

HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES BY PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

ANYAECHE IFEOMA C.
Department of Educational Foundations,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University
Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.
+2348030614130

&

MANAFA IFEYINWA F. (PhD)
Department of Educational Foundations,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University
Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.
+2348063416191

&

ONYEKAZI PEARL I.
Department of Educational Foundations,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University
Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.
+2348066003093

Abstract

The study investigated human resource practices by principals in secondary schools in Anambra State. It adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was guided by two research questions. The population of the study comprised 350 respondents, consisting of 262 teachers and 88 principals. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled: “Human Resource Practices Questionnaire” (HRPQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, from the department of Educational Foundations in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha procedure and internal consistency reliability co-efficient of 0.75 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The results of the data analysis revealed that ascertaining the staff need of the school, welfare of the staff, good communication with the staff, selection of qualified staff, placement and training of staff in relevant skills, encouraging staff participation, motivation of staff are some of human resource practices by principals in secondary schools in Anambra State. Again the study identified challenges principals encounter in human resource practices which include low staff strength, distortion in communication, staff work overload. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that school principals should always make use of adequate human resource practices to ensure that the desired school goals are achieved.

Keywords: Human resource, Practices, motivation, communication.

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of the nation and as such should be given attention through effective human resources practices in the sector. The most important element in any business is the human resources. Hence, for an organization to be successful, it requires a constant balancing between meeting the strategic human resources and financial needs of the business. The human resources describe the people who make up the work force of a company or organization. Human resources in schools are referred to by principals and managers as the school most important assets. This is because the progressiveness of school depends on the availability and usefulness of her teachers. Nwaka and Ofojebe (2010) stated that teachers are the crucial

resources for effective implementation and realization of the educational policies and objectives at the practical level of classroom.

Human resources practices are quite important for the school's survival and growth especially in the face of challenging and highly competitive dynamic society. Human resources are crucial to educational management because it is the human beings involved that manage all other resources (Nwaham, 2011). The principal therefore has to indulge in qualitative human resources practices to ensure that the needed human resources are provided and managed, for optimal utilization and for the achievement of educational goals.

Nwaham (2011) saw human resources to include human beings like teachers, non-teaching staff and students in schools. The human resources of an organization consist of all individuals regardless of their role, who are engaged in any organizational activities. These human resources in education are managed through planning, recruitment, promotion, development, evaluation, welfare services, transfer and orientation.

Human resource practices is the policies and practices required to perform the routines of human resources in an organization, such as employee staffing, staff development, performance management, compensation management, and encouraging employee involvement in decision making (Foss & Linguine, 2011). Human resource practices is a core human resource management process that seeks to prepare organization for their current and future workforce needs by ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time (Jacobson, 2010). It consist of putting the right number of people, the right kind of people at the right place, the right time, doing the right things for which they are suited for the achievement of goals of the organization (Rashida, 2011). According to Khadka (2009), Human resources practices must be linked to overall strategy of the organization. It evaluates human requirements, keeping the organizational objectives, operation schedules, and demand fluctuation in the background. Thus, human resources practices should be future-oriented, system-oriented, and goal directed.

According to Richards (2011), human resource practices is a critical business function and involves a number of processes designed to ensure that the organization is staffed with the right people with the right skills in the right positions to move the company forward towards meeting its goals and objectives. These processes involve assessing workforce needs through an analysis of internal and external environment, identifying gaps in current and future needs putting actions in place to fill those gaps and providing ongoing training and assessment of staff to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Human resource practices can be used to achieve organizational objectives by understanding and planning for people needs in the short, medium and long-term (Colley & Price, 2010). It indicates the need for updating the skills of the existing and newly recruited teachers to enable them assume new positions with added responsibilities, undertake challenging assignments and to be abreast of technological innovations.

Hence, human resources practices in secondary schools involve projecting the staff needs of the school and equipping them with the required skills and maintaining them to ensure continuous survival and growth of the school. Human resources practices should be a continuous process in order to ensure that the school does not experience overstaffing or understaffing at any point in time. In order to ensure steady availability and usefulness of teachers, human resource practices need to be a regular practice by principals in secondary schools to ensure that the right caliber human resources are made available for the achievement of the school goals.

