MANAGING THREE APPROACHES TO ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY: IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The development of any nation is a function of Organizational Behaviour (OB) which is, in turn, influenced by the impact of individuals, groups and structure within the organization. OB encompasses the study of what people do and how they do it in an organization touching on employment related issues - job analysis with job specification and job description, productivity, individual performance and management matters. Three approaches to OB are identified which, if appropriately managed, would bring about effectiveness and sustainability in organizations. One of such approaches is Preventive Manager Behaviour (PMB). This addresses a situation where, because a manager lacks foresight to prevent a problem or nip it in the bud, the organization performs poorly. Another approach is Maintenance Manager Behaviour (MMB) which addresses a situation where, because a manager relaxed having attained a high productivity level, the organization starts going down. There is yet another approach - Remedial Manager Behaviour (RMB) which tries to cope with a situation where, because a problem has already taken place, production becomes very difficult or even uncertain. The three approaches have implications for educational management, effectiveness and sustainability

Keywords: Behaviour, Organization, Manager, Preventive, Maintenance, Remedial.

Introduction

The development of any nation is a function of organizational behaviour. It is so because the management of the resources of every nation is a function of the intra and inter-play of the various organizations which include corporate and non-corporate public and private bodies engaged in their different business activities.

The extent to which the business activities meet the respective set targets of the various bodies would suggest the nature as well as the effectiveness of organizational behaviour which they exhibit. This view is appreciably in line with general system theory which views all organizations as systems with a variety of

coordinated activities taking place within an organization (SashKin and Sashkin, 2004).

In Nigeria, organizations need to improve their behaviour for effectiveness and sustainability: Multi-million Naira industries and factories have crumbled; many have reached their peak of production but started falling and are at the brink of collapse; some educational institutions are epileptic and cannot stabilize their good academic and moral tone! Even in the wake of some antagonism managers do not seem to have the foresight to forestall their negative effects or nip them in the bud before they are deep – rooted. Worse still, many business organizations with high employment capacity but shut down for poor management are hardly thought of being rehabilitated or resuscitated, rather their structures and equipment are fast getting dilapidated. Hence today, dotted all over the country are poultry farms, cocoa processing factories, palm oil mills, iron and steel industries, glorified other mining industries, and an assortment of business organizations - all at varying stages of mal-function and dilapidation of structures and equipment. Therefore among other things, the following objectives will be addressed:

1. To place in simpler perspective the concept of Organizational Behaviour.
2. To provide avenues for domesticating the three approaches to Organization Behaviour.
3. To give hope to Nigerian managers especially educational managers by introducing them to the three approaches.

Obviously, the vexed issues so far highlighted are essentially attitudinal and therefore are within the purview of organizational behaviour. Hence the paper is approached in addition to introduction, under the following sub-headings:

- Conceptualizing organizational behaviour
- Three approaches to organizational behaviour
- Preventive manager behaviour .
- Maintenance manager behaviour and
- Remedial manager behaviour
- Implication for Educational management
- Summary and conclusion

Conceptualizing Organizational Behaviour

An expert view of organizational Behaviour (OB) is that OB is a field of study that investigates the impact which individuals, groups and structures have on behaviour within an organization for the important purpose of applying such knowledge gained toward improving the organizations effectiveness (Robbins, 2003). Summing up the definition, central to OB is what people do in an organization and how what they do (their behaviour) affects the performance of the organization, positively or negatively.

Analytically, OB encompasses the study of what people do and how they do it in an organization. It is concerned with employment-related issues; hence organizational concerns such as job analysis, job specification, Job description, work, absenteeism, turnover, productivity, individual performance and management matters are considered germane.

Furthermore, while debate is on regarding the relative importance of the inclusion of some components of the subject area of OB, there appears to be consensus on aspects such as motivation, leader behaviour and power, interpersonal communication, group structure and process, learning, attitude development and perception, change process, conflict, work design and work stress (Garcia and Keleman, 1989; Health and Sitkin, 2001).

