

Challenges to Change and Innovation in Educational System

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Abstract— *The study was designed to identify the challenges to change and innovation in educational system in Nigeria. Educational institutions, like all other organizations, require constant monitoring, to identify areas for potential improvement. However, educational reforms are often not well-implemented. This results in massive wastage of finances, human resources, and lost potential. Educational institutions are organised on many levels, from the individual classroom under the management of a single teacher, to groups of classrooms supervised by a Head Teacher or Executive Teacher, to a whole-school structure, under the guidance of the principal. Therefore, there is need for changes and innovation in our educational system since we are in the era of computer age. In doing so, this paper examined the psychology of change, concept of change and innovation with suggested view points. Educational administrators and individuals should be ready to have the challenge of monitoring changes in technologies. Educational planners/policy makers should be encouraged to involve in change process.*

Keywords— *Innovation, Challenges, Change, Education and System*

I. INTRODUCTION

This change is inevitable in any organisation. The question of whether change will occur is no longer relevant. Instead, the issue is how managers and leaders do cope with the inevitable damage of change that confronted them daily in attempting to keep their organisation viable and current? Although, change is fact of life, however, both profit and non-profit organizations operate in a dynamic environment which implies change-. An organisation that fails to recognize the inevitability of change is doomed for failure. The manager that succeeds is one that is constantly adapting the direction and operation of his enterprise to changes in technological, social, political and economic environment in which it operates.

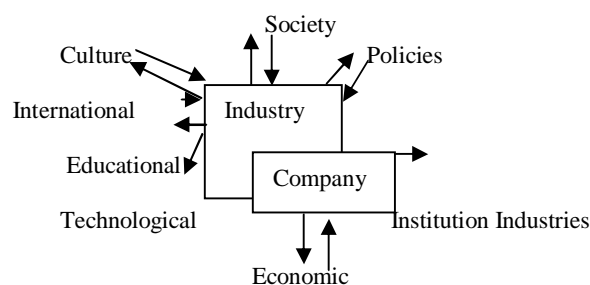
Oyedemi (1999) defined change as making something different in one or more ways but not really the activity of converting to something wholly new. It also implies that between time I and time II some noticeable alterations have taken place e.g. in or students' attitudes.

Usually when we think about change we focus on the need to create a vision and strategy for the change. Change does not occur by following a well defined path, rather it is a laborious journey on hands and knees towards an elusive goal with many things and missed opportunities. Only rarely do's an organisation know exactly where it is going and how to get there. However, no matter how much thought has gone into the change effort, there will be unforeseen external, uncontrollable and powerful forces that will have a profound impact on the success of the effort. For an organisation to grow and prosper, it must monitor change in the following:

- 1) Manpower Function:- Participation rate, change in the composition of labour force, skill availability role of labour unions.
- 2) Government policies dealing with such issuer as minimizing wage, labour relations, air pollution, taxes, import restrictions, and possibility of military takeover or war.
- 3) Economic change such as total production, increase in competition and price changes, total national income and income distribution and

Technological-break through that could render company product obsolete e.g. the use of computers that have revolutionized record keepings, inventory, clerical jobs, medical diagnosis, traffic control, telephone operation and mail delivery. For example, uses of computer have altered the way schools operate. Computer based resources unit helps the teacher to make decisions in his complicated planning tasks. It helps- in decision making about classroom objectives, subject matter contents, instructional activities and materials and evaluation methods.

Figure 1.1 shows the factors in the environment bringing about changes.



II. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHANGE

Attitudes change result from a complex interplay of emotions and cognitive processes. Because of this complexity everyone reacts to change differently. On the positive side, change is seen as akin to opportunity, rejuvenation, progress, innovation a violent and growth. But just as legitimately, change can also be seen as akin to instability, unpredictable, threat, and disorientation. Whether employees perceive change with fear, anxiety, and demoralization or with excitement and confidence, or somewhere in between, depend partially on the specific nature of the change.

