

APPRAISAL OF STRATEGIES TOWARDS UPGRADING STAFF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper investigated appraisal of strategies towards upgrading staff personnel management in the public secondary schools: implications for policy makers in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research questions and a null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The population was 251 out of which 200 were drawn for the study. The research design used was descriptive survey. The reliability score was 0.80 which was deemed okay for the study. A self-developed structured questionnaire entitled Appraisal of Strategies towards Upgrading Staff Personnel Management Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions and t-test at .05 alpha to test the hypothesis. Major findings of the study among others where improving staff personnel management funding and enhancing of effective staff personnel management policies in public secondary schools. It was concluded that effective staff personnel management will go a long way in sensitizing secondary education in terms of realizing its goals. It was also recommended that improved funding, better welfare package for teachers among others are needed for effective public school management.

Keywords: *Education, Secondary Education, Staff Personnel Management and Policy Makers.*

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Introduction

The significance of education to man's overall growth and development cannot be over-stressed. Perhaps this is what prompted Chaudhary (2015) to assert that education ensures economic growth, leads to social transformation and finds solutions to overall national developmental challenges. In almost the same vein, Ekanem (2015) states that education is the basic human right that should be feasibly accorded to all human beings since it is the key index to economic and social development of a Nation. The author explains that no nation can develop beyond its educational standard. Further, Agbowuro, Saidu and Jimwan (2017) contend that education is first and foremost a basic need which any ambitious country must embrace in a bid to reach optimum development.

It should be pointed out that it is only when the educational system is functional and qualitative that the above-stated gains of education can be realized. Nigeria as a developing country is trying to ensure that its own system is up to standard with marginal success due to overwhelming challenges from various angles at all levels of education especially secondary education. This important level of education which is the bridge between primary and tertiary levels has certain specific and general objectives according to the National Policy on Education, (N.P.E). (2013). Generally, the major aims of secondary education are preparation for higher education and preparation for useful living in the society. Specifically, the document states that secondary school shall:

- i. Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- ii. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- iii. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- iv. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- v. Inspire students with desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
- vi. Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in diversity;
- vii. Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens; and
- viii. Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (N.P.E., 2013:18).

The extent personnel management is effective will go a long way in helping to achieve the goals of secondary education. Personnel management is a continuous process for identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of the teachers so that the goals and objectives of the school are more effectively achieved, while at the same time benefitting teachers in terms of professional development and career guidance (Iloabuchi, Abraham & Afangideh, 2016). These authors explain that Personnel Management comprises the effective use of human resources in educational institutions through proper management of people-related activities. According to them, staff personnel management helps to increase the effectiveness of secondary schools whereby the teacher facilitates personal and professional attributes for individuals and groups, enabling them to achieve their potentials and contribute to the provision of excellence in teaching and research development.

Aja-Okorie (2016) also asserts that staff personnel is responsible for activities such as recruitment and selection, training, wage and salary administration, establishing staffing ratios, benefit planning and productivity. According to Aki-Okorie, it seeks to develop and recommend policies and procedures which will contribute to the achievement of the goals in the educational system. Summarizing staff personnel management, the author state that its functions are to select, train, develop, assimilate and remunerate teachers.

Further still, Aguba (2009) posits that personnel management involves the selection, placement, and retention of people working for an organization. Aguba explains that it includes the study of various inter-related forces and factors that determine the work output of people in an organization and how to harness these to ensure personnel co-operation and stable productivity. According to the author, it involves the creation and maintenance of conducive atmosphere in which staff are willing to contribute their best towards the aims of the organization.

An effective personnel management will go a long way in ensuring that educational policies are implemented to the latter. This translates into helping policy makers gauge their successes and failures so as to re-strategize subsequently. The job of policy makers will be quite daunting in the absence of an effective staff personnel services or management. Certain strategies help to make staff personnel management quite effective. Nakpodia (2010) reports that a number of factors tend to influence staff personnel management for effective job performance in schools namely training and manpower development, employment policy and conditions, supervisory problems, environmental management, external environmental factors and recruitment policies/practices. According to Nakpodia, weak management systems and decision-making, tight fiscal management policies and insufficient management of workforce skills constitute serious challenges to the strategic ways of managing staff. The focus of this study is the Appraisal of Strategies towards Upgrading Staff Personnel Management in the Public Secondary Schools. Implications for Policy Makers is also considered.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, there had been a deluge of criticisms made against the academic performance of secondary school students in both the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the National Examination Council (NECO). Majority of the candidates fail to record the minimum number of credits for admission into the university when include five credits at two sittings with Mathematics and English language inclusive. Many factors ranging from teachers; societal influence among others had been identified as the causes of the problem. However, there may be other factors which should be considered so that a long-lasting solution would be found in order to assuage the long-drawn anxiety and lamentations of stakeholders to education. Staff personnel management may be a factor that should be considered at this point. The problem of this study, therefore, is to critically appraise strategies towards upgrading staff personnel management in the public secondary schools and its implications for policy makers as a way of improving students' academic performance in external examinations.

