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School Management: Characteristics of Effective Principal

By Abdikadir Issa Farah
Atlantic International University, United States

Abstract- Research shows that managing school is like managing a state. So, the school principal must be politician, economist, psychologist and sociologist. Culture, ethnicity, gender and religion of the school population may diverse and customers of the school require satisfying their needs. This paper of characteristics of effective principal discusses how perfect school principals look like. There are nine selfassessment tips that principals can measure themselves. I derived these nine tips from the nine alphabet letters that the word principal consists of. Each alphabet letter of the common word given to school leader stands for good jobs required to be fulfilled by the principal. Principals will understand that their task is unique and require extra knowledge and standards to apply it. After reading books and articles wrote by different scholars, I noted that leadership and principalship and are unique task, that are not easy all people to engage in.

Keywords: *educational management, good leader, quality education, leadership, health management.*

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School Management: Characteristics of Effective Principal

Abdikadir Issa Farah

Abstract- Research shows that managing school is like managing a state. So, the school principal must be politician, economist, psychologist and sociologist. Culture, ethnicity, gender and religion of the school population may diverse and customers of the school require satisfying their needs. This paper of characteristics of effective principal discusses how perfect school principals look like. There are nine self-assessment tips that principals can measure themselves. I derived these nine tips from the nine alphabet letters that the word principal consists of. Each alphabet letter of the common word given to school leader stands for good jobs required to be fulfilled by the principal. Principals will understand that their task is unique and require extra knowledge and standards to apply it. After reading books and articles wrote by different scholars, I noted that leadership and principalship and are unique task, that are not easy all people to engage in.

The principal is the corner stone of the school and plays important role on development of education programs. I see that it is necessary to equip principals with knowledge and skills to interact multiple changes and complex task of managing human being. Schools are the mirror of the life and birthplace of human resource so leaders of schools must be familiar with management skills and leadership styles. The main objective of the schools is to produce creative leaners who will be leaders of tomorrow; hence principals must be role models that students and other people in the schools will learn from them.

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I. Introduction

The positive characteristics of good principal cannot be summarized into nine letters, but I thought that each letter of the word given to the school leader (principal) stands for unique task that can be measured of the quality of good school leader.

Leadership is a complex task and requires knowledge, experience and good skills. There is no generic definition of school principal but it concerns practices and operations of educational management. The field of educational management relates varying approaches and established disciplines including economics, general management, psychology, sociology and political science.

Good health management is expected to produce planned work done with the help of assigned people, within the allocated budget and within the given deadlines.

Author: Atlantic International University, United States
e-mail: diirshe39@yahoo.co.uk

Education institutions require management to plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate day to day activities to accomplish education goals through coordination education personnel and allocated budgets.

In this paper, I want to explain my understanding the positive characters of school principal and principal's role. I will discuss what each letter of the common noun (principal) given to the school leader stands for. This does not mean that there are agreed definitions assigned to each letter but is my innovative way that would suggest other scholars to add their thoughts.

II. Characteristics of Effective Principal

"A central part of being a great leader is cultivating leadership in others." [16]

Principal is the leader and manager of school but this task needs experience and knowledge to differ from others. In this paper I suggest to measure characteristics of perfect school principal the nine letters of the word "principal" comprises.

P- Plans school activities and provides guidelines- "Planning is defined as a process of setting objectives and determining what should be done to achieve them. It is a decision-making activity through which, managers act to ensure the future success and effectiveness of their institutions and departments as well as themselves".

Planning helps educational managers to anticipate problems and opportunities, to think forward and to contribute efficacy of other managerial functions. Thus, "planning is a role of effective principal to provide a basis for control in a school and set priorities to focus their emergencies on important things first. The effective principle also focuses the attention of the teachers on objectives that can give a performance oriented sense of direction to the school". [Priadi Surya 2011] "The process of educational management consists of three basic functions, namely planning, implementing and controlling. A manager uses these functions to achieve educational organization goals and objectives."

