



Management of Human Resources and Academic Achievement of Government Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined human resource management and students' academic achievements among Government Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 4924 teaching and non-teaching staff. The operational instrument used was a Likert type questionnaire tagged Human Resource Management for Academic Achievement Questionnaire "HRMSAAQ". Test retest method was used to determine the reliability index of 0.86. Two research questions as well as two hypotheses were posed for the purpose of this study. Mean, standard deviations were used for analysis of research questions. While-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that: (1) the human resource for effective academic achievement in government secondary schools in Rivers State are not enough especially science teachers, technical teachers and vocational science teachers. (2) Art teachers, social science teachers and non-teaching staff were recognized as human resource that is adequately utilized for effective academic achievement. (3) The factors that militate against effective performance of human resource in secondary schools in Rivers State were identified as: poor staffing, student factor, low skill among staff, lack of motivation, poor staff development and training, lack of government involvement, delay in payment of salaries, denial of promotion and incentives, lack of enabling and conducive environment and poor flow of communication and initiative between ranks and files with the school management. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others that: there should be human resource department with qualified staff to shoulder responsibility for the management staff.

Keyword: Management, Human Resources, Academic Achievement, Government, Secondary School, Students, Obio/Akpor, State.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Orluwene, O. B., & Ndioho, O. F. (2018). Management of Human Resources and Academic Achievement of Government Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 11(1), 137-146. Retrieved [DATE] from <http://www.ij sre.com>.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in the management of human resource personnel has been a sustained concern in almost all human organization. This is because the ability of any organization to achieve its goals depends largely on the caliber of its human resource, and more importantly, on how they are managed. From this direction, Drucker in Ezeani (2016:273) opined that "...good organizational structure does not by itself guarantee good performance. Human resource is as a fact of life of the existence, survival and development of an organization as food is to man." Likert in Ezeani (2016) further asserts thus: "of all the tasks of management, managing the human component is central and most important task because all else depends on how well it is done".

There is a plethora of definitions of human resource management in the literature. According to Nwachukwu (2006:3) "human resource management is the planning, organizing, directing and controlling of the procurement, development, compensation, integration and maintenance of people for the purpose of contributing towards organizational goals. Similarly, Gbosi (2003) defined human resource management as the ability of organizations, including schools to use human resources in order to ensure effective implementation of school programmes and policies. It is therefore against this backdrop that the issue of human resource management is brought into focus in the school system today.

The deepening economic crises in the less developing countries of the world have made it imperative that the available human resources be maximally utilized to avoid colossal wastes. Ejiofor and Eze (1992:141) maintained that qualified and resourceful manpower acts as a centre of gravity for other factors of production such as land, labour and capital. They maintained that without good and efficient manpower, other factors remain without inherent power of action. But organizations are re-generated, multiplied and have growth potentialities with manpower.

In schools and other learning organisations, the position of teachers as veritable resources for goal achievement has been aptly documented. A previous study by Uzodimma (2009) has revealed the situational position of teachers as indispensable resources in education. Uzodimma also opined that there has been continued expression of dissatisfaction over the workers as well as their productivity all over the country. This situation is more pronounced in the educational system where workers persistently abandoned their jobs for other establishments with better pay packages.

However, there have been seminars, commentaries, workshops and many researchers have conducted research on what could be done to rescue this situation but there appears to be no improvement. All the activities of any school system is initiated and determined by the persons who make up the institution. School plants, offices, machine, and other material resources are unproductive without the direction of human efforts. While this problem might appear quotidian, the situation in public secondary schools in Rivers State has depreciated to a deplorable level.

Public secondary school in Rivers State have for years been facing various problems in an attempt to achieve effective management of educational human resources for the realization of the goals of secondary education in Nigeria. Hence the need to study the problems of human resource management in secondary schools cannot be over-emphasized. This is because secondary school education occupies a very strategic position in any nation's educational system. With its consumer producer status, secondary education not only determines the fate but also dictates the pace of education at primary and tertiary levels. According to Collins (2009:17) "wastage and effectiveness at primary level are clearly reflected in the growth and development

of secondary school leavers among whom various higher educational institutions draw their entrants”.