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of this study was to appraise strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools and implications for policy makers. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. determine factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools.
2. establish strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools.
3. determine the impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools.

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study may be of immense benefits to teachers, principals, and educational administrators or policy makers. Data generated from factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools might help teachers to identify factors concerning them so as to adopt a new, positive approach to their job. When this change takes place, teachers may be more productive to the advantage of the secondary school system.

Principals could also benefit from the data generated from the strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools. Knowledge of such proactive strategies will definitely have significant influence on principals' outlook on staff personnel management. Such positive influence may make them to be more effective in the daily discharge of their duties to the overall advantage of secondary education as far as realizing its general and specific goals are concerned.

Educational administrators or policy makers are also bound to gain from the outcome of this investigation. Data generated from factors that hamper effective staff personnel management and strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools might go a long way in assisting policy makers in re-assessing and restructuring their policies in certain vital areas. The findings of this study may help to bridge the perennial yawning lacuna between policy formulation and policy implementation prevalent in our education system as a whole.

Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to the appraisal of strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools: Implications for policy makers in Anambra State, Nigeria. It covered factors that hamper effective staff personnel management, strategies towards improving staff personnel management and impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. what are the factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools?
2. what are the strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools?
3. what are the impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used for the research. Azubuike (2012) states that this type of design examines people's opinions, motivations, interests and perceptions on a subject through the use of questionnaire or interview. As such, survey design was deemed suitable for the research.

The population of the study consisted of all the principals in the public secondary schools in Anambra State numbering 251. Two hundred respondents were selected for the study consisting of 100 male and 100 female principals from the six education zones namely Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha.

A self-developed, structured questionnaire captioned, 'Appraisal of Strategies towards Upgrading Staff Personnel Management in the Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (ASSPMPSSQ)' was used for data collection. It consisted of 21 items spread over three sections. The instrument was validated by three senior lecturers who were staff of the Faculty of Education, Departments of Educational Management and Planning, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Measurement and Evaluation, from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. Cronbach co-efficient alpha formula was used to analyze the reliability of the instrument. A reliability score of .80 was deemed reliable. Hundred percent of the 200 questionnaire administered through on-the-spot method of administration were properly completed and retrieved.

Coming to techniques for data analysis, the research questions were answered using the mean and standard deviation. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test. Items that attracted a mean rating of 2.50 and above were accepted and those below the cut-off point were rejected. The t-test was used at .05 level of significance at 198 degree of freedom in testing the hypothesis for the study. The null hypothesis was not rejected if the calculated t-value was less than the table value and was not rejected if the calculated t-value was equal or greater than the table value. Response Key: Strongly Agreed (S.A.)-4 points, Agreed (A)-3 points, Disagreed (D) -2 points, Strongly Disagreed (S.D.)-1 point.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools.

S/ N	Item Description	Male Principals		Female Principals		Remarks
		X	SD	X	SD	
1.	Poor funding.	3.25	0.73	3.33	0.77	Agreed
2.	Teachers' laxity.	3.95	0.43	3.5	0.46	Strongly Agreed
3.	Prevalence of ungrounded principals.	3.12	0.49	3.08	0.49	Agreed
4.	Lack of proper clinical supervision.	3.42	0.47	2.80	0.51	Agreed
5.	Poor teachers' welfare package.	3.81	0.44	3.5	0.46	Strongly Agreed
6.	Absence of learning materials.	3.14	0.49	3.17	0.48	Agreed
7.	Infrequent workshops and other in-service trainings.	3.81	0.44	3.75	0.44	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.5	0.46	3.30	0.47	Agreed

From the tabulated result above, it was clearly revealed that there is respondents' consensus that these are factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools. This conclusion was reached due to high agreement rate among the respondents of the study.

Research Question 2: What are the strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents on strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Improved funding for provision of working materials.	3.5	0.65	Agreed
2.	Better welfare package for teachers.	2.69	0.94	Agreed
3.	Regular and intensive clinical supervision of teachers.	3.25	0.22	Agreed
4.	Frequent in-service trainings for teachers.	2.98	0.55	Agreed
5.	Appointment of principals on merit.	2.78	0.50	Agreed
6.	Provision of learning materials of teachers.	3.59	0.95	Agreed
7.	Systematic weeding out of incompetent teachers.	3.01	0.12	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.1	0.49	Agreed

To a high extent, information documented on Table 2 depicted homogeneity in responses among respondents as regards strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools. This was as a result of high agreement rate from the respondents of the study concerning the seven items presented to them.

Research Question 3: What are the impacts of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents on the impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools.

