

Managing the Teaching Staff in the Public Primary Schools of Addis Ababa: The Case of Assai School

Wossenu Yimam^{*}

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Introduction

Because of the growing demand for education in our country, in addition to the government schools, public and private primary schools are opened. Assai Elementary Public School is one of these schools which was established in 1958 E.C. as a private school and was changed to a public school in 1968 E.C.

In order to attain their prime goals, schools require human and non-human resources. Among these resources, the human factor is the most significant one because it is the people who use the other resources. Moreover, without proper human resources, even the best designed organizations guided by well-made plans cannot succeed in their performance (Chandan, 1995; Schermerhorn, 1989).

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Even though people are the most important assets of an organization, managing them may be difficult. Regarding this, Miller (1985) noted that, "managing people is as challenging and stimulating a profession as can be found and success in it is an achievement second to none."

Since teachers play a central role in the delivery of quality education, they are considered as the key resources in any education system (Gaynor, 1998). Hence, the question of how best to manage teachers needs to be given due attention. In light of this view, this paper attempts to assess the practice of managing the teaching staff in Assai Elementary Public School.

Methodology

Since the study deals with the current practice of managing the teaching staff and is aimed at identifying and describing the push and pull factors observed in the management process, it employs a descriptive approach.

The sources of data for this study were teachers, and members of school management committee (including the principal). There were 49 teachers, and 10 members of school management committee in the school. Out of these, 16 teachers, and 6 members of the committee were included in the sample on the basis of simple random and availability sampling techniques respectively.

Questionnaires, which were of two types, were used as data collecting instruments. That is, the first set was for teachers, and the second set was for members of school management committee. Moreover, relevant books were consulted. The data obtained in the course of the study were analyzed using percentages.

Scope of the Study

Depending on the level and type of schools, various issues related to teacher management can be raised for discussion. However, this study is delimited to treating the issues related to the recruitment,

selection, orientation, utilization, training/development, appraisal, discipline, and motivation of teachers in the school under study. Moreover, the study is based on the information secured from the sample respondents in 1999/2000 academic year.

Issues In Teacher Management

It is known that the issues that surround teacher management are numerous and varied. But, this study focuses on the following issues.

Recruitment

Recruitment is the art of attracting applicants from among whom the most suitable ones may be selected. It is the first part of the process of filling a vacancy and includes the examination of the vacancy, the consideration of sources of pertinent candidates, making contact with those candidates and attracting their applications (Graham and Bennett, 1990; Prasad and Bannerjee, 1985).

The function of personnel recruitment is two-fold: (1) discover the sources of manpower to match job requirements and specifications, and (2) attract an adequate number of prospective employees to permit meaningful selection of the required personnel (Agarwal, 1993).

There are basically two sources of supply from where the potential employees can be drawn. These are internal and external sources. The internal sources are exclusively within the organization itself and include its present working force, whereas the external sources include new entrants to the work-force, the employed, and retired experienced persons (Chandan, 1995).

The following three steps are involved in the recruitment process: (1) advertisement of a job vacancy, (2) preliminary contact with potential job candidates, and (3) initial screening to create a pool of qualified applicants (Schermerhorn, 1989).

Selection

This personnel function is related to assessing the potential candidates by various means, and making a choice followed by an offer of employment. Selection is the process of choosing from a pool of candidates the best person or persons who meet job specifications.

Any selection process has the purpose of fairly discriminating among applicants. Moreover, the effectiveness of an organization's selection process significantly determines the ability of the organization to achieve its goals and to survive and grow in a dynamic environment (Agarwal, 1993).

Wyatt (1989) is more articulate on this issue when he said, "if you choose the right people, most aspects of running your business will become easier." He further stated that, "errors made at this stage can prove very costly and time-consuming in the future."

Table 1: Selection and Employment of Teachers

| Criteria to Select and Employ Teachers | Respondents | | | |
|--|-------------|-------|-----------|------|
| | Teachers | | Committee | |
| | No | % | No | % |
| • Qualification | 13 | 81.25 | 4 | 66.6 |
| • Experience in teaching | 3 | 18.75 | 1 | 16.7 |
| • Interest " " | - | - | - | - |
| • a and b | - | - | 1 | 16.7 |
| • Others | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |

A typical selection process involves the following steps: (1) completion of formal application form, (2) further interviewing, (3) testing, (4) reference checks, (5) physical examination, and (6) final analysis and decision to hire or reject (Schermerhorn, 1989).

To know the basis for the hiring of teachers in the school, a question was posed to the sample respondents, and their responses are presented in Table 1.

