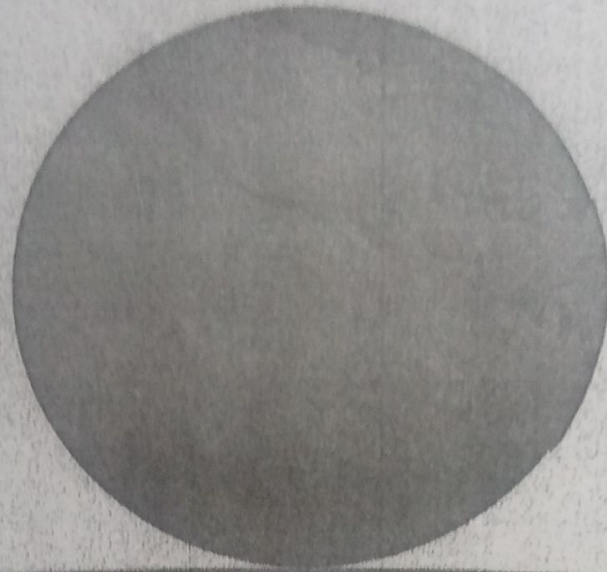


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Editor-in-chief

Peter Okenyi Ph.D
45 Terhune Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305
USA
Email: peterokenyi@isecgroup.com

Nigeria Contact

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FRUSTRATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

TIJANI, A.A. PhD

Department of Educational Management,
University Of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria

Abstract

This paper examines frustration and its implication to school administrators. The school managers are expected to assign tasks to both teaching and non-teaching staff in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. In doing this, there is a tendency for frustration to arise. As the school administrators may be frustrated, so also the staff may experience frustration in the performance of their duties. It is in this regard that this paper appraises the concept of frustration, types of frustration, and finally the frustration in the school system and its implication to school administrators. The paper concludes that school managers must understand different issues that generate frustration situations and must be able to manage frustration effectively so as to attain school goals and objectives. In addition to putting situational leadership theory into use, the paper as well recommends that school managers should pay attention to the needs of all staff as a way of reducing tension in schools.

Introduction

Man is a unique being. Human beings are highly complex and their behavior is rather dynamic and unpredictable. This unique nature arises from deep seated interests and needs of individuals. Management's role is to identify and activate employees' needs to perform assigned tasks so as to reduce

frustration in an organization (Tijani, 2001). The educational system consists of several people with different values, norms, backgrounds, characters and behaviors. The understanding of all these variables is important for effective management of frustration in our educational system.

Man as an emotional being is capable of experiencing and expressing feelings (with the exception of those who are emotionless, a pathological disorder). Emotional feelings of human behavior and actions are products of nature (pathological) and nurture (environment or cultural). As a result of this, man is faced with many challenges of tension in his quest to achieve his desires. Between our present position and the desirable future state, there may exist obstacles and mountains to scale. Sometimes the obstacle is easy to surmount and we get what we want and get fulfillment and satisfaction and are thus filled with the air of great accomplishments. At some other times, we come across a little obstacle which may stand to resist us and defy our operational strategy of goal accomplishment. Feelings of dissatisfaction and unfulfilment may trigger some behaviors and actions in man that would require understanding and attention. When this scenario occurs, people talk and express their feelings as "we are frustrated" or we are "hindered or resisted".

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, frustration has become a common phenomenon and a disturbing issue in the school system. There are complaints of frustration among academic and non-academic staff and even among students. The causes and management of conflict have been examined with little emphasis on frustration in the school system and its attendant management implications. It is this vacuum that this paper tends to fill by focusing on frustration and its implication to school administrators.

What is Frustration?

Frustration is an emotion that occurs in situations where one is blocked from reaching a personal goal. The more important the goal, the greater the frustration. It is comparable to anger. Frustration can simply be considered as disturbance or resistance that arises to thwart the efforts of a person or organization from reaching or achieving personal goal(s) or desire(s). It is unanticipated, unplanned or unwarranted interference or nuisance that constitutes a clog in the wheel of achieving goal-directed objectives of an individual or organization. It can be linked to a sudden break failure or bridge cutting that prevents ongoing movement from where we are to where we intend to be (Oladipupo, 2007).