In examining change, Kunt described change as a three-phased process, the first stage he called "*unfreezing*" it involves overcoming i dismantling the existing "mind set." Defense mechanisms have to be bypassed In a second stage a *change occurs*. This is typically a period of confusion. We are aware that the old ways are being challenged but we do not have a clear picture of how to replace them yet. The third stage is called "*refreezing*." The new mind set is crystallizing and one's comfort level is returning to previous level.

However, an individual attitude toward a change tends to evolve as they become more familiar with it. The stages a person goes through can consist of: Apprehension, denial, anger, resentment depression, cognitive, dissonance, compliance, acceptance and internalization. It is management's job to create an environment in which people can go through these stages as quickly as possible and even skip some of them. Effective change management programmes are frequency sequential with early measures directed at overcoming the initial apprehension, denial, anger, and resentment, but gradually evolving into a programme that support compliance, acceptance and internalization.

Innovation is defined as "the process of making changes to something established by introducing something new." It applies to "...radical or incremental changes to products, processes or services." Over the years there have been many changes in the way education is designed and delivered in parts of the world.

Today, technology is a significant driver behind change, and sometimes plays an important role in innovations in educational design and delivery. There are immense possibilities for greater and wider-spread change with the use of present-day technological advancements, as well as with the implementation of innovative educational programs. The challenge is to ensure that innovation plays a constructive role in improving educational opportunities for billions of people who remain under-served in a rapidly developing world.

III. CONCEPT OF CHANGE ON EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Educational leaders are proposing systematic reforms requiring crucial change for schools to consider, in order to meet the ambitions "*gout 2000*" and other "*Explanatory Vision*" for education. There is need to establish some educational changes though it is time consuming. Educators ma\ be hesitant to meet the type of sweeping changes necessary for systematic *reforms*. An effective change does not come without adequate planning, vision, professional development, education measures and new institutional structures.

Furthermore, for systematic change to be effective, it is important to involve the stakeholders e.g. the curriculum planners, administrators, teachers' e. t c as discussed under the organization development. In decision making and change processes and to Look beyond pieces of the old to understand the relationship between them. With these awareness and improvement of others the change process begins. Often technology is a key component of educational reform, effort as well as learning. Though technology is a planning and implementation guide, designed to help reform and guide educators' systematic reform effort that include technology implementation and utilization.

In educational system leadership is the *key ingredient*. It is important at the school level for the principal school administrate to have a vision of what is possible through the use of technology and be able to work with others to achieve the vision. Without this vision, and translation of .vision into action lasting school improvement is almost impossible. For example, notice ability, the schools in which we are having the greater impact are the private schools with the strongest leaders who committed to helping their teachers and to use technology effectively.

Effective principal's school administers lead by example. They have a clear idea about how technology can support best practice instruction and assessment; they use technology effectively and participate actively in professional development opportunities. The leaders who expect to see technology use in the classroom but does not know how to use *E-mail* sends a mixed message. Effective leader also attend professional development session with their teaching staff.

In other words, let us consider a situation where use of computer was introduced in the school system for effective teaching and learning to take place but reverse was the case.

No matter how many computers are available or how much training teachers have had, there are still substantial who are "talking the talk" but not "walking the work."

When you consider the fact that microcomputers have been in schools for almost twenty years, and considering that most teachers have, participated in some type of professional development more way or the other. It is still surprising to see how many teachers there who do not use technology at all. We know and appreciate that there are variety of reasons, some of which we cannot do anything about, and others that we can do something about. For example, there are few research studies (MacroO 995) affirmed that some teachers have a natural privilegde towards using technologies in general and computers in particular, while others do not. And, like the general population, there are some teachers who



embrace changes while others resist it. On the other hand, there are some research-based practices and common sense strategies we can implement that enhance the like-hood that teacher will begin using technology.

a) Begin with teaching and learning, not with hardware and software

As technology oriented professional, we have tendency to frame professional development and technical assistance around technology tools, such as word processing and database. We tell teachers, "Now what you need to do is integrate word processing into your lesson plans which can work with motivated teachers, but not those who need a lot of support. In short teachers have a difficult time in applying technology skills in the classroom unless there is a direct linkage with the curriculum, teaching strategies, or improvement in achievements.

b) The training-of trainers' model means than providing a workshop for a view people and expecting them to train their colleagues on what they learn.