Perhaps, a more important consideration is the fact that secondary education represents to most Nigerians, the terminal points of formal training. Ihejirika (1995) noted that only about 16 percent of secondary school leavers are able to proceed to further studies. This means that whatever learning experience the secondary school can provide will determine to a large extent, the personality foundations in terms of physical, moral and social accessible to most Nigerians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Management in Secondary School

Human resource in Nigerian school particularly in the secondary schools refer to the students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, bursar, librarian, laboratory attendants, clerks, messengers, mail runners, gate keepers, gardeners, and cooks as well as educational planners and administrators. However, the emphasis is on management of human resource as well as the factors related to academic achievement in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Agabi (2003), in focus on effective teaching in schools, classified human resources into teaching and non-teaching staff which serve as an indispensable tool in the manipulation of other factors in any production process and he also said that the school enrolment may rise or fall depending on the administrative capacity of the school as well as availability of quality teachers to promote academic achievement. Human resource involve the skills and expertise of educated manpower in educational organizations such as principals, teachers, students and non-teaching staff. They constitute very important inputs in, the process of teaching and learning.

Human resource management is the deployment and management of personnel by an institution or organization. The primary role of human resource management is that of deploying the organization's manpower resource so as to enable people to make a flexible, multi skilled contribution to the overall aims of the organization or institution. Armstrong (2012) defines human resource management as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets: the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

Human resource management in public secondary schools therefore refers to the management of teaching and non-teaching staff so that the staff will do their work willingly and to the best of their ability in order to achieve the overall aim of the school. Essentially, human resource management can be redefined as the part of management that deals with people at work.

The human resource manager role is multidimensional. He is an administrator, welfare officer, supervisor and an intermediary between management and employees. Thus a human resource manager is a trained personnel in personnel management. In the case of a secondary school, the human resource manager is the principal. Some of his roles include: Analyzing and designing job, recruiting and living employees, managing performance and motivation. Motivation appears to be the most important issue in human resource management. This is so because the efficiency of the organization or institution and the extent to which the objectives are achieved depends on how well motivated the workers are. If workers are highly motivated they tend to make their highest contributions.

Unfortunately, in recent years, the performance of Nigerian secondary school education has steadily declined. One manifestation of this ugly trend is the huge educational wastage and

lapses in human resource management and utilization (Nwachukwu, 2006). Public secondary school managers experience a lot of management difficulties in the management of staff and learners. In spite of several attempts made by Rivers State Government, private school owners, school managers and even Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to improve human resource management and maximum performance through staff promotion, improved staff wages and salaries, staff in service training and development, good working condition of staff, security motivation, provision of modern facilities, and staff welfare service. There are still problems associated with the procedure of recruitment of qualified and experienced applicants, the level of utilization and management of recruitment staff and efficient management of human resource in general.

To reverse this trend and to ensure that effective achievement is guaranteed towards the realization of expected objective, educational managers in secondary schools have to live to their responsibilities and expectations of galvanizing and motivating teaching staff, providing congenial environment and quality teaching tools, providing good working environment, maintaining good interpersonal relationships with teachers and students and showing good leadership competences, skills and qualities.

This research is not an isolated enterprise. Previous studies have been conducted related to human resource management and students' academic performance. Nakpodia (2010) in his study of *Human Resource Management in School Administration in Delta State, Nigeria* revealed that school resources are being mismanaged and underutilized due to lack of qualified personnel and management of resources needed for the improvement of instruction. Similarly, Ameba (2006) showed that poor staffing affects academic achievement process because the students may lack teachers who are competent in skills, knowledge and abilities, as well as motivated to address their academic challenges. Finally, Kaegon (1998) in the work titled "relationship between principals and staff in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State" provided evidence that principals' human resource competence and facilitates cordial relationship with staff, which in turn facilitates students' academic performance.

What these reviews have shown is that human resources if well managed, have the potentials to be a source of academic achievement in our public secondary schools. Given all we have observed about the unique nature of education and academic achievement, it follows that the need for the management of human resources is increasing seriously and the leaders of education should thus perceive it. This can only be attainable if the extent to which management of human resources are identified, as well as identification of possible factors militating against the effective management of human resource in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The major aim of this study is to investigate the impact of human resource management on academic achievement in public secondary school in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- To identify type of human resource available for administration of public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- To investigate the factors militating against effective performance of human resource among public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

- What types of human resource are available for management of public secondary schools students' academic performance in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- What are the factors militating against effective human resource management for academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

- The human resources available for efficient academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area do not differ significantly based on gender.
- There is no significant influence of years of working experience on the mean scores of the staff on the factors militating against effective performance of human resources in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

METHODS

For the study, the descriptive research design was adopted. This research design was taken in order to describe and assess the extent the management of human resources influences academic achievement of public school students in Rivers State. The population for the study was made up of all 4,924 teaching and non-teaching staff in the two hundred and forty three public secondary schools in Rivers State. Stratified random sampling was used to select one thousand and fifty (1050) teaching and non-teaching staff representing twenty-one-percent of the total population of the study. Ten local government areas shall randomly be selected for the study and seven secondary schools shall randomly be chosen from each of the ten selected local government areas to make a total of seventy (70) schools for this study Eleven (11) teaching staff and four (4) non-teaching staff shall randomly be selected from each school.