What seems discernible from the forgoing literature is that frustration is a disruption of the emotional stability of the individual that induces a state of disorganization in personality and behavior, hence thwarting the attainment of personal goals. Inability to achieve one's desire may result from either the inability to possess what it takes to achieve the goal or some supervening event may occur which may hinder the efforts of the individual or organization and make it impossible to achieve individual or collective goals and objectives. In short, frustration may occur when the means to achieve certain goals are blocked.

Types of Frustration

Frustration may be internal or external. Internal sources of frustration involve personal deficiencies such as a lack of confidence or fear of social situations that may prevent one from reaching a goal. Goals conflict can also be an internal source of frustration when one has competing goals that interfere with one another. Frustration from this standpoint could be described as unfulfilled goals or motives which may arise when an individual is faced either with diverse ways of achieving the goal or is faced with a plethora of goals most of which are incongruent owing to lack of adequate resources (time, money, skills, qualifications etc.). This

will eventually bring about making a choice. Whichever goal is chosen will bring about an opportunity cost. This is the reality of life arising from laws of society, preferences and choices. The problem of choice may therefore predispose a man to frustration when goal is unfulfilled.

External Sources of Frustration

This may manifest in the obstacles that present themselves to an individual in his effort to achieve a goal. These obstacles are external sources of frustration to man and may be present in the environment or organization where man operates. Lack of things required or presence of things not required to achieving one's goals either in the physical or social environment that an individual finds himself may predispose him to frustration. Thus to overcome this frustrating situations, whatever is lacking must be provided and whatever is obnoxiously present to hinder must be removed or scaled over otherwise the individual may continue to experience frustration. Such external sources of frustration may include road blocks, lack of money or lack of sexual activity.

Frustration in the School System

There exists an array of challenges or problems that could predispose to resisting and hindering the attainment of personal goals and that of the school system. Frustration in schools may include factors like lack of instructional resources, uncooperative attitude of some members of staff, conflict among staff or students, lack of concern by school leaders, unmanageable student population, obnoxious policies, too much demands on an individual staff particularly when such individual is taking care of both the conjugal and nuptial families, corruption, unpatriotic attitudes of political elites, absence of motivation and stress. Other factors include the physical environment of the schools, poor interpersonal relationships among staff, students and the administration, and government interference in the school administration. These challenges will be examined in relation to

how they constitute clogs in the wheel of progress of school management.

Shortage of Instructional Resources

The inadequate supply of vital materials such as diaries, school attendance registers, chalks, dusters, blackboards, benches and tables amongst others could predispose teachers to frustration and therefore school objectives may not be achieved.

Uncooperative Attitude of Some Members of Staff (Academic and Non-Academic)

It is a common occurrence in some schools to observe some staff members not willing to perform their desk functions. Hence lesson notes are hardly written, school attendance registers not marked as at when due, they rarely go to classes to teach and may not attend staff meetings, etc. These unwholesome behaviours could lead to frustration to school heads and at the end of the day, school objectives may not be realized.

Unmanageable and Explosive Students Population

All educational resources and facilities are in acute short supply except student enrolment (Nwadiani, 2006). This scenario cuts across all levels of education be it primary, secondary or tertiary. For example, during the 2000/2001 and 2002/2003 academic session, the students population of the University of Benin was 20,364 and 24,914 respectively (University of Benin, 2004). Similarly, students enrolment in Kwara State public secondary schools in 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 were 173,352 and 182,448 respectively (Tijani, 2011). Thus matching increasing student population vis-à-vis inadequate facilities and resources could predispose school administrators to frustration.

Conflict

Conflict connotes a product of disagreement between or among individuals or groups in an organization over allocation and distribution of resources which are relatively scarce relative to the demand for them (Emhabekhai, 2001). This form of rivalry among individuals or groups may create negative emotions. Such can only become noticeable when incidents that manifest these negative reactions begin to appear in the relationship between individuals and among groups. In acrimonious situations like this, frustration could set in and attainment of school goal may be thwarted.