According to the data in Table 1, 13 (81.25%) of the teachers and 4(66.6%) of the committee members expressed their agreement that qualification was the major criterion used to hire teachers in the school. On the other hand, 3(18.75%) and 1(16.7%) of the two groups respectively indicated that experience in teaching was used as a selection criterion in the process of hiring teachers. However, interest in teaching is not considered in the employment process. From this it can be observed that the criteria used to hire teachers in the school are not comprehensive enough to attract those candidates who have the necessary potential other than qualification.

Orientation

Orientation is one of the important functions in personnel management, which enables to bring about congruence between organizational goals/ expectations and employees' needs. It helps employees to integrate themselves with the organization and its environment. Orientation also assists workers to acquaint themselves with important considerations of personal; professional and community relationships within the organization. In this connection, Fowler, (1983); and Tyson and York, (1996) noted that orientation is useful to ensure that the newly employed staff develop confidence and commitment, settle in to their new jobs as quickly as possible. On top of this, orientation eliminates the risk of inconsistency, and misunderstanding; increases staff efficiency and effectiveness; and promotes the highest level of personal satisfaction. While organizing orientation program to teachers, the organizers should know that the primary objective of such a program is to improve instructional programs for the students. As far as the information and concerns that are commonly needed by beginning teachers are concerned, Berglas (in Webb, et.al., 1987) has identified the following:

- Administrative routines and procedures,
- Student evaluation,
- Student discipline,
- Conditions of work,

- Relationship with other teachers,
- Relationship with administrators,
- Getting acquainted in a new community, and
- Financial problems.

To ascertain whether or not the school had such a kind of program, a question was posed to teachers and members of the school management committee. The following table depicts the opinion of the respondents.

Table 2: Staff Orientation

| | Items | Respondents | | | |
|--|--|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Teachers | | Committee | |
| | | No | % | No | % |
| • Whether the school provided orientation for newly employed | a) Yes | 12 | 75.0 | 5 | 83.3 |
| | b) No | 4 | 25.0 | - | - |
| | c) Not sure | - | - | 1 | 16.7 |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |
| • Focus of orientation | a) Administrative routines & Procedures | 8 | 66.7 | 2 | 40 |
| | b) Instructional process | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 20 |
| | c) relationship with the school community and/or parents | 1 | 8.3 | - | - |
| | d) Conditions of work | 2 | 16.6 | 2 | 40 |
| | Total | 12 | 100 | 5 | 100 |
| • Importance of orientation | a) High | 4 | 33.3 | 1 | 20 |
| | b) Moderate | 3 | 25.0 | 3 | 60 |
| | c) Low | 5 | 41.7 | 1 | 20 |
| | Total | 12 | 100 | 5 | 100 |

As can be observed from the data (Table 2), the majority of both respondents confirmed that the school provided orientation for newly employed teachers. As far as the focus/topics of the orientation program was concerned, considerable portion of the respondents disclosed that the orientation program mostly focused on administrative routine and procedures (66.7% and 40 %) rather than on the instructional process (8.3% and 20%). Furthermore, the

importance/usefulness of the orientation program was rated as being moderate and low by 66.7 % and 80 % of the teacher respondents and committee members respectively. This may indicate that although the school tried to organize such a program, it lacked continuity and substance.

Another question was also raised about the utilization of teachers in the school. Table 3 portrays the opinion of the respondents on this issue.

Table 3: Staff Utilization

| Items | | Respondents | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------|-----------|------|
| | | Teachers | | Committee | |
| | | No | % | No | % |
| • Criteria used to assign teachers | a) educational level | 5 | 31.25 | 2 | 33.3 |
| | b) experience | 2 | 12.50 | - | - |
| | c) teachers' interest | - | - | - | - |
| | d) field of specialization | 9 | 56.25 | 4 | 66.7 |
| | e) combination of the above | - | - | - | - |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |
| • Weekly load of teachers | a) 10- 15 periods | 3 | 18.75 | 1 | 16.7 |
| | b) 16-20 " | 13 | 81.25 | 4 | 66.6 |
| | c) 21-25 " | - | - | 1 | 16.7 |
| | d) 26 -30 " | - | - | - | - |
| | e) others | - | - | - | - |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |

As shown in Tables 3, 9 (56.25 %) of the teachers and 4 (66.7%) of the school management committee revealed that teachers were assigned to teach in the different grade levels on the basis of their field of specialization. This was followed by teachers' level of education. This showed that the majority of the teachers in the school taught subjects for which they were qualified and trained. On the other hand, teachers' interest and experience were not given due emphasis in their assignment. According to the data in Item 2 in Table 3, 81.25% and 66.6% of the teachers and committee members respectively disclosed that teachers in the school had a weekly load which ranged between 16 and 20 periods. When compared to teachers' load in government schools, which usually ranged between

25 and 30 periods per week, Assai Elementary Public School had relatively sufficient number of teachers. Moreover, it could be inferred that teachers in this school had reasonable workload. But in order to say so, other factors such as the activities performed by the teachers both inside as well as outside the classroom should be considered.