The principal is the executive head of secondary schools. He/she is the one that develops and implements the educational programmes of the school, procures staff, funds as well as creating a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere in the school. At the secondary level of education, it is the duty of the principal to stimulate the available human and non human resources to ensure quality output. The contributions of teachers to school improvement cannot be underestimated. Teachers are charged with other responsibilities such as counseling, guiding managing classes, disciplining students and participating in curriculum development panels other than teaching (Yuniah, Walter & Duke, 2015). The uninterrupted discharge of their duties cannot be actualized without steady practices from school principals.

Since human resource practices involve the strategic operations of human resources, they form the foundation and guidance for managing the organization's employees and should coordinate with the

executive school plans. These practice adopted by the principal, determines the availability of teachers in the school for the attainment of the set goals. Thus, for principals to ensure that schools have the needed workforce, these practices are to be addressed effectively. Such practices include: Ascertaining the staff need of the school, welfare of the staff, good communication with the staff, selection of qualified staff, placement and training of staff in relevant skills, encouraging staff participation, motivation of staff. In a situation where the principal neglects these human resource practices, the school will begin to experience non goal attainment, low staff strength due to incessant transfer, distortion in communication channel, staff work overload, ineffective teaching and learning, conflict and stress. It is in attempt to find out the practices and challenges of human resource that the study was embarked upon.

Statement of the Problem

Giving of quality instruction at all levels of educational system rest squarely on teachers and with the absence of the teachers in the classroom, instruction would be difficult. The effective teaching and learning in schools can only be achieved through effective planning, selection, recruitment and placement of teachers by principals. Reverse seems to be the case when principals lack these effective human resource practices. Observation shows that problem in human resource practices by principals may lead to non attainment of the school predetermined goals which affects the students performances. It appears that teachers don't normally attend conferences and workshops which if attended will improve their teaching prowess.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to find out the human resource practices by principals in secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the human resource practices employed by principals' in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Identify the problems faced by principals in human resource practices in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the human resource practices employed by principals in secondary schools in Anambra State.?
2. What are the problems of human resource practices encountered by principals in secondary schools in Anambra State.?

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Ary (2010:426), "descriptive research design is a scientific research that describes about event, phenomena or fact systematically dealing with certain area or population." Thus, the researcher deemed it wise to adopt descriptive survey design because it concentrated on discussing events as they were without interference on what was observed.

The area of the study is in Anambra State. There are six education zones in Anambra State, which are Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha. Simple random sampling technique and proportionate stratified random techniques were adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 350 respondents, consisting of 262 teachers (117 from Onitsha, 73 from Ogidi, and 72 from Nnewi) and 88 principals (27 from Onitsha, 26 from Ogidi and 35 from Nnewi). Simple random sampling was used to select schools, while proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select respondents. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers, titled "Human Resource Practice Questionnaire" (HRPQ). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A sought information on the personal data of the respondents, while section B is divided into two clusters with 20 items. The instrument has four point scale response options with responses format of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) and a numerical value of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the department of Educational Foundations all in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents with the help of six research assistants who were instructed on what to do. A total number of 330 copies of the

questionnaire were collected back which was 94% of the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha procedure and internal consistency reliability co-efficient of 0.75 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Mean score between 2.50 and above is accepted as strongly agree while disagree mean of 2.49 and below is rejected.

Results

The results of this study were presented in tables according to the research questions.

Research question 1 : What are the human resource practices employed by principals in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 1 : Mean ratings of respondents on human resource practices by principals.

S/N	Item Description	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Ascertaining the staff need of the school	350	2.09	.90	D
2	Welfare of the staff	350	1.09	.83	SD
3	Good communication with the staff	350	2.60	.73	A
4	Selection of qualified staff	350	2.39	.49	D
5	Placement of qualified staff where needed	350	2.39	.59	A
6	Tranining of recruited staff	350	3.01	.89	A
7	Motivation of staff	350	2.01	.40	D
8	Encouraging staff participation	350	2.79	.98	A
9	Recommending staff for promotion	350	2.99	.63	A
10	cooperating with staff	350	2.49	.63	D
Grand mean			2.43		D

Result in Table 1 indicated the mean ratings of respondents on the human resource practices employed by principals. The Table revealed that respondents agreed to items 3,5,6,8,9 with mean ratings of 2.60, 2.81, 3.01, 2.79 and 2.99 respectively, while they disagreed to items 1, 4, 7 and 10 with mean ratings of 2.09, 2.39, 2.01 and 2.49 respectively and strongly disagreed to item 2.