Also considered within the embrace of OB are behaviour as a function of the person and what situation, that is, the context: the nature of the situation in addition to "understanding" and examining the relationship between means and ends which Sashkin and Sashkin (2004) credit to Weber. It is essential to note that the morality behind achieving ends with means should be of utmost consideration in OB especially in most Nigerian Organizations where grabbing attitude reigns supreme.

Also worthy of consideration in appreciating OB, especially in the Nigerian context, are attitude towards the use of organizational properties especially public properties and what the SERVICON BOOK (2007) calls "Critical Elements" in "Service Delivery" which include standards and practices/ performances, reception experience, complaints and grievance redress, information, customer feedback, transparency, efficiency, et cetera. Also from the Nigerian perspective OB should be expanded to include other aspects of SERVICOM---- Service Compact with All Nigerians namely:

Conviction that Nigerians can only realize full potential if citizens receive prompt and efficient service from the State.

Renewal of commitment to the service of the Nigerian Nation.

Consideration for the needs and rights of all Nigerians to enjoy social and economic advancement.

Avowal to deliver quality services based upon the needs of citizen.

Dedication to providing the basic services to which each citizen is entitled in a timely, fair, honest, effective and transparent manner. From these considerations, conclusion can be drawn to the fact that the concept of OB, with particular reference to the Nigerian situation, attempts to capture a plethora of human attributes which should gear towards making, not marring an organization.

Before highlighting the three selected approaches for discussion here, it is necessary to note that the hallmark of bothering about OB is effectiveness and

sustainability of whatever organization under consideration, be it education or otherwise. If our organizations were effective and sustaining one might not see the need to irk out approaches for their effectiveness and sustainability. But what is organization effectiveness?

When an organization achieves the goal(s) for which it is established, then it can be described as effective. Hence effectiveness is defined in terms of the group's output, morale and the satisfaction of its members (Stogdill, 1975; Bass, 1960). Hoy and Miskel (1978:181) express a similar view of effectiveness by saying that "leadership effectiveness… has an objective dimension- accomplishment of organizational goals – and a subjective dimension – perceptual evaluation of significant reference". The perceptual evaluations, according to them, include opinions held or judgments made by subordinates, peers and superiors. Therefore organizational effectiveness can be regarded as the extent to which the goal set by the organization is achieved (Njoku, 2001). It is necessary to note that the goal is in consonance with the mandate of the organization and the "subjective dimension-perceptual evaluations" made by subordinates, and others. Having appreciated the concept of effectiveness, it stands to reason to place in proper perspective the concept of sustainability.

Sustainability in its own case is the stabilization of effectiveness. When the goal of an organization is achieved it is of much significance that it be sustained – kept going in the desired direction. This requires a special behaviour package to maintain the status quo and the tempo of performance. Sustainability is the live wire of organizational survival once production has been optimally maximized-high profit margin, excellent service delivery, excellent academic performance, in respect of schools, high moral standards, high tone, et cetera.
Sustaining these good qualities requires special management ingredients that should be plugged into the organization.

Management in the title of this paper requires contextual clarification because it is often erroneously regarded as leadership. Management and leadership are related but not the same.
Aptly put, management is putting resources - personnel (manpower), equipment and facilities, finance, time, and even motivation - to effective use. When leadership is mentioned, it carries the connotation of followership backing it up. Hence leaders create a vision in such a compelling way that followers "sign on" to help attain the leader's vision (Sashkin and Sashkin,2004). While a good leader may not be a good manager, a good manager may not be a good leader. But the two can be found in one person; where this is so, the organization (in which the leader-manager is operating) reigns supreme.

The Three Management Approaches To Organizational Behaviour
Whether production in an organization is tangible or intangible, the hallmark is service delivery which is a function of behaviour in respect of the individual,

groups(s) and structure. The intra- and inter-play of these three components have often given rise to three situations in an organization:

1. A situation where, because the manager lacks foresight to prevent a problem, the organization performs poorly.
2. A situation where, because the manager relaxed having attained high productivity, the organization starts going down.
3. A situation where, because a problem has already taken place, production becomes difficult/uncertain.