Training and Development

Training and development programs are the methods of improving employees' knowledge, skills and abilities. Training programs are designed to maintain or improve current job performance, whereas development programs are designed to develop skills necessary for future work activities (Stoner and Freeman, 1989).

Training, if properly carried out, provides organizations with several advantages. Concerning this, Leap and Crino (1993) stated that, "training can benefit the organization through increased profitability, improved employee morale and commitment"

According to Schermerhorn (1989), good training and development programs address the following five steps:

- assess needs,
- set objectives,
- select methods,
- implement program, and
- evaluate program

There are four procedures that managers can use to determine the training needs of individuals in their organization. Stoner and Freeman (1989), enumerated these procedures as follows:

- Performance appraisal - each employee's work is measured against the performance standards or objectives established for his/her job.

- Analysis of job requirements - the skills or knowledge specified in the appropriate job description are examined.
- Organizational analysis - the effectiveness of the organization and its success in meeting its goals are analyzed to determine where differences exist.
- Survey of human resources - managers as well as non-managers are asked to describe what problems they are experiencing in their work and what actions they believe need to be taken to solve them.

Table 4: Staff Development Program

| Items | Respondents | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|----|-----------|---|------|
| | Teachers | | Committee | | |
| | No | % | No | % | |
| • Does the school have a staff development program ? | a) Yes | 11 | 68.75 | 5 | 83.3 |
| | b) No | 5 | 31.25 | - | - |
| | c) Not sure | - | - | 1 | 16.7 |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |
| • If yes, the staff development program is through:* | a) Summer courses | 6 | 54.5 | 2 | 40 |
| | b) Extension programs | 9 | 81.8 | 3 | 60.0 |
| | c) workshops and/or seminars | 2 | 18.2 | 1 | 20.0 |
| | d) combination of the above | - | - | 1 | 20.0 |
| | e) others | - | - | - | - |

* multiple response

As it is seen in Table 4, 11(68.75%) of the teachers and 5 (83.3%) of the committee members indicated that the school had a staff development program. Concerning types of the staff development program, a sizeable portion of the respondents in both groups indicated that attending extension classes and summer courses in higher learning institutes were the major means of upgrading/developing teachers' professional competence. However, except 2 (18.2%) and 1(20%) of the teachers and committee members respectively, the other respondents disclosed that the

school did not organize workshop/seminars on various educational issues so as to develop the capacity of the staff.

Appraisal of Staff Performance

This is an essential managerial activity which enables organizations utilize their workforce effectively and efficiently. If skillfully and properly carried out, it also increases employees' efforts towards achieving personal and organizational goals. Moreover, it is an indispensable aspect of human resource management which, when applied to teachers, should give more emphasis to their professional development and enhancement of the teaching learning process. However, it should be carried out by technically briefed and trained staff (Leap and Crino, 1993; Prasad and Bannerjee, 1985; Graham and Bennett, 1990; Miller, 1985; Chandan, 1995; Poster, C. and D. 1992).

Fidler and Cooper (1992), asserted that a properly conducted appraisal system enables to enhance the quality of education by improving teachers' morale and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, appraisal shouldn't be seen or used as simple paper work if it is to be worth the effort (Miller, 1985).

In the school situation, performance appraisal has a major purpose of enriching the educational opportunities of students through the professional development of teachers and other staff members, thus leading to both personal and organizational growth (Mathias and Jones, 1989). Moreover, teacher appraisal should relate to the objectives of the school as well as to the individual teacher's role in achieving those objectives (Biggs in Green, 1994).

Regarding the criteria that are required to appraise the performance of teachers, they need to be job related and within the control of each teacher. As noted by Heath (1989), "appraisal should only take place when clear, preferably agreed, appropriate, specific, and achievable criteria have been established." Thus, the criteria for appraising the performance of teachers ought to be carefully identified, clearly

understood, and mutually agreed upon by both the appraisers and the teachers.