Poor Management

Where school leadership sees workers first as workmen before perceiving them as humans with varying needs and aspirations, it may lead to frustration. This is because such school administrators are likely to be strong believers of the scientific management theory and see human relation theory as secondary and would thus create stressful conditions for their staff which in turn leads to frustration. Hence in some schools, while some teachers may be overloaded with more teaching periods, others may have little or nothing to do. School leadership that stress teachers in the attainment of nomothetic goals at the expense of idiographic need of staff may sooner than later find resistance from such teachers. This may hinder the attainment of corporate goals of the school. A balance between initiating structures and maintaining consideration, that is, being transactional ought to be the best style of leadership.

Poor Funding of Schools

This could also cause frustration in our school system. There is unbridled increase in the number of schools and student enrolment without corresponding increase in revenue allocation to them. Using the universities as an example, Asobie cited in Emhabekhai (2001) showed that in Nigeria, there are consistently

significant shortfalls between approved recurrent and capital expenditure and what is actually released by government to universities. The author cited the following examples:

For recurrent grant in 1994, the shortfall was N900, 000.00; in 1995, N335,864,042; in 1996, N27,582,981. While for capital grants in 1993, there was a shortfall of N200,700,000.00; in 1994, N198,404,650.00 and in 1996, N59,999,000.00.

Poor funding is usually one of the main reasons given by the Academic Staff Union of Nigeria University (ASUU) for going on strike. Thus where funds are inadequate vis-à-vis the myriad of school activities to be prosecuted, frustration could set in as the corporate purpose may not be actualized or is thwarted.

Interference from Government

School leadership most especially at the primary and secondary levels are usually not given free hands in the determination of the financial, manpower and curricular needs of schools. Rather decisions on these key areas are centralized either in the Ministries of Education or state education boards. It can only be imagined what the plight of school administrators with this kind of arrangement will be. This kind interference among others could result to frustration.

Poor Physical Facilities in Schools

Most schools are lacking infrastructural facilities such as school laboratories, libraries, lecture theatres/classrooms, etc. and even where available, they are virtually empty of the required number of furniture items as well as up-to-date textbooks and journals in the libraries. Laboratories are virtually empty with little or no chemicals and other reagents to prosecute the teaching/learning needs of the schools. This kind of poor situation could predispose school leadership, teachers and students to frustration as personal and corporate goals of the school may not be readily achieved.

Implications of Frustration to School Administrators

The school as a social system is populated by students and staff (academic and non-academic) from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. These critical actors in the school system have different emotions, needs, expectations, etc. which school leadership must understand and appreciate. Thus to overcome this problem, whatever is lacking must be provided and whatever is obnoxiously present to hinder progress must be removed if frustration will not be allowed to set in. For instance, job enrichment (which creates opportunities for achievement, recognition, promotion, etc.) should take precedence over job enlargement (meaningless tasks that bear no relevance to these). A good understanding and management of pupil-personnel functions and staff-personnel functions amongst others is a big challenge to school administrators.

Conclusion

The attainment of school objectives is determined by how school leaderships handle personnel management functions and understand the psychological-idiosyncrasies of the actors in the school system. A school head must be able to understand issues that generate a particular frustrating situation. He should be able to carry out situation analysis to ascertain what the problem is, who is affected, what are their needs, concerns, worries and anxieties. Also what needs and concerns are held by everyone or the large majority, etc. Thus the administrator who has a deep knowledge of the contingency or situational theory and puts it into play and is transactional would most probably carry the day in the task of attaining school goals and objectives.

Recommendation

In addition to having deep knowledge of situational and transactional theories and putting such theories to play, the paper also recommends that school administrators should understand the needs of individual workers in their schools. Needs are driving

forces behind every human behavior. If the school manager is able to understand another person's need, he can easily predict their behavior. Human beings come to the work place with their individual needs. A need is accompanied by a state of drive or tension that results in a behavior being directed towards a goal that will satisfy the need and thus reduce the tension and frustration. School administrators must ensure that the needs of individuals under them are satisfied from the basic level to the higher order and the people must be well understood to know their level of needs so as to use satisfaction of such need as a form of psycho-socio support service to reduce tension in the school system.

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