The three situations described have given rise to three management approaches to organizational behaviour which are discussed as follows:

Preventive Manger Behaviour (PMB)

The principle of PMB is in line with the common saying: "Prevention is better than cure". It insists that all measures to prevent any hitches emanating from individuals, groups or the structure of the organization be put in place; and should there be any, it should be detected and reported promptly. In other words, the early signs of an unhealthy situation in the organization should be detected, reported and nipped in the bud.

Unfortunately, in most of our organizations, including educational organizations , materials and equipment are hardly serviced to avoid breakdown; little pot holes on our roads are often allowed to develop into gullies; labour issues that might degenerate into protracted strike actions are not promptly addressed; students are not thoroughly nurtured and prepared for examination hence they resort to unprecedented examination malpractices; wearing parts of machines, gadgets and structures are not addressed early enough hence our government premises are littered with unserviceable machines, gadgets and structures.

PMB therefore emphasizes among others:

- Adequate provision of appropriate work materials
- Supervised delegated duties
- Regular monitoring and reporting of performance and constraints or circumstances beyond the control of the service provider or schedule officer which is likely to limit performance in the short term (www.servenigeria.com., 2007).

Because an organization is a system with sub-stems it behooves the manager to put in place structures and mechanisms to ensure the various units of each sub-systems comply with the principles of PMB. PMB says: A stitch in time saves nine assuming they are ten.

Maintenance Manager Behaviour (MMB)

MMB asks the question: If the organization is performing, what does the manager do to ensure sustainability?   In order words, what measures can the

manager take to sustain the good tempo so heralded such that performance does not drop? The manager should note that it is easy to destroy but difficult to build. He /She should know that of all resources human beings are the most difficult to manage and control. Conflicts of different types are typically inimical to good organizational performance as they reduce effectiveness of the organization (Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu, 1992). Effective communication is a maintenance manager behaviour. Communicating is the transmission of attitudes, feelings, insights, and facts to others (about the organization) with the aim of influencing or modifying their behaviour (Sisk, 1973).

Declaration of employee bonus at the peak of performance is another maintenance manager behaviour. Other types of motivational incentives declared and offered employees at this time would discourage any obnoxious behaviour within the organization to an appreciable extent.

Ensuring constant quality control mechanism are in place and steadily checked is an indispensable integral aspect of MMB. This, however, varies with types of organization. A school organization is different from a business organization such as one that bottles drinks. Yet they must ensure that constant quality control mechanisms are in place.

Accountability by units or sub-systems of the organization needs to be ensured with members made aware of expectations of management with the accompanying reward(s). Hence Robbins (2003) lays emphasis on special motivation packages such as recognition of individual differences; employee participation in decisions that affect them; linking reward to performance; checking the system for equity and using goals and feedback. Above all, there should be a track record of performance unit by unit or sub-system by sub-system.

Remedial Manager Behaviour (RMB)

RBM operates a restoration agenda resting on the fact that what is mismanaged by man can be reactivated. Instances abound: That there is global food shortage does not imply that this has become a permanent situation in-so-far – as there is no natural disaster. That once booming shoe factories, poultry farms, cement factories and, of course, a school that has been recording excellent performance, and similar organizations which are now grounded cannot just be written off as irremediable.

In remedying the situation, management could employ situation analysis and not to shy away from the challenge. One of such analytical tools is SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is a tool for analyzing a system and its functioning in an environment. It provides information that is helpful in matching the systems resources and capacities to the competitive and dynamic environment in which it operates.

