all the duties in the school on his head alone. He has to share these responsibilities to his staff. In doing that, he can effectively apply MBO approach to solving these problems. This is by identifying the responsibilities and thereafter delegating these responsibilities to the staff based on experience and area of specialization. As MBO has time frame and appraisal feature, the principal should spell out clearly the time or day within which the staff should be able to finish his work allocated to them. Some of the areas of responsibilities the principal can effectively apply MBO are dean of discipline, assembly master,
form masters, dean of studies, library master, subject masters, games master, food master, counsellor, agric master, etc. The principal and his vice should ensure compliance through monitoring, supervising and coordinating of the work of those saddled with these responsibilities.

School farming Activities

The principal can apply MBO, technique in school farming activities to produce certain target of food crops for commercial purpose. Agricultural master can be given two farming seasons as a target period to produce certain number of bags of grains for commercial purpose for generating certain amount, say, N2.4 million, for school. The principal ensures that all necessary requirements to execute the farm are provided the agric master so as to avoid hitches. A lot of monitoring, supervising, directing, coordinating of various activities personnel, materials, work, etc are put into this kind of project to achieve its objectives. With the determination of objective and target to achieve it, this agricultural project makes a clear manifestation of application Management By Objective principle.

In view of the above, MBO is a good device for helping to obtain total commitment of all those in the systems to work together in order to achieve a common goal or objective which could have otherwise been very difficult.

It improves communication and inter-personal relationship. It encourages motivation to improve individual performance and achieve self-actualization since workers' motivation is a vital pre-requisite for successful utilization of the MBO technique.

MBO encourages democracy, freedom, flexibility and self-development in an organization. Okwori (2003) stressed that the most important feature of MBO is that objectives and targets are not imposed but established and agreed upon through participation of subordinates and superiors.

Finally, it is important to note that timing and appraisal are very important aspects of MBO and should be brought to the consciousness of the
workers in the organization because any result achieved outside the specified period of time will affect the entire MBO programme. For example, it will be against the principle of MBO to talk of achievement if it takes four weeks to teach a topic in science "Qualities of good water" that would have normally been taught in one week.

MBO as a management technique shows that performance evaluation is a universally accepted and practised principle or technique of management, both in the school or public and private sectors of any economy.

Shortcomings of MBO

Despite its various important, a lot of shortcomings can be associated with the use of MBO as a modern management technique. MBO has been likened to a modern form of scientific management whereby human beings are neglected at the expense of productivity.

One of the shortcomings of MBO is that it places too much emphasis on individual job definitions together with the management authority (i.e. placed too much emphasis on subordinate participating jointly with the superior in the management process).

It also neglects the facts that there might be conflict in the process of subordinate and superior managers trying to jointly identify common goals and targets. In supporting this shortcoming, Ngu (1994:45) said MBO has placed too much emphasis on the managerial functions at the expense of individual workers' role or contributions towards the achievement of the overall objectives'. Following Ngu's stand, Okwori (2003: 130) opined that, "MBO should not be applied simply as a pressure device by which management applies increasingly demanding targets which staff are expected to achieve".

MBO also is not applicable to jobs, which require high level of interpersonal relationship. Okwori (2003: 13) giving his criticism on the issue, stated that:

...It is not always easy to set specific targets or
APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO) TO ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS

figures for certain more senior jobs or where the work involves high degree of self established role prescriptions. The same might apply to jobs which require a high level of interpersonal relationship... confidential matters such as counseling.

The implementation of MBO requires a lot of skills, knowledge and time by both participants involved. Where these elements are lacking, the participants involved may neglect the difficult objectives and targets and opted to the objectives and targets that are easier to monitor. For example, the monitoring of science subjects and Mathematics are neglected by the teachers simply because they lack skill and knowledge in the areas where as history, geography, etc are closely monitored because teachers have fair knowledge of these subjects.

Conclusion

MBO has proved useful in helping in the often-avoided issue of clearly defining objectives and specifications. It has also helped in breaking down the bureaucratic structures, the impersonality, and lack of accountability that have plagued the educational institutions. It has ensured increased authority and autonomy to individual teachers in planning and executing their programmes, thus increasing the responsibility of teachers and administrators. It helps everyone to be involved in the process of planning and policy making and be accountable for the outcomes of the education enterprises. Finally, the MBO enhances good communication system, which is one of its essential ingredients. In view of the above MBO as a technique should occupy an important position for effective management technique of our contemporary schools.
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