A researcher-developed instrument was used for data collection titled "Human Resources Management for Academic Achievement Questionnaire" (HRMAAQ) and was divided into three section A, B and C. Section A elicited in information on the personal data such as name of school, location of school, gender of respondent, professional qualification and years of teaching experience. Section B elicited information on the available human resources for effective academic achievement. It has 6 items that were responded based on 4-point Likert Scale formats weighted 4 points, 3 points, 2 points or 1 point respectively. Hence it provided a maximum of 24 marks and a minimum of 6 marks. Furthermore, Section D elicited information on the factors militating against effective performance of human resources in public secondary school in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. It has 10 items that were responded using 4 point likert format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. They are weighted, 4 point, 3 point, 2 point and 1 point, respectively hence the section provided a maximum of 40 marks and a minimum of 10 marks.

Face and content validities of the instrument were done by giving the copies of the questionnaire, the objectives, research questions and hypotheses guiding the study to the research

supervisor and other experts in educational measurement and evaluation, with all agreeing that the items were relevant and appropriate for the work. Reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach Alpha Method and reliability coefficients of 0.914 and 0.823 were obtained for sections B and C respectively.

The instrument was administered on all the sampled staff of 1050 from the selected public schools personally by the researcher, and the completed copies were collected by the researcher with an interval of two weeks. When retrieved, 70 copies of the instruments were not properly completed, while 118 copies were not returned. The data from the questionnaire was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the human resources available for academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	N	\bar{x}	STD	Ranking
1	Science Teachers	181	199	24	-	384	3.41	0.61	3
2	Arts Teachers	201	162	21	-	384	3.47	0.60	2
3	Technical Teachers	101	160	87	36	384	2.85	0.92	5
4	Social science Teachers	200	176	8	-	384	3.50	0.54	1
5	Vocational Science teacher	97	141	86	60	384	2.72	1.01	6
6	Non-Teaching Staff	155	123	56	50	384	3.00	1.04	4
Aggregate Mean						384	3.16		

An observation of table 1 shows that all the items, related to the human resources available for academic achievement in Public Secondary Schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area had the means scores that are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence it is perceived by the respondents (staff) that the human, resources available for academic achievement are the science teachers, art teachers, technical teachers, social science teachers, vocational science teachers and non-teaching staff. This is because their mean scores are 3.41, 3.47, 2.85, 3.50, 2.72 and 3.00 respectively while the aggregate mean is 3.16. Table 1 also revealed that in ranking that the social science teachers had the highest mean scores followed by art teachers, science teachers, non-teaching staff, technical teachers and then vocational science teachers.

Research Question 2: What are the factors militating against effective performance of human resources in public secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean scores of the staff on the factors militating against effective performance of human resources in public secondary schools

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	N	\bar{x}	STD	Ranking
7	Poor staffing	191	184	09	-	384	3.47	0.54	2
8	Student factor	199	179	06	-	384	3.50	0.53	1
9	Low skills among staff	175	195	10	04	384	3.40	0.96	3
10	Lack of motivation	179	183	14	08	384	3.39	0.66	4
11	Poor staff development and training	141	167	51	25	384	3.10	0.87	5
12	Inadequate government involvement	99	163	73	49	384	3.81	0.60	7
13	Delay in payment of salaries	121	169	80	14	384	3.03	0.82	6
14	Denial of promotion and incentive	106	111	97	70	384	2.66	1.07	9
15	Lack of enabling and conducive environment	102	131	103	48	384	2.75	0.99	8
16	Poor flow of communication and initiative between ranks files with the school management system	101	107	99	97	384	2.60	1.08	10
Aggregate Mean							3.07		

An observation on table 2 revealed that the mean scores for item 7-16 are 3.47, 3.50, 2.81, 3.39, 3.10, 3.40, 3.03, 2.66, 2.75 and 2.60 respectively. It is clear that all the mean scores for the items are greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50. thus it is perceived that factors that militate against effective performance of human resources in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor include poor staffing, student factor, low skills among staff, lack of motivation, poor staff development and training, lack of government involvement, delay in payment of salaries, denial of promotion and incentives, lack of enabling and conducive environment and poor flow of communication and initiative between ranks file with the school management system.

