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COUNSELLING FOR VALUE EDUCATION THROUGH INCENTIVE ADMINISTRATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' IN ABIA STATE: STRATEGY FOR WORKFORCE RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate the influence of incentive administration on primary school teachers' workforce retention. The need for the study came up as a result of high rate of teachers' attrition in public schools in Abia State. The study adopted a descriptive survey with four research questions. The population of the study comprised all the primary school teachers in 63 primary school and a 30 item likert type questionnaire of incentive administration assessment scale (IAASQ) was administered in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. Data analysis of the research questions were done using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other that there should be adequate incentives, frequency of incentives should be packaged, offered to the teachers, educational administrations should integrate teachers needs and aspirations, counsellors should have a bigger role to play in the lives of the teachers as they should be included in decision making in the school even for the policy-making. Conclusion was made.

Keywords: Incentive, Counsellors, Administration, Primary, School, Teachers, Workforce

INTRODUCTION

The retention of quality teachers is a major problem in Nigeria, and Africa schools (Steyn, 2013). Teachers are the most fundamental and crucial resources in education system especially in primary school level; this is because the strength of an educational system largely depends on the quality and quantity of its teachers in primary school level. Hence the primary goal of every educational institution is to achieve optimum delivery service which is effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, no educational goal for any nation's development can ever be achieved without an adequately trained and motivated teaching staff. This can be possible if deliberate efforts are put in place to ensure the retention of the teachers' workforce. The importance of the administration of incentive for this purpose cannot be underestimated. Consequently, for teachers to give optimum productivity, their satisfaction should be of utmost importance to the government or administration.

Incentive to the teachers could be seen as an encouragement given to them for them to put in more efforts in what they are doing. This is the totality of what one gets in return for services he or she has put in, hence the urge and ability to get things done well. This implies that the individual tends to stay long on a particular job, if such job offers him a good opportunity to achieve either personal or group goal. Teachers' sometimes work under unsafe and unhealthy conditions which has negative consequences on the academic progress of the learner and that of the teachers themselves. Incentive administration refers to the manner in which incentives are directed or controlled by organizational teachers for maximum productivity (Onwurah & Anurugwo in Nworgu, 2007). The remuneration for teachers are also relatively very low in primary schools when compared with their counterparts who work in federal sectors. This has in a way translated into primary school teacher low morale in Abia State. Being intrinsically and extrinsically motivated increase job satisfaction (Nadim, Chaudhry, Kalyar & Riaz, 2012).

Teachers are constantly protesting as a result of the poor remuneration and reward practices (Armstrong, 2007). Teachers' turnover leads to a significant loss of service efficiency which eventually has detrimental effect on the performance of school children (William, Champion & Hall, 2012). According to Shukia (2009), effective reward and retention policies improve new employees satisfy the older generation of employees and motivate current employees to stay within the organization (Barkhuizen, 2014).

Teaches' retention helps to avoid disruption of schooling especially when teachers leave the profession during the academic year or while engaged in critical projects in school (Agboola& Offiong, 2018). It is evident that retention helps to ensure continuity and to avoid teachers' shortage in a given country (Borsuk, 2001; Chiboiwa, Samuel & Chipunza, 2010). Demaki (2012), while stressing on the benefits of promotion to workers reiterated that it is positively related to job satisfaction because pay and promotion have social prestige which is tied up with occupational level. Demaki (2012), continued to state that the more pay and promotion are increased, the more they have the capacity to fulfil an increasing number of needs. Incentive is a good mechanism through which the teacher can be loyal to school administration. The teachers as a model are creators or facilitators of knowledge and skill for future leaders and only motivated ones would perform well and produce good and better results by delivering quality instructions and can be able to impart relevant skills to learners, hence they, not only produce good quality leaders but will join hands to contribute to the sustainable development of any state and country in general. It is therefore good to keep teachers satisfied and happy with their jobs for longevity of an organization.

The retention of teachers in the field of teaching is of paramount importance if the goal of education is to be attained. The concept of employee retention emerged with regularity in 1970's and early 1980's because prior to this period, most people entered into organization and remain for a very long period, sometimes for their entire working lifetime. However, as job mobility and voluntary job changes began to increase, employers found themselves with the problem of employee turnover and a matching management tool known as employee retention began to develop (McKeown, 2012). No matter how well the curriculum is designed and structured, the important thing is how the pupils (learner) are made to learn the contents. Without good incentives, it may not be realistic to look towards quality teachers for quality education. Promotion offers opportunities for growth and is also one of the Herzberg motivators which can be used to enhance retention, hence promotion can be seen as feedback that the teacher has performed well.

The role of primary school teachers who are entrusted with responsibilities of grassroots development of pupils cannot be overestimated. Despite the fact that it is stated on article 77 section 9 of National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) that promotion opportunities will be created at every educational level to allow for professional growth at each level, teachers promotion has not been implemented accordingly. Experience has shown that most

of the problems associated with increasing rate of primary school teachers' attrition lie on the method of incentive administration in primary school system.