The appraisal of teachers' performance calls for the involvement of different groups of people. Among these, parents are regarded as having valuable information about the worth of different aspects of the instructional program in general and the performance of teachers in particular. Concerning the advantages of involving parents in the appraisal process, Strike (in Millman and Hammond, 1990) stated that:

Doing so would empower them, would allow them to contribute their views in a legitimate way, might enhance their sense of ownership of decisions, and would subject their influence to an organized process and to the requirements of due process.

Table 5: Staff Performance Appraisal

| Items | Respondents | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----|-----------|---|------|
| | Teachers | | Committee | | |
| | No | % | No | % | |
| • Frequency of teachers' performance appraisal | a) quarterly | - | - | - | - |
| | b) twice in a year | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |
| | c) once in a year | - | - | - | - |
| | d) once in two years | - | - | - | - |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |
| • Appraisal of teachers carried out by: * | a) principals | 5 | 31.25 | 3 | 50.0 |
| | b) department heads | 14 | 87.50 | 5 | 83.3 |
| | c) supervisors | - | - | - | - |
| | d) parents | - | - | - | - |
| | e) students | - | - | - | - |
| | f) unit leaders | 8 | 50.0 | 4 | 66.6 |
| | g) combination of the above | 2 | 1.25 | - | - |

* multiple response

Table 5 presents respondents' view concerning the appraisal of teachers' performance in the school under investigation.

As depicted in item 1 of Table 5, all of the respondents reported that teachers' performance was appraised twice a year or once in every

semester which was similar to the appraisal of teachers' performance in the government schools. Moreover, the majority of the teacher respondents informed that department heads, unit leaders, and principals in that order appraised teachers' performance. This was also confirmed by members of the school management committee (Item 2). In this school, parents and students did not participate in the appraisal process, unlike in the government schools.

Disciplinary Procedures

One of the issues in the management of the teaching staff is related to the disciplinary procedures that are applied in the school systems. Scholars in the field argue that teachers need to be governed by a set of rules, regulations and procedures that are reasonable, transparent, and fairly implemented. A good system of teacher management should also respect teachers' rights to contribute to and influence the decisions that affect them (Gaynor, 1998). In this study an attempt was also made to examine this issue. To this effect, respondents were asked to identify the type(s) of disciplinary penalty taken by the school for breach of school rules and regulations. The data in the following table reveal the situation.

Table 6: Disciplinary Procedures

| Items | Respondents | | | | |
|---|---|----|-----------|---|------|
| | Teachers | | Committee | | |
| | No | % | No | % | |
| • Measures taken by school for breach of discipline | a) written warning | 1 | 6.25 | - | - |
| | b) salary reduction | 5 | 31.25 | 2 | 33.3 |
| | c) postponing the next salary increment | 1 | 6.25 | - | - |
| | d) dismissal | 9 | 56.25 | 4 | 66.7 |
| | e) combination of the above | - | - | - | - |
| | f) others | - | - | - | - |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |

As shown in Table 6, the teacher respondents identified dismissal and salary reduction as the two major disciplinary measures that the

school applied for breach of discipline. The committee members also shared this opinion. This indicates that the school management mostly used higher level disciplinary measures rather than taking corrective actions. To the open-ended question, the sample teachers further disclosed that there was no grievance procedure or an appeal mechanism in the school. This could be an indicator for the absence of job security in the school which could force teachers to leave the school and look for other alternatives.

Motivation

The final issue treated in this study is motivation, which is considered as the core of human behavior studies. Understanding human behavior is not an easy task. Besides, what motivates human beings is not clearly known. As a result, various theories of motivation, ranging from purely mechanistic behavioral approaches to those that are almost mystical in their view of human activity are found in the literature. This study, however, does not intend to deal with these theories. It rather attempts to assess the extent of teachers' motivation in the school on the basis of respondents' opinion concerning the questions related to this issue. Table 7 portrays the questions and the responses.

The data in item 1 of Table 7 reveal that 13 (81.3%) of the teachers and all of the committee members confirmed the presence of motivational mechanisms in the school. Regarding the mechanisms, a considerable portion of the teacher respondents reported that partially covering their training cost, assigning teachers in tutorial classes, and offering merit certificate with bonus at the end of each academic year were the methods used by the school to motivate the staff. In addition, 4(30.8%) of them indicated that assigning teachers in administrative/managerial posts was used as a means to motivate teachers. The committee members also informed that in addition to the aforementioned methods, the school tried to motivate teachers by giving them priority when there was part-time work, and by covering the cost of educational tours/excursions. Furthermore, the principal of

the school disclosed that the school covered 75% of the cost when teachers joined higher learning institutes. He also mentioned that the school paid allowances (up to 125.00 Birr) for those staff members who served as unit leaders or department heads. The extent of staff motivation, however, was rated by the majority (76.9%) of the teacher respondents as moderate and low (item3).