The training -of-trainers model for professional development might just be misunderstood or misinterpreted model in education. Quite often it is interpreted as one or two people delivering a workshop in which the participants are supposed to acquire the content knowledge and training skills needed tor conducting turn-around training. Unfortunately, the content is too complex to be mastered in a one-shot **workshop** and there is no follow-up accommodation for the **would-be trainers** become proficient, there is no support to turn-around training, or the would-be trainers are inexperienced trainers. For the model to work, all these barriers must be overcome.

c) It is a waste of time and energy lo provide technology training when teachers don't have the resources, opportunity and support to apply their new knowledge and skills.

It is a waste of time or absolutely no sense to provide training on technology applications when leaders do not have access to appropriate hardware and software However, some school leaders continue to follow the tradition of sending teachers to workshop when it is convenient rather than when it is logical.

IV. UNDERSTAND AND OVERCOME WHY SOME PEOPLE RESIST TO CHANGE

The most effective way to introduce¹ change is to identify the reasons why people resist change. Employees, irrespective of their position, educational background or experience, tend to react negatively to plunging info the unknown. However, the ability to understand and overcome resistance to change increases when one recognizes and avoids common misconceptions about change. Everyone involved in school reform-teachers, administrators, parents, students, district staff members, consultants, board members, state department officials, legislators, materials developers, publishers, test-makers, teacher, educators, researchers-has a personal map of how change proceeds. These constructs are often expressed in form of a preposition or statement

1. Resistance is inevitable, because people resist change.
2. "Every school is unique
3. "Schools are essentially conservative institutions, harder to change than organization.
4. "You just have to live reform one day at a time.
5. "You need a mission, objectives, and a series of tasks lay out well in advance.
6. "You can never please everyone, so just push ahead with reforms.
- 7, "Full participation of everyone involved in a change is essential

There are four essential conditions for adult learning in schools and communities therefore for educational change, the S-U-R-E approach lo the improvement process in schools are:

- Shared vision of the goals of learning, good teaching, and assessment;
- Understanding of the urgent need for change;
- Relationships based on manual and trust; and

UNDERSTANDING THE URGENT NEED FOR CHANGE

Why do we need change in the school? When you asked educational leaders-policy makers, superintendents, principals, and .school board members- How can teachers be motivated to change if leaders cannot clearly explain why it is important?

The description of the nation's educational problem that is offered by politicians and the media often hinders, rather than help, the change process. "Schools -are failing, "and the solution is education "reform," everyone tells educators. Teachers hear or read these words nearly every day.

SHARED VISION

For many leaders, d shared vision begins and ends with a school or district mission statement pinned to a bulletin board somewhere. However, as a tool in the change process, such statement virtually useless.

First, we need clarity about what are the few most important things students should know and be able to do- a short lost of expectations for all students which grows out of a new awareness of how the world has changed and of the essential skills needed for work and citizenship today. And then we need a deeper, shared understanding of the good teaching practices that can achieve those goats and of the performance-based assessments that best measure student progress. In

developing this more in explicit vision of academic goals, teaching methods, and assessments require a very different kind of process from just putting together another blue-ribbon committee to write a district mission statement.

V. TEN THINGS TO DO ABOUT RESISTANCE

Reviews of the relevant literature reveal numerous behaviours and actions that can help prevent or minimize resistance.