Teachers who feel stagnant in their positions are not motivated and they see themselves as disadvantage when they see their counterparts in other sectors of the economy, they are demoralized, frustrated and dissatisfied with their job which may result to partial commitment to work, early retirement or resignation. Probably, the method of primary school administration constitutes poor workforce retention in the system.

Factors contributing to the shortage of educators include resignation, medical boarding, dismissal, emigration of highly trained professionals for greener pastures and restrictions related to self-development and a lack of recognition for good performance (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011; Schullion, 2011). In particular, teachers are constantly protesting as a result of the poor remuneration and reward practices (Armstrong, 2007). As a result of these factors teachers are leaving the teaching profession for better compensation in developed countries or other career prospects.Teacher turnover leads to a significant loss of service has a detrimental effect on the performance of school children (Williams, Chamption & Hall, 2012). The task of the Department of Education is therefore to develop attractive reward and remuneration practices that will retain a talented pool of school teachers (Armstrong, 2009; SACE, 2010). According to Shukia (2009), effective reward and retention policies improve teachers' abilities and the school's overall effectivness. Retention policies should be able to attract new employees, satisfy the older generation of employees and motivate current employees to stay within the organization (Barhuzien, 2014). One of the best methods that institutions can implement to retain employees is to adopt good remuneration practices (Davies & Edge, 2004; Gerhart & Rynes, 2003). The professional counsellor should advocate for these vulnerable teachers in order to safeguard their rights and protect them from abuse. Also, the counsellor should consult with teachers regarding the problems they are experiencing to enable them have more. Constructive relationship with the pupils and be more effective in teaching them.

Many studies dwelt on organizational incentives in secondary school, higher institutions level of education. But not much had been said specifically on the need for this study. Trained teachers are graduating from colleges of education and tertiary institutions yet school continue to experience a low level of teacher retention particularly in primary schools. This has raised a lot of concern to

parents, students, counselors, school administrators and the government. Poor level of teachers' retention, especially in primary schools, has directly and indirectly affected pupils and students' overall academic performance. It has taken some time to get good replacement in the primary school which loses experienced teachers. It has also been observed that teachers in primary schools showed their lack of motivation in carrying out assigned tasks by being absent from school on weak excuses to run private businesses. These unwholesome attitude to work seems to suggest that these teachers identified as one of the most foreseeable but unsolvable problems facing the education system in primary schools. This ugly situation prompted the researcher to set out to ascertain the influence of incentive administration on primary school teachers' workforce retention in Abia State. This study focused on the;

- adequacy of the incentives to primary school teachers in Abia State,.
- role of incentives on the retention of primary school teachers in Abia State,
- the constraints/problems of administration of incentives on primary school teachers in Abia State,
- strategies for improving the incentives for teachers' workforce retention in Abia State.
- The relationship between adequate incentives to primary school teachers and retention of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study was descriptive survey of incentive for primary school administration workforce retention. The area of this study was Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. The population of the study comprised teachers in 63 primary school in the local government Area. The sample size was sixty-eight teachers selected from the schools in the local government using proportionate stratified random sampling with 12% as a base. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire on a 4 point rating scale of strongly –agree, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, reflecting the four (4) cluster relating the research questions. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts, two from guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation all in College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a measure of internal consistency, of the items with Cronbach Alpha (X) used to establish the internal reliability. The entire clusters together yielded a coefficient of internal stability of 0.75.

This measure was considered high enough for the instrument to be considered as reliable. The researcher personally administered the instruments to the respondents. Both inferential, descriptive statistics were used for data analysis in the study. Hence any score below the criterion mean of 2.5 is rejected. T-test was used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the adequacy of the incentives to primary school teachers in Abia state?

Table 1: Adequacy of various incentive needs to primary school teachers

S/N	Adequacy of various incentives needs to primary school teachers	Mean	SD
1	Teachers do not receive their allowances as at when due.	3.24	.91
2	Teacher's salary are adequate.	1.62	.66
3	Teachers that obtained higher qualifications have their salaries adopted on time	1.60	.75
4	There are good opportunities for teachers development	1.90	.69
5	There are prospect for promotion	1.87	.71
6	Productive teachers are given awards and commendation	2.05	.58
7	Teachers working environment are not conducive	2.97	.69
	Grand Total	2.18	.71

The data in Table 1 above shows the opinions of the respondents regarding adequacy of incentive needs to primary school teachers. The data revealed mean scores ranging from 1.60 to 3.24. The cluster mean of 2.18 and standard deviation of 0.71 was gotten, indicating inadequacy of various incentive needs to primary school teachers. This goes on to explain that teachers do not receive their allowances as at when due, the salaries when available are not adequate, teachers that have obtained higher qualifications do not have their salary upgrade updated on time, there are no good opportunities for teachers development, there are little or no prosepcts for promotion, those who are productive are not given awards and commendations, and teachers environments are not conducive for effective teaching and learning.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of incentive in the retention of primary school teachers?