Table 7: Staff Motivation

| Items | | Respondents | | | |
|--|---|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Teachers | | Committee | |
| | | No | % | No | % |
| • Whether there was any mechanism to motivate the staff? | a) Yes | 13 | 81.3 | 6 | 100 |
| | b) No | 3 | 18.7 | - | - |
| | Total | 16 | 100 | 6 | 100 |
| • Mechanism(s) of motivating staff | a) Salary increment | 3 | 23.1 | 1 | 16.7 |
| | b) Covering training cost | 8 | 61.5 | 4 | 66.7 |
| | c) assigning teachers in tutorial classes | 6 | 46.1 | 3 | 50.0 |
| | d) offering merit certificate with bonus | 5 | 38.4 | 4 | 66.7 |
| | e) others | 4 | 30.8 | 2 | 33.3 |
| • The extent of motivation | a) High | 3 | 23.1 | 4 | 66.7 |
| | b) Moderate | 6 | 46.1 | 2 | 33.3 |
| | c) Low | 4 | 30.8 | - | - |
| | Total | 13 | 100 | 6 | 100 |

* multiple response

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recruitment and Assignment of Teachers

It was found out that the school used qualification as the number one criterion to hire teachers. Moreover, the school focused more on field of specialization and qualification in the assignment of teachers into the various grade levels. In both cases, experience and interest in teaching were considered less. It is well known that the terms/conditions of employment affect, to a large extent, the quality of candidates attracted to the teaching profession. Hence, it is suggested that these criteria ought to be revised in such a way that

both experience and interest in teaching are given equal weight in the recruitment and assignment of teachers.

Staff Orientation

The school provided orientation to the newly employed staff. However, it was disclosed that the orientation program lacked continuity and substance. Consequently, newly employed teachers did not benefit much from this. Therefore, it is recommended that the school should organize the orientation program on a continuous basis. In addition, the orientation program should focus on the improvement of the instructional process. To this effect, topics related to classroom management, test construction, student evaluation, etc. should be included in the program.

Staff Development

The results revealed that teachers in this school upgraded their professional competence through attending extension classes and summer course. The school also supported teachers' effort by covering their training cost partly. This is a good start and has to be encouraged. Teachers need to have access to continuing professional development. Therefore, the school should give due emphasis to organizing a series of seminars/workshops so as to develop the capacity of the staff and acquaint them with modern principles and methods of teaching. Resource persons with different fields of specialization could be invited from Addis Ababa University and other similar institutions.

Teachers' Performance Appraisal

It was learned that in this school the performance of teachers was appraised by department heads, unit leaders, and principals in that order. Parents and students did not participate in the appraisal process. This shows that even though there appears to be a team approach in conducting teachers' performance appraisal, the school

has failed in getting the cooperation of the important stakeholders/parents to this sensitive task. Involving parents in the appraisal of teachers' performance helps to develop in them a sense of ownership in the overall activities of the school. Since the school is a public school, parents need to have a say in the appraisal process. Thus, in addition to the previously mentioned appraisers, the appraisal scheme should allow meaningful involvement of parents. However, care should be taken in the selection of parent appraisers. That is to say, those parents who can appreciate the complexities of the teaching task or those who may not be influenced by individual bias have to be involved.

Disciplinary Procedures

An effective teacher management system must assure teachers that their rights are respected, and that they are fairly treated. The study, however, disclosed that dismissal and salary deduction were the two major disciplinary actions that the school applied for breach of discipline. This can be an indicator for the absence of job security in the school, which initiates teachers to leave the school and look for other alternatives. Therefore, the school principals/management body should to be trained to follow proper disciplinary procedures. Teachers should also have a say in setting acceptable standards that govern their conduct. On top of this, there should be a grievance procedure or an appeal mechanism that would allow teachers to register their complaints with another level of management or a special body.

Staff Motivation

Although the school attempts to raise teachers' motivation through various mechanisms, the extent of staff motivation was found to be moderate and low. The reason for this might be the inadequacy of the salary the teachers earned. Low salaries discourage qualified candidates/teachers from entering the teaching profession and/or give those who enter little incentive to improve their teaching.

Teachers are also concerned about opportunities for promotion/ their career path. It is known that public school teachers are not the beneficiaries of the existing career structure. Hence, the school should revise its salary scale so as to retain the existing teachers as well as to attract qualified and competent teachers from the labor market.

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