*R- Respects the wishes of the school population, replies their requirements and listens-*This means that the effective principal responds the enquiries of the school populations (i.e. teachers, students,

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parents and other staff of the school) and listens their complaints. This is the characteristics of Total Quality Management Organization and the relations of the school population will be positive when the customers are listened and provided their requirements. "The power of knowledge management, particularly when compared to other changed efforts, it that it maintains focus on people-on faculty, staff and students-and their needs" [6]

Indicates and commands school population and never dictates orders- One of the leadership traits is to lead people in the organization through recommendations. The perfect leader does not impose hard orders to the staff but gives them mentoring and advice and staffs are delightful all the time. Like this, effective principal provides instructions and directions to the school populations and invites them to participate in developing education programs. "Principals play a major role in developing a "professional community" of teachers who guide one another in improving instruction."[16]

N- Networks to the school population and makes timely contacts- The effective principal has networking skills and makes early contacts with the school population. She/he is not passive but is proactive and aware what is going internal and external of the schools. "Co-ordination is the process whereby two or more people/organisations work together to deal collectively with a shared task. The responsibility for co-ordination may be assigned to a single individual or a team/group of individuals, in consultation with all the parties concerned. Co-ordination would the major responsibility of a project coordinator, heading a project team."[3]

C- Consults with school population and conducts constructive changes- The perfect principal consults with the people in the school and initiates constructive changes. He or She accepts the suggestions and good ideas from people, creates atmosphere that letting all participate in school development. "Paternalistic form is where the manager makes decisions in the best interests of the employees rather than the organization. The manager explains most decisions to the team members and ensures that their social and leisure needs are always met. This can help balance out the lack of staff motivation caused by an autocratic management style.

Feedback is again generally downward; however feedback to the management will occur in order for the employees to be kept happy. This style can be highly advantageous, and can engender loyalty from the employees, leading to a lower staff turnover, thanks to the Management Structures emphasis on social needs."[10]

Instructs school population and accepts new ideas-The effective principal instructs people and accepts their ideas. He or She makes appropriate transformations and information that enable school people to achieve assignments required.

P- Participates in school activities and encourages teamwork- The effective principal participates in school activities and encourages team work. She or He does not make decisions alone but asks people what to do, how to do, when to do and approves their suggestions. "One or more processes in which an individual or group takes part in specific decision-making and action, and over which they may exercise specific controls. It refers specifically to processes in which primary stakeholders take an active part in planning and decision-making, implementation, learning and evaluation. This often has the intention of sharing control over the resources generated and responsibility for their future use." [13] "Team members have the experience and creative thinking that will be needed to ensure attainment of each deliverable."[15]

A- Attracts school population and motivates them to learn and teach hard- The effective principal attracts school population and motivates them to learn and teach hard. He or She motivates slow learners and rewards hard working and talented ones." A positive school culture is the underlying reason why the other components of successful schools were able to flourish. For example, one principal seeking ways to increase reading comprehension asked for and valued teacher suggestions. As a result, suggestions were developed into action plans that were then implemented. Because the principal valued the expertise of the teachers and allowed the latitude to try new approaches, an unbroken cycle of continuous improvement was observed in the building. The culture was one where the teachers felt their opinions mattered and felt comfortable enough to take risks and try new methods. Therefore, the positive culture the principal created enabled continuous improvement to occur." [14]

L- Leads school population to the right direction and learns from them-The effective principal leads school to the right direction and learns from other people. He or She follows planned steps and considers feedback from external and internal of the school to make supporting modifications and necessary changes. School principal is the manager of school programs, and interact directly with other stakeholders of school. [Marcus D. Ingle, 2009] "Communication between the manager and other stakeholders must flow in both directions. The manager should know, and be an active participant,wherever feasible, in establishing why the project is being undertaken."

III. General Discussion and Analysis

Findings of my research show that school principal contacts more people than any other person. The school principal has relations with parents, teachers, students, and non-teaching staff in the school,

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education management and peer teachers. The school principal solves school problems, manages school programs, helps teachers, students and other customers of the school and sets roadmap for the school activities.

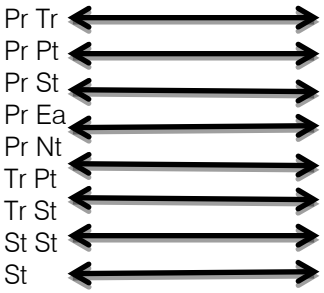


Figure 1.1 : shows relations of school population where Pr stands for principal, Pt stands for parents, Ea stands for education authority, Tr stands for teacher, Nt stands for non-teaching staff and St stands for student.



Figure 1.2 : shows position that each alphabet letter of the word principal represent for

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