SWOT analysis is not in itself a problem solver but rather an instrument in problem identification and strategy formulation (UNESCO, 2006). In the acronym SWOT, 'S' stands for "Strengths", 'W' stands for "Weaknesses", 'O'   stands for

Opportunities" while 'T' stands for "Threats". Strengths and weakness are internal factors, while opportunities and threats are external to the system. The manager therefore capitalizes on the strengths and takes advantage of the opportunities; in turn he converts the weakness into strengths and plays down on the threats as much as possible. It is essential to note that the approach demands endurance, steadfastness, and a collaborative strategic planning to manage the subjective tool, SWOT.

Implication of the Three Approaches to OB for Educational Management
Although to the not-well-informed, saying that the Nigerian educational system is epileptic may seem over-flogging the issue, yet it is no gain-saying the fact. Granted that efforts are being made by putting structures in place, to strengthen the system, there is a lot more to be done. Guided by the three approaches to organizational behaviour there are implications for educational management.

Njoku (2007) outlines instances of preventive management behaviour which are disciplinary measures to arrest the Nigerian school child: Ensuring adequate provision of school materials; ensuring regular school attendance of the school child; effective supervision, and monitoring and reporting of teaching and learning with adequate record-keeping for reference. These measures and more, other things being equal, would go a long way to prevent examination malpractice or, at least, keep it at a low ebb as long as the school child's good moral foundation is complemented by the school. But the reverse will be the obvious case if an unkempt child is in a school without protective devices: classrooms with broken and dusty floors without adequate furniture, door and window shutters and teaching learning materials in short supply et cetera The teacher who is not happy with the irritating school environment will not be expected to perform a miracle to produce a good end-result. For success in any venture the preliminary and basic issues must be addressed. This is the import of Preventive Management Behaviour.

Maintenance Manager Behaviour needs application in the Nigerian education industry. Many educational institutions have suffered abrasions of enviable status quo. At the tertiary level, for instance, each of the first generation universities was known for its excellence, at least, in one of the following disciplines: engineering, law, education and medicine. Some go extra mile to offer enviable business and community services – producing agricultural products including meat, egg, grains and roots, bread, et cetera - feeding the university community and their neighborhoods. At the secondary level, schools' names were synonymous with the knowledge and skill areas in which they excelled- academic excellence, sports generally, football in particular, general discipline and good tone. The magic for such long term success was Maintenance Manager Behaviour (MMB). Continuity, commitment to duty, congruency of goals (staff goal and school goal were the same), leader regarding himself or herself as a servant not a lord, self discipline, recognition of special talents and recognition of constituted authority characterized

the system and brought about stability and sustainability of excellent performance. In this respect, cultural revival is welcome.

Remedial Manager Behaviour (RMB) would re-examine the three major components of organizational behaviour in respect of education namely: the individual, group(s) and structure. To resuscitate any ailing school or other ailing educational organizations therefore, the staff- teaching and non-teaching, - pupils/students, all, both individually and as a group, and the structure of the school or the particular educational organization should be subjected to situation analysis. Fortunately, SWOT analysis has been found suitable to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats each of which should be subjected to appropriate treatment for its relative advantage(s). Every system is operated by human beings, even where they (human beings) have changed, their good qualities can be retrieved through the process of behaviour modification.

Summary

For effective management of organizational behvaiour, the characteristic features of its three components – individuals, groups(s) and structure should be considered. The extent to which these determinants are managed to achieve the desired goal reflects organizational effectiveness. Three approaches to managing organizational behaviour have been discussed in respect of the Nigerian situation for effectiveness and sustainability. The first approach is Preventive Manager Behvaiour so called because it is very cost effective to detect a problem early enough and nip it in the bud. The second is Maintenance Manager Behaviour which, among other things, involves encouraging the heart and modeling the way to maintain the high tempo when the organization is excelling. The third approach is Remedial Manager Behaviour which employs remedial strategies to resuscitate an ailing organization. These three approaches have implications for educational management.

Conclusion

Adequate preparation for school work and early detection of problems and terminating same forestall further damage. Enviable status quo of educational institutions, including universities and secondary schools should be sustained; even when these institutions suffer set-backs in their performance, SWOT analysis could be employed to obtain a profile for remediation.

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