Meanwhile, the grand mean showed that respondents disagreed with mean ratings of 2.43 on human resource practices employed by principals. Hence, the study showed that principals do not employ human resource practices in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research question 2 : What are the problems of human resource encountered by principals in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2 : Mean ratings of respondents on problems of human resource encountered by principals.

S/N	Item Description	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	lack of fund	350	3.10	.46	A
2	Poor working condition	350	3.20	.98	A
3	Mismanagement of school resources	350	2.90	.82	A
4	Poor staffing	350	2.81	.59	A
5	Management stress	350	2.40	.49	D
6	Conflict in school	350	2.30	.70	D
7	Staff work overload	350	3.00	.63	A
8	Distortion in communication channel	350	2.19	.60	D
9	Incessant transfer of staff	350	2.89	.70	A
10	Availability of non competent staff	350	2.29	.90	D
Grand Mean			2.71		A

Table 2 revealed the mean ratings of respondents on the problems of human resource practices encountered by principals. The study revealed that respondents agreed with mean ratings of 2.71 on problems of human resource practices encountered by principals. Therefore, the study indicated that problems of human resource practices encountered by principals was much.

Discussion of Results

It was found in Table 1 that the human resource practices by principals include: ascertaining the staff need of the school, welfare of the staff, good communication with the staff, selection of qualified staff, placement of qualified staff where needed, training of recruited staff, motivation of staff, encouraging staff participation, recommending staff for promotion and cooperating with staff. This means that principals in secondary schools do not effectively make use of human resource practices which at times leads to reduction in staff strength and hinder the achievement of the school set goals. This is in line with Yuniah, Walter and Duck (2015) which indicated that the human resource practices adopted by principals determine the availability of teachers in schools for the attainment of the set goals. Thus, for principals to ensure that schools have the needed workforce, these practices are to be addressed effectively.

Table 2 revealed the problems of human resource practices encountered by principals which was much and would affect productivity. These problems include : poor working condition, mismanagement of school resources, poor staffing, management stress, conflict in school, staff work overload, incessant transfer of staff, availability of non competent staff. This finding is in line with Colley and Prince (2010) which emphasized that poor human resources practices make school to experience overstaffing or understaffing at any point in time. Therefore, in order to avoid this, the human resource practices need to be carried out regularly to ensure that the right caliber of human resources are made available and maintain for the achievement of the set educational goals.

Conclusion

The study identified some human resource practices by principals which include : ascertaining the staff need of the school, welfare of the staff, good communication and selection of qualified staff. It also observed some problems principals encounter in human resource practice to include : lack of fund, poor working condition, poor staffing, management stress, conflict, and incessant staff transfer. When these human resource practices by principals are not effectively utilized in management of staff in schools, it would affect teaching and learning which would lead to non attainment of set educational goals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study,

- 1 The school principals should always make use of adequate human resource practices to ensure that the desired school goals are achieved.
- 2 Regular seminars and workshops should be organized by governments in order to attend to problems principals encounter in human resource practices.

REFERENCES

- Colley, L. & Price, R. (2010). Where have all the workers gone? Exploring public sector workforce planning. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 69(2), 202-213
- Foss, N.J & Linguine , K. Human resource management practices and innovation. In: *Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management*. Oxford University Press; 2011:505-530. doi: 10.1093/oxford/978019969495.013.009
- Age, A. M. (2013). Provision of secondary education in Nigeria: Challenges and way forward. *Journal of Africa studied and Development* 5 (1), 1-9
- Jacobson, W. (2010). Preparing for tomorrow: A case study of workforce planning in North Carolina Municipal Government. *Public Personnel Management*, 39(4), 1-21.
- Nwaham, C.O. (2011). *School administration and supervision of instruction in Nigeria*. Asaba: Progress Printing Association.
- Nwaka, N.G. & Ofojebe, W.N. (2010). Strategies for coping with shortage of resources in primary schools administration in Anambra State. *Journal of Education Leadership*.1 (1) 29-36
- Rashida, M. (2011) *Study material guidelines for B.com 3rd year students in the subject of functional management*.
- Richards, S.E. (2011). Program planning of human resources strategies. *Strategic Planning Review*, 2(1), 6-9

Yuniah, K.M, Walter, B.O, Duke, N.N.(2015). Determinants of teachers motivation in public secondary schools in Masaba South sub country, Kenya. *International Journal of Economic, Commerce and Management*, 3(6), 37-78