1. **Acknowledge change as a process-** Change is not an isolated event, but a series of stages that requires time. Remember that the process of change is lengthy and may take years from, goal-setting to stable in an establishment. Missteps and setbacks are common. Conflict and resistances are natural products of change, not automatic signs of failure.
2. **Empower stakeholder.** As critical components of innovation, stakeholders must be included as decision makers. If change means individual needs are met, negative behaviours and resistance are less likely. Empowering people means creating mechanisms that provide them with genuine authority and responsibility, or else change efforts will become incoherent. However, real or perceived shifts in power can spark resistance by colleagues, administrators, or board members. To minimize discord, the change process should be guided by negotiation, not by issuing of demands.
3. **Encourage all stakeholders.** Stakeholders must be active, invested participants throughout the change process. It is beneficial to focus directly on helping participants understand the innovation being tried. Providing a variety of opportunities- for both individuals and groups- to vent concerns also can be particularly effective. "Head" is fundamental in establishing understanding and consensus.
4. **Set concrete goals.** Agreed-upon goals should form a shared agenda reached by consensus, thus creating a board sense of ownership and strengthening communication among stakeholders. This step is critically important because if anything goes awry later in the change process, the stakeholders will be able to return to a shared agenda and refocus their talent and efforts.
5. **Show sensitivity.** Managing conflict means being aware of differences among individuals. Each stakeholder must genuinely feel he or she is an equal and valued party throughout the change process, not just in the initial trust-building stage. People need respect, sensitivity, and support as they struggle to redefine their roles and master new concepts.
6. **Model process skills-** Teaching through the appropriate process skills and actions is fundamental to successful staff development initiatives. Staff developers may find, for example, that reflecting publicly and straightforwardly on their own doubts and resistance to change may help others. At the very least, honesty goes a long way toward building credibility. When staff developers model desirable behaviour, they give other stakeholders a chance to identify with someone going through the difficult process of change.
7. **Develop strategies for dealing with emotions.** Often, educators concentrate on outcomes and neglect the emotional experiences— anxiety, fear, loss and grief-of change. Effective leader should include activities and strategies to address those emotions. Focus on such questions as: How will our lives be different with the change? How do we feel about the changes? Is there anything that can or should be done to honour the past before we move on?
8. **Manage conflict-** Change is a negotiated process. Stakeholders should be limited to negotiate on issues that provoke their resistance. For example, an assistant principal may need to negotiate the needs of the whole school with the staff members who rank their departmental priorities higher.
9. **Communicate-** Openness in communication is a necessary component of collaborative problem-solving. Communication that focuses on differences can move issues of concern out of the shadows. Another technique that increases communication is reflective questioning. The questioner tries to help stakeholders explore their thinking, feelings, needs, or attitudes. Such questions can include: where are we in the change process? What has changed so far? Where are we headed?
10. **Monitor process dynamics-** The constant interplay between the various tensions within the change must be monitored and appropriate adjustments must be made. Evaluation begins with the original assessment of the need and readiness to change in forms the scaffolding of the evaluation process an ongoing assessment of progress serve as checkpoints on the reform journey

The need for change

Both internal and external forces (Yee, 1998) drive the need for change. Referring to "change drivers", large scale forces that produce complex change, Swenson (1997) notes that "globalisation" of society has produced an imperative for continual reappraisal of practices in order to maintain a competitive edge. In educational terms, this may be interpreted as the need to update practices in keeping with the findings of international research, and to continually conform to national trends.

Internal to the school are the pressures brought to bear by curricular reform. Further, alterations in staff-student relationships from teacher-centred to student-centred create the need for modification of teaching practices, and policies and procedures to support more meaningful educational experiences.

The change process

Change management is the core activity in realizing organisational goals, whilst implementation is the practical or physical process of delivering an innovation. People and relationships are the major components to successful implementation, and support mechanisms are required to achieve an improvement in practices and procedures.

"Change" itself has undergone change in the description of various models. Whilst previous decades have witnessed the concepts of "Quality Circles", followed by "Total Quality Management", and most recently "Business Process Reengineering" (Honeywell Australia, 1999), the basic procedure for auctioning change has remained reasonably constant.