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Ensures significant implementation of secondary education policies.	2.80	0.51	Agreed
2.	Enhances teachers' morale and productivity.	3.12	0.49	Agreed
3.	Improved academic performance of students	3.83	0.37	Strongly Agreed
4.	Ensures minimal drop in school population.	3.33	0.77	Strongly Agreed
5.	Reduction in incidence of cultism.	3.08	0.64	Agreed
6.	Prevalence of smooth running of schools.	3.12	0.49	Agreed
7.	Achievement of goals of secondary education.	3.25	0.73	Agreed
8.	Grand Mean	3.27	0.48	Agreed

To a significant extent, information documented on Table 3 showed uniformity in responses among respondents as regards the impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools. This conclusion was reached as a result of the high agreement rate among the respondents on the seven items presented to them.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools.

Table 4: shows t-test summary reviewing the difference in the responses of male and female principals on factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools.

Category of Principals	No. of Respondents	\bar{X}	SD	Degree of Freedom	t-cal	t-crit	Level of Significance
Male Principals	100	3.32	0.70	198	0.7	1.96	0.5
Female Principals	100	3.43	0.74				

Findings

1. Factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools are needed for improved funding, better welfare package for teachers, clinical supervision, in-service training, meritorious appointment of principals, provision of learning materials and weeding out of incompetent teachers.
2. Strategies towards improving effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools include improved funding, better welfare package for teachers, regular clinical supervision, in-service trainings, meritorious appointment of principals, provision of learning materials and weeding out of incompetent teachers.
3. Impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools. These include significant implementation of policies, enhancement of teachers' morale and productivity, improved students' academic performance, minimal drop in school population, reduction in cultism, smooth running of schools and realization of goals of secondary education.

Discussion

The study revealed factors that hamper effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools. These factors are needed for improved funding, better welfare package for teachers, infrequent clinical supervision, lack of in-service trainings, need for meritorious appointment of principals, inadequate provision of learning materials and weeding out of incompetent teachers. Singly and collectively, these factors in their own ways hamper the effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools. This assertion coincides with the viewpoint of Giwa and Illoh (2012) that the challenges to effective teacher management include insufficient or inappropriate management of workforce skills, poor or inefficient systems of development, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of workforce skills that are in operation, poor working conditions and salaries, supporting roles of administrative staff, and limited capacity as well as quality of instruction in teacher training institutions.

Findings also showed that there were strategies towards improving staff personnel management in public secondary schools. These included improved funding, better welfare package for teachers, regular clinical supervision, in-service trainings, meritorious appointment of principals, adequate provision of learning materials and systematic weeding out of incompetent teachers. Generally and specifically, these strategies significantly improve staff personnel management in public secondary schools.

This is in consonance with the viewpoint of Okorie (2009) who listed the duties of a principal as an internal supervisor to include the following:

- i. Assisting teachers to formulate relevant and acceptable goals and instructional objectives.
- ii. Helping teachers in planning learning opportunities and experiences that will facilitate the achievement of the educational goals and objectives.
- iii. Developing a highly motivated staff by stimulating the teachers' interest in teaching.
- iv. Helping a teachers develop skill and attitude formation.
- v. Helping teachers develop professionally.
- vi. Co-ordinating the varieties of teaching units in the school. Supporting the above submission, Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) posited that principals supervisory roles include these:
 - a. Building and ensuring that staff adjusted to the school vision of achievement.
 - b. Developing an accomplishment and conviction based vast society.
 - c. Instituting operations and frameworks to bolster learning.
 - d. Moulding individual initiative that sets the tone for all under-study and grown-up relationship in the school

Finally, the study revealed the impact of effective staff personnel management on educational policy makers in public secondary schools. Such impact manifest in the shape of significant implementation of polices, enhancement of teachers' morale and productivity, improved students' academic performance, minimal drop in school population, reduction in cultism, smooth running of secondary schools and realization of the goals of secondary education. These factors impact significantly on policy makers in upgrading the profile of our Nigeria's educational system. Overall, there is a connection between this reality and the viewpoint of Udoh and Akpan (2014) that the type of education that Nigeria needs should be capable of producing Nigerians who can produce raw materials, manufacture machines and tools needed for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hitherto incurable

and transform the nation from consumption to manufacturing status. Supporting the above assertion, Adewale (2014) posited that Nigeria needs the type of education that is wholistic and focused on the identification of situational problems, gathering of information to make decisions in a world of challenges and realities of life, enhancing users and end users to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to showcase new concepts as a vehicle of globalizing such countries or states for meaningful co-existence, sustainability and development.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings, it is concluded that no proactive initiatives should be spared in ensuring that there is effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools in Nigeria. When this is realized, not only will the laudable formulated policies of secondary education be implemented but also the goals of this level of education will be fully or significantly realized.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Improved funding towards staff personnel development in shape of vehicles, more staff, stationeries and allowances among others should be made available.
2. There should be Initiation of regular in-service trainings for teachers.
3. Improved welfare package for teachers in terms of salaries, promotions, retirement benefits among others should be introduced and maintain.
4. There should be Regular and intensive clinical supervision for teachers in secondary schools.
5. There should be Weeding out of incompetent teachers and replacing them with young, eager and committed teachers with I.C.T. competency.

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