Again in table 2, it is shown that students' factors the first factor that militate against effective human resources in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area is student factor followed by poor staffing, low skills among individuals, lack of motivation, poor staff development and training, delaying in payment of salaries, inadequate government involvement, lack of enabling and conducive environment. Finally the aggregate mean score of 3.07 indicates that, all the factors militate against effective performance of human resources at a high level.

Hypothesis One: The human resources available for efficient academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area do not differ significantly based on gender.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis on the influence of gender on the mean scores of the respondents on the human resources available for effective academic achievement

Gender	N	Mean	Std	Df	T-Cal	T-Critical	Decision
Male	179	19.04	5.20	382	0.302	1.960	Not significant
Female	205	18.88	5.24				

In table 3, it is revealed that the summated mean scores of the male and female staff on the human resource available for effective academic achievement are 19.04 and 18.88 respectively. The standard deviation of their scores are 5.20 and 5.24 respectively. Based on their mean scores, it could be deduced that the male score more than their female counterpart by a difference of 0.16. However when this mean difference was subjected to an independent t-test, a calculated t-value of 0.302 was obtained at a df of 382 at 0.05. This indicated that the mean scores of the male and female staff did not differ significantly. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of years of working experience on the mean scores of the staff on the factors militating against effective performance of human resources in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the influence of years of working experience on the mean scores of staff on the factors militating against effective performance of human resources

Years of Working Experience	N	Mean	Std	df	T-Cal	T-Crit	Decision
16-30 years	198	30.86	8.36	382	0.347	1.96	Not significant
1-15 years	186	30.54	9.74				

In table 4, it is shown that the means cores of the staff who had worked for 16-30 factors that militate against the effective performance of human resources are 30-86 and 30.54 respectively. The standard deviations of their scores are 8.36 and 9.74 respectively. Based on their mean scores, it is deduced that the staff who had 16-30 years working experience had a higher mean score than their counterparts with 1-15 years working experience with a mean difference of 0.32. Furthermore, when this mean difference was subjected to an independent t-test analysis a calculated t-value of 0.347 was obtained at df of 382 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that years of working experience did not significantly influence the mean scores of the staff on the factors militating against effective performance of human resources. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and retrieved.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that most of the human resources available for effective academic achievement in public secondary schools such as science teachers, technical staff and vocational science staff are statistically proven to be grossly inadequate. The reason could be that there are few teacher trained in that area available to be recruited and posted to schools.

This finding is in line with Ukeje (1986), who stated that success in any educational programme depends to a considerable extent, upon the availability of skilled manpower of all grades and types in an optimal distribution.

UNESCO-IIEP (2002) and Combe (1991) also corroborate this finding when they reported that the quality of education depends strictly upon the quality of personnel engaged in the education enterprise and upon the effectiveness with which they carry out individual and group responsibilities.

The finding of this study revealed that factors militating against effective performance of human resources are poor staffing, student factor, low skill among staff, lack of motivation, poor staff development and training, lack of government involvement, delay in payment of salaries, denial of promotion and incentives, lack of enabling and conducive environment, and poor flow of communication and initiative between ranks and files with the school management system. This perhaps is as a result of the fact that the management of public secondary schools does not have human resource management department which is supposed to shoulder responsibility on these problems. This is in line with the findings of Egbezor in Okorie (1992) who found the factors militating against human resources to be irregular payment of salaries, poor accommodation for staff, low income level, delay or denial of promotion, inadequate staffing, withdrawal of incentives and lack of motivation. These factors hinder proper human resource utilization and distract staff members from carrying out their duties properly.

CONCLUSION

With strict reference to the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that there are still insufficient human resources, especially in the area of science, technical and vocational subjects. Teachers with masters' degree are also inadequate in secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. There is gross over utilization of the available human resources, especially teachers that teach science, technical and vocational subjects.

Since government is not fully involved in human resource management, there are many problems affecting the effective academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, which includes; poor staffing, student factor, low skill among staff, lack of motivation, poor staff development and training, lack of government involvement, delay in payment of salaries, denial of promotion and incentives, lack of enabling and conducive environment and poor flow of communication and initiative between rank files with the school management system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusion of the study:

- There should be human resources department with qualified staff to shoulder responsibility for the management of human resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Since inadequate staff, lack of training and development, lack of motivation, lack of government involvement among other factors have been identified as problems inhabiting effective human resources, government should live up to expectations in these directions.
- Policies governing human resources management should be implemented in every public secondary school and there should be timely review of these educational policies in order to accommodate current trend in the society.

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