Table 2: Roles of incentive packages in retention of teachers

S/N	Roles of incentive packages in retention of teachers	Mean	SD
8	Satisfaction of teachers needs	3.0000	.62217
9	Lead to increase job performance	3.1746	.75219
10	Shaping individual and group behaviour of the teachers	3.3968	.95950
11	Leads to job commitment of the teachers	3.3651	.74707
12	Leads to job instability	1.5714	.61472
13	Attainment of educational goals of the teachers	3.3175	.83907
14	Leads to job dissatisfaction of teachers	1.3810	.58000
	Grand Total	2.74	.73

Data in Table 2 shows roles of incentive packages in retention of teachers in primary schools in Abia State. Result shows mean rating of respondents ranging from 1.38 to 3.39 and a cluster mean or grand total of 2.74. Out of the 7 items (8 - 14), 5 (items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13) had mean scores above the cut-off mean of 2.50 showing acceptance of the items while 2 (items 12 and 14) had means below 2.50, showing rejection of the items.

Research Question 3: What are the constraints/problems of administration of incentives on primary school teachers?

Table 3: Problems of administration of incentive packages

S/N	Problems in administration of incentives packages	Mean	SD
15	Lack of good office space for the teachers	3.5079	.78026
16	Head masters and head mistresses are not partial over professional development of nomination with their teachers	1.5556	.50090
17	Salaries of teachers are not paid in time	3.3175	.59094
18	No provision for funds for in-service training courses for teachers	3.6508	.65152
19	Teachers stay on one level for over ten years	2.5714	.77697
20	Promotion of teachers are not by protest	2.6190	.58000
21	Lack of facilitative instructional supervision to schools	3.0794	1.05190
22	Poor and irregular payment of teachers allowances.	3.2857	.60718
	Grand Total	2.9484	.6925

Table 3 above shows problems facing the administration of incentive packages to primary school teachers. Result reveals mean score of respondents which ranged from 1.56 to 3.65. 8 items were formulated by the researcher to answer the research question 3. 7 items had means of above 2.5 while 1 item had mean below 2.5. The problems identified by the respondents as facing the administration of incentives to teachers include lack of good office space for the teachers,

headmasters and headmistresses partiality over professional development of nomination with their teachers, lack of provision of funds for in-service courses for teachers, teachers staying on one level for a long time without receiving promotion duly, lack of facilitative instructional supervision to schools, poor and irregular payment of teachers allowances.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies for improving the incentives for teachers' workforce retention in primary schools?

Table 4: Mean ratings of respondents on strategies for improving primary school teachers incentives

S/N	Strategies for improving primary school teachers incentives	Mean	SD
23	Teachers should not be part of decision making in school administration	1.6984	.75423
24	Communication flow should be effectively ensured in the primary schools	3.4444	.56162
25	The need of the teachers should as much as possible be satisfied	3.3651	.54777
26	The working environment should have adequate security	3.7937	.40793
27	Health subsidy should be provided to the teachers in primary schools	3.4762	.59180
28	Work environment should be more conducive	3.7460	.43878
29	Productive teachers should not be given due recognition on the effort they put in their best at work	1.2540	.43878
30	There should be no provision of fund for in-service training	1.7143	.48952
	Grand Total	2.8115	.5288

The data in Table 4 above shows the opinions of the respondents on strategies for improving primary school teachers' incentives.The data revealed mean scores ranging from 1.25 to 3.79. The cluster mean of 2.81 and standard deviation of 0.53 were gotten. The deductions made from the result we're that teachers should be part of decision-making in school administration, communication flow should be effectively ensured in primary schools, teachers needs should be satisfied as much as possible, there should be adequate security in the learning centres, health subsidy should be provided to the teachers, working environment should be more conducive, productive teachers should be given due recognition and that there should be provision of funds for in-service training.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between adequacy of incentives and workforce/retention of teachers in Primary Schools in Abia State.

Table 5: t-test analysis of responses on the relationship between adequacy of incentives and primary school teachers retention/workforce

Source of variation	N	$\bar{\chi}$	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{cri}	Decision
Adequacy of incentives	63	2.18	0.71	124	4.36	1.96	*
Teachers retention/workforce	63	2.74	0.73				

* = Significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4.5 above reveals that, the t_{cal} 4.36 is greater than the t_{cri} 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis one is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the mean scores teachers on adequacy of incentives and teachers retention/workforce. This also shows adequacy of incentives for primary school teachers plays a positive role in teacher's retention/workforce.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study as presented in Table 1 revealed the adequacy of various incentive needs of primary school teachers. The study showed inadequacy of various needs made available to the primary school teachers. This finding is in consensus with the findings of Onwurah and Anurugwo (2007), who observed similar results of inadequacy of various incentives needs to primary school teachers. This study also conforms with the findings of Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff (2007), who revealed that teