
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (CCE) SERVICES

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Abstract

Childhood is a crucial stage of life in terms of a child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. This is the time children mainly need high quality individual care and learning experiences. The leaders and the managers of childhood care, education and services have important and challenging roles to meet the need of every child. Their styles and characteristics are central to their success in driving change and improvement in the field of childhood care and services. There should be significant changes in the way in which children's services are planned and delivered if these institutions are to bring about products for children. Hence, the managers of childhood services need to be more acquainted with what is effective leadership and what skills, knowledge and behaviours are required to influence and shape the practice for the best outcomes for our children and for national development. The aim of this paper is was discuss the concept of leadership in childhood care and education, the need for and characteristics of successful leadership in childhood education. It also highlighted some barriers to effective leadership and offered insight to how leadership and management can be operational in childhood education. The paper concluded by offering suggestion that there should be a framework to guide leadership roles and management in childhood education centres and schools. More courses on management and leadership in childhood education should also be included into the curriculum programme for the training of childhood education practitioners. Not only these, reflective and professional development programme should be encouraged for better practice and quality services that childhood education needs to play its undeniable roles in achieving sustainable development.

Keywords: *Childhood care and education services, Effective leadership and management*

Introduction

There continues an increased concern for the care and education of young children as every nation begins to realise the implication of early years in achieving a sustainable development. It is a fact that cannot be repudiated worldwide that the development of any society depends

on the conservation, fostering and development of the child. This is because early years of life are the most important for the development of sound intelligence, social relations, personality and physical growth. Childhood Education (CE) is a fundamental part of lifelong education and foundation for active and responsible citizenship. Its central role in supporting children's growth into ethical and responsible members of society guarantees the realisation of sustainable goals. Without mincing words, the anticipation is that CE should be able to provide a rich and stimulating experience needed for children's optimal development, guarantee their health and safety, overall wellbeing and develop children for great citizenship.

The human material required to provide services determines the reality of attainment of the organisational goals. Adedigba & Effrim (2018) noted that the leadership of early childhood does have a lot of significant influences on its efficiency. The quality of services provided by the caregivers, teachers, and other personnel is predicted by the tone of the leadership of the establishment. It is thus important for CE practitioners to gain more understanding of what effective leadership is and ensures the delivery of a functional and rewarding CE services. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to discuss the concept of management and leadership in CE, reveal the need for effective leadership in CE, highlight components and characteristics of effective leadership in CE, identify some barriers to effective leadership and suggest some ways the leadership style of CE managers could be improved.

Bush (2012) and Adedigba & Ajala (2013) submitted that teaching young children is a serious work that requires high quality, dedicated professional teachers who see the importance of what they do and are eager to increase their effectiveness, knowledge, and skills. Skilled and committed leaders are needed to help shape teaching and learning in order to produce and uphold high quality learning environments. Adedigba & Effrim (2018) posited that a high facilitative management style is important to enhance teachers' morale, attitudes, motivation and job performance. Mitgang (2012); Bush (2012) and Lewis & Hill (2012) contended that the quality of leadership in a school could have a dramatic effect on both teachers' and students' performance.

Concept of Management and Leadership of Childhood Care and Education

The concept of management is very wide and important in any organisation. It involves all activities that would make an organisation to achieve its goals and objectives. According to Bush (2008), management refers to the organisation and mobilisation of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in that system. Management in any organisation involves a group of people managing, that is, putting plans into action in order to achieve the desired results. This means that without management, organisational goals and objectives cannot be achieved.

Kurt Lewin (1939) identifies three types of leadership style: the authoritarian leadership, democratic leadership style, and laissez faire or permissive leadership style. Authoritarian leadership style means that the leader (teacher) makes all the decisions about the organisation or the group and the activities performed in the group. He or she does not share with the staff the overall plan of activities nor the criteria for assessing individual or group performances. His/her evolution supposes keeping outside the group's concrete activities and exercising a strict control. Nwakwo (2010) described authoritarian style as a leadership style in which production is emphasised at the expense of any human consideration, and where decisions are made exclusively by the leader. The democratic leadership style is the leader that recognises individual teachers in formal and informal positions to take responsibility for leadership activities by a network of interactions in schools. Nevertheless, he/she avoids making decisions alone, and invites the group to participate in setting the organisation's objectives and manner. This type of leadership also offers staff the opportunity to use their discretion and seeks for their advice regarding the task fulfilment. It is not surprising that this kind of leadership has been found to be more functional. This is confirmed by Adedigba & Effrim (2018) in their study on managements' leadership style and early childhood education (ECE) teachers' attitude to work in Kwara State. They found that democratic style produced better results than authoritarian or laissez faire leadership styles. Their conclusion was that democratic leadership style is the most effective.

The laissez-faire leadership style means a passive role of the leader, who limits his or her participation as much as possible, leaving the staff to take all initiatives. He/she does suggest indifference and non-involvement. He/she hesitates when put in the situation of offering

suggestions and constantly avoids any evaluation of participants' ideas or behaviours.

Spillane (2004) opined that the leadership and management of CE should realise that programmes are planned, delivered, tailored to the needs of the child and contribute to improved outcomes for children. As contained in England Framework (2008), to ensure that CE programme actually meets children's need, five outcomes of childhood care and education are identified as being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic wellbeing. These five outcomes to be achieved actually demands a leadership that will build a consistent, predictable, respectful, trusting, nurturing and unbiased relationships. In the same vein, the leadership should be able to honour diversity of all kinds in constructive and courageous ways and as well build supportive, respectful and genuine relations with families and communities.

Early Childhood Australia (2012) submitted that leadership in Childhood Care and Education (CCE) develops a set of capabilities on which early childhood and school care leaders can frame their professional leadership plans. These capabilities encourage a leader to reflect personally and with others. The framework also supports that the leader of CE should make children's learning, development and wellbeing the core focus on excellent early childhood programmes. They should have in place a process that pulls the energies and abilities of all the members of the school community together to collaboratively develop a culture of ethical inquiry and create a community of learners.

Leadership in Childhood Care and Education settings requires deep human qualities that include but go beyond conventional notions of authority. The traditional idea of a leader as being one at the top of a hierarchy, issuing orders and exercising control is a wrong perception of what a leader in CCE stands for. National Association for Education of Young Children (2008) made it clear that leadership in CCE strives to encourage individuals and teams to make the changes that reflect shared vision and purpose. Leadership is both an individual and collective ethical responsibility.

Need for Effective Leadership in Childhood Care and Education Services (CCE)

Several authors identified the necessity for effective leadership in CCE. Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) -

reported that leadership is second only to teaching as an influence on learning, and that the quality and practice of leadership is linked in a consistent and perceptible way to improved student outcomes and educational equity. Mitgang (2012) emphasised that leaders set the tone and are critical to the development of a nurturing environment that supports and focuses on improving the outcomes for children, young people and families.

Effective leaders are also required to use their wealth of experience and skills to develop new leaders and address under-performance both within their own settings and across the foundation years. Little wonder, Lewis and Hill (2012) concluded that the requirement for leadership in Childhood Care and Education (CCE) settings has and always will be a priority because of the link between high-calibre leadership and better outcomes for young children. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) also confirmed that effective leadership does have a significant effect on the achievement of children's educational outcomes. Knowledge, skills and behaviours of leaders and managers of children's education and services are determinants of the quality of services that they will render. In whatever capacity, it is essential that services provided by leaders and managers of CCE are of high quality. This is rightly captured in the words of Rodd (2013) who stated that effective leadership is a key element in the provision of quality services in the early childhood and that leadership in childhood education profession is about providing a high quality service.

The need for effective leadership in childhood care and services is further stressed by Nupponen (2000) in framework for developing leadership skills in childcare centre. There is need for a framework through which pathways progression can easily be identified and the core competences desired in our key leaders in the system can be shared and understood. It should be used to help managers identify where there are gaps in their knowledge, recognise the value and transferability of their experience and take time out to reflect on the kinds of development activities that will help them. The system needs leaders and managers with the right personal qualities and for these to be reflected in their behaviours. The conclusion here is that successful early childhood settings should be characterised by effective leadership. As recognised by Ord, Mane, Smorti, Carroll-Lind, Robinson, Armstrong-Read, Brown-Corper, Meredith, Richard & Jala (2013), leadership is about purpose, and for childhood care and education settings, that purpose is embodied in pedagogical leadership. While strong pedagogical leadership underpins the way a

setting operates, Heika & Waniganayake (2011) acknowledged that effective leaders do many other things such as organising and managing resources and time, hiring and managing staff, and making genuine connections with children and staff, families, communities and other organisations.

Characteristics of Effective Leadership in Childhood Care and Education Services

Leadership is about qualities and values rather than position. Some distinctive qualities set effective leaders apart from those who merely manage early childhood programmes. One of the most important structures of any early childhood setting is the quality of its leadership and staff. According to Solly (2003), O'Sullivan (2009), Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd (2012), an effective leader is viewed as someone who is inspirational, enthusiastic, and innovative and who manages changes, motivates others to make change and have a good awareness of change that leads to improved quality. Strehmel (2016) maintained that to conceptualise leadership in the early years, the leaders need qualities and skills which are related to team work, motivation, support, role definition and goal setting. With this, they acclaim that early childhood education will be able to fulfil its roles in achieving sustainable development. Credibly, O' Sullivan (2009) acknowledged that these attributes are to do with exhibiting democratic, inclusive and collaborative behaviour which have been confirmed to be identified with productivity and recommended for use in educational organisation. These attributes have been identified with types of leadership like democratic, interactional and principle-centred leadership which have been adjudged best leadership style with qualities needed to obtain effective leadership in educational system, CE inclusive. The author reviewed these leadership types, extracted the qualities and grouped them as discussed below:

Vision and Goal Setting

Effective leaders should be able to set clear goals that are measurable and achievable for their service. Siraj-Blatchford & Manni (2007) described a good leader as one who administers for change, has followers, focuses on long-term vision, sets direction, and is oriented toward inspiring people to achieve results. A leader will provide strategic drive and vision and effectively implement policies. A leader in childhood care and education setting should be able to develop a vision

for children's services in his/her area of responsibility and communicate that clearly and persuasively to others. Moyles (2006) also noted that an effective leader will motivate the team and provide authority with breadth of vision to ensure that all aspects of multifaceted teamwork are delivered. The vision of a leader will describe the knowledge, skills, behaviour and attributes he/she demonstrates in carrying out his/her responsibilities.

Reflective and Professional Practice

An effective childhood care and education leadership should support reflection and professional development. Whitebook, Kipnis & Sakai (2011) pointed out that this practice supports teachers for professional commitment and development. Leaders encourage reflective professional practice through their behaviour and management styles. They are as well devoted to the personal and professional development of the workforce and the efficient performance management of those within it. Rodd (2013) reiterated that the CCE sector requires all who work within it to strive for the continuous improvement of their service that responds flexibly and efficiently to the changing needs of children, young children and families. Reflective practice has been beneficial in the development of teachers. York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, & Montie (2001) affirmed that teachers gain a better understanding of their teaching practices through individual reflection, reflection with partners, reflection in small groups, and school-wide reflection. This is more likely to improve their effectiveness in the classroom and grow professionally.

Relationship/Collaboration

The importance of collaboration, relationships, responsiveness and mutual support in effective leadership is stressed by Goffin & Washington (2007). To these authors, an efficient leader should be able to build and motivate effective, high-performing teams in the context of leading and managing the change required to secure reformed children's services. As established by Leithwood et al (2006), teachers would be able to plan, commission and deliver services effectively in partnership with others. Leaders are expected to be able to use evidence and the experience of team members to understand the needs of local communities and prioritise activities on the basis of evidence and evaluation. They should also be committed to listening to the views of all children and young people, including importantly, those who are looked after, and their families, and ensuring that they are taken into account in policy development and service delivery.

Communication and managerial skills

An effective leader should also possess efficient interpersonal communication skills. These are demonstrated in his/her ability to adopt fruitful decision making skills like conducting effective meeting or consultation using participative management skills, group facilitation skills, etc. This is confirmed by Bloom (2003) who noted that building of trusting relationship is dependent on effective communication. Sharp, Lord, Handscomb, Southcott, George & Jeffes (2012) submitted that effective leader should be able to promote good communications to ensure consistent ways of working among the staff. The leader should be responsive to parents' need and able to communicate with them. A highly effective leader communicates and explains the key messages from his/her data analysis to a range of different interest groups. This includes communicating with parents, partner organisations and with staff to provide feedback on successful approaches and motivate them to achieve even better outcomes in the future.

Barriers to Effective Leadership in Childhood Care and Education

Literature identified some barriers to effective leadership in childhood care and education (Solly, 2003; Whalley, Whitaker, Wyles & Harris, 2005; Fasoli, Scrivens, & Woodrow, 2007; Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd, 2012). Solly (2003) opined out that educational and professional qualification of personnel managing CCE programme can be a major issue in CCE setting. Most people in leadership positions in childhood care and education settings have limited professional training for leadership and administration roles.

This is confirmed by Solly (2003) who identified a good number of young and inexperienced staff working in the sector and emphasised that the specific leadership context is multi-professional. Stephen, Mark & David (2005) also foregrounded decline in ECE workforce as a result of low qualification.

The personality of the leader can also be a barrier to possessing fruitful leadership skills. Whalley, Whitaker, Wyles & Harris (2005) noted that trait theories show that there are significant connections between personality traits and successful leadership. Bloom (2003) listed attitude and moral purpose among characteristics to be demonstrated by an effective leader. The temperament, attitude and personal characteristics of the leader or manager are related to how effective

he/she will be in his/her leadership. A leader's personality traits are stable over long periods of time; this suggests that innate personality traits are an important part of leadership capability. Solly (2003) highlighted enthusiasm, passion, kindness, and warmth as personalities that can ensure effective leadership qualities. Definitely, the absence of these results in ineffectiveness of the leadership.

Goffin & Washington (2007) maintained that inability to choose and maintain appropriate style by the leader is a serious barrier to effective management of a centre. CCE leaders should recognise when each style is appropriate. It is about developing one's personal leadership skills at each level. It involves recognising one's strengths and the strengths of others as well as building and utilising those strengths. If a leader is not sensitive and proactive, he/she might not be able to use appropriate leadership style.

Lack of managerial skills in the leader is a major barrier that can inhibit an effective leadership. If a leader has understanding of the vision and goal of a centre but do not have knowledge of or possess the skills for execution and management of the team he/she needs to work with, the vision cannot be accomplished. Whalley (2011) described these skills as problem solving, communication, decision making, planning, delegation, and time management skills. The absence of understanding the need for communication and knowledge management between levels and within levels in a system to set a clear direction and shared sense of purpose blocks the chances for effective management.

Improving the Leadership of Childhood Care and Education

As submitted by NAEYC (2008), there should be a framework to guide leadership roles to ensure quality in leadership and management of childhood education. This will be a comprehensive document spelling out visions for the leadership of children's education, care and services. This will be applicable across all levels of leadership and management, in different settings and in the various sectors that make up the children's education, care and services.

There is widespread belief that training will help to develop and improve leadership within early years. Bella and Bloom (2003) reiterated the impact of ECE leadership training on role perception and job performance. The participants reported their sense of empowerment after going through the leadership training. Where a

trained teacher is the leader/manager and a good proportion of trained teachers are staff, quality service is possible. Training can be a key indicator of quality. Providing leadership and management training and intensive mentoring that support the accreditation process can lead to significant improvements in quality in CCE. Institutions providing training and development programmes and courses for childhood care and education should tailor their courses appropriately.

The role of reflection in the promotion of effective leadership in ECE centres cannot be overlooked. Though direct training has its place in skills acquisition, professional reflection provides a vehicle for the practitioner to re-examine situations, actions and practices and consider actual against intended outcomes. This can have a particularly powerful effect on changing behaviours, challenging under-performance and holding individuals to account. Siraj-Blatchford & Manni (2007) in their study of effective EY leaders, noted that they monitor and reflect on the current situation, and this is a practice that is to be promoted in the drive for immediate and sustained service improvement. It is crucial for leaders and staff to be reflective and willing to develop their own practice.

Lewis & Hill (2012) submitted that an effective leader seeks to build respectful and genuine connections with families and communities. Early childhood professionals should be engaging responsively with families to promote positive outcomes for children. The most highly effective leaders also work to 'move them on' to achieve better outcomes through highly sensitive, supportive, non-judgmental and step-by-step approaches. Goffin & Washington (2007) opined that skilful administrators support teachers in finding their voices to create harmonious learning communities. Stakeholders at all levels of leadership are also engaged in offering health, educational and advocacy services for the early childhood profession.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although not all leaders possess the same qualities, the style in which they engage their staff, partners and local community is central to their success in driving change and improvement. It is well established that an effective leadership is a quintessential to endure smooth running and efficient service delivery needed for the attainment of early childhood goals. Good managerial style like democratic style of leadership which literature had been adjudged to be the most suitable

leadership style to manage the activities of their various centres and schools should be employed. Effective leadership should possess the knowledge and skills for creating child-centred programmes that promote positive learning experiences and ensure safety for all children. They should be able to discover and develop strategies for staff recruitment, retention, motivation and evaluation. Pupils' outcomes are strongly influenced by their early learning experiences and leadership is a key factor in making early childhood education successful. This has a vital message for policy and practice.

National policymakers need to recognise the key contribution of CE leaders to society and do more to encourage this sector of education by providing necessary support. This study has implication for curriculum planners and designers to include more courses on management and leadership of CCE into the curriculum programme for the training of CCE practitioners. This is important to secure the future pipeline of highly skilled and well-prepared childhood care and education leaders. There should also be reflective and professional development programme in form of workshops, conferences, training and retraining, collaboration and networking for leaders and managers of CCE centres and schools. The early childhood professional development programme should include strengths-based, self-directed, short-term programme for both current and aspiring early childhood leaders in diverse settings. It is also important that government provide a framework to ensure uniformity and effectiveness in the management and leadership of CCE centres and be truthful in their monitoring and supervision of what goes on in CCE centres.

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