

Chapter 7

Managing the Chaos and Complexities of Informal Organizations for the Effectiveness of Schools as Formal Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Informal organizations in education are those groups or unions that are spontaneously formed within the educational institutions by the members of staff, students and tradesmen for the realization of their identified goals. Those groups, in spite of their advantages, are chaotic and complex in nature as they are bound to bringing about frustration to the top or line managers of the schools, encourage negativism, generate inter-personal and group rivalries, resist changes, cause harassment to certain employees, promote rumor mongering and promote dissatisfaction among employees. All of these deter the smooth operation and management of schools which if care is not properly taken may result to institutional entropy. The chapter puts forward some future trends for managing complexity of informal organizations by contending that, educational managers should employ approaches of cooptation, divide and rule, control of information, control of reward, displacement and control of meeting for the management of those groups.

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INTRODUCTION

There never exist variables of informal organizations except in the existence of formal organizations where human and material resources relate and work interdependently for goals. This is why Sharma (2003) defined organization as both a structure and a process. As a structure, it is the structure of human relationships which include both formal and informal that affects the behavior of employees. Hence, it is a systematic combination of people, functions and facilities. It is the framework within which people work and live together for the achievement of predetermined goals. As a process, organization involves a process of establishing harmonious relationship between departments, activities and human resources which defines the functions of all employees of an organization, decides their authorities and establishes relationship among them. Saleemi (2011) also sees organization as a structure of relationships among Individuals. It is basically a group of people formed to accomplish some common objectives.

Schools as Formal Organizations

Formal organizations have been taken to mean organizations or groups that represent the structure of duties, responsibilities and working relationships (Kawesi, 2014). Sociologists also perceived formal organizations as social systems that are organized around specific goals and usually consisting of several interrelated groups or subsystems.

Educational institutions otherwise referred to as schools, colleges or universities are places for learning and education. They are the temples of learning where learners assemble; sit together under the same roof, on the same floor, carpet or desks and learn from the same teachers irrespective of color or creed. It is in them that teaching and learning had been institutionalized (Sidhu, 1999). Educational institutions as formal organizations have the following formal characteristics that distinguish them from the informal organizations:

- They are formed by Authority. Educational institutions are formed and guided by the high level authorities like the Ministries of Education (Federal, State or Local Education Authorities), legislatures and or executives and have legal backings.
- They have determined objectives and policies. That is to say they aim at achieving target and specific objectives. This forces them towards establishing relevant policies and programs leading to the attainment of those goals.

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