The identification of areas for improvement is the initial stage of the change process, followed by the generation of possible solutions to address issues so identified. Activity in these areas is independent of position in the organisation. These first two stages of the change process are possibly the most easily achieved.

Implementation of proposed innovations, the third stage of the change process, is the most complex and difficult to achieve. In the school context, this may be even more arduous than in other organizations. Fullan (1993, 46) notes that educational reforms are "hard to conceive and even harder to put into practice". The implementation of change is not linear (Carlopio 1998, 5), and must progress through various stages over time, with commitment from stakeholders that is achieved through shared decision-making, common vision, collaboration and the establishment of support structures.

Carlopio (ibid) notes that the implementation stage of change is itself constructed of four periods. The creation of "knowledge and awareness", the first step of implementation, is noted by Shields (1989, 41) as consisting of a further six "stages of concern". The second step in the implementation process is the establishment of facilitating structures, whilst the third is the complex simultaneous process engagement in persuasion, decision and commitment; Lastly, "rollout and fine tuning" complete the implementation of innovation.

Interestingly, a study on business decisions reported that the success rate of implementation (Wind & Maine, 1998) was only about 50%. The lowest rate of implementation was for the most successful practices, such as group problem solving, whilst the highest rate of implementation was for the least successful practices, such as issuing directives (Sauer, 1997).

It is self evident that the implementation stage of change must be followed by evaluation and reassessment, possibly with further amendments needed as issues of concern become identified. Honeywell Australia (1999) comments that change is "like fractal patterns", complex and iterative, with stakeholders making "thousands of incremental adjustments" in reaction to each of the stages noted above.

VI. MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE DEVELOPMENT

Change management is the process of **developing** a planned approach to change in an 'organization'. Typically the Objective is to maximize the collective benefits of all people involved the change and management the risk of failure of implementing the change, The discipline of change management deals primarily with the human aspect of change and is therefore, related to pure and industrial psychology proactive is of best management i.e. planning before execution.

Change management can either be 'reactive' in which case management is responding to change in the macro environment that is the source of change is external, or proactive in which case management is initiating the change in order to achieve a Goal, i.e. the source of the change is *internal* Change management is the process of developing a planned approach.

VII. LEVELS OF CHANGE

System

All organisations, including educational systems, have concerns that are addressed by attempts at organisational renewal. Productivity (class sizes, teaching periods per day), cost effectiveness (global budgeting was introduced in 1989 in NSW government schools), capital utilisation, market orientation (increasingly higher enrolments in non-government schools, together with an increasingly greater proportion of "out-of-area" enrolments, demonstrating that pupils are exercising their right of choice), organisational renewal and viability are primary of importance for all organisations.

Whole School

As individual schools have unique cultures, practices and traditions, it is self-evident that an individual tailoring that is context-specific is required. The leadership style of the administrator will to a large extent determine the types of change that are likely to occur, together with the ultimate success of their implementation and subsequent improvement to learning outcomes. Lincoln (1987, 16) states that a whole school approach is necessary, with the need for shared decision-making and collaborative practices being paramount.

At Classroom Level

Individual teachers and teacher librarians are in an ideal position to instigate innovative practices and processes. Whilst their "self-imposed isolation" (Smith & Scott, 1990) has numerous drawbacks, it does allow the freedom to experiment with innovation.

It may be hoped that by individuals taking risks by developing educational practices that embrace the concepts of information literate learning communities, gradual change to some of the barriers may occur, thereby laying the foundations for a whole school approach. Fullan et al (1990, 14) view this approach as a catalyst for innovation, linking



classroom practice to school improvement. While this is to be viewed as a long-term goal, the nature of change and the resistance to it makes this option a more pragmatic strategy.

However, innovation implies risk taking (Hirose, 1992). Current educational practices do not support unsuccessful outcomes (Santos, c1998). The nature of accountability in government schools determines to a large extent the school principal's response to suggestions of innovation at the local (school) level. However, these "unsuccessful experiments" are part of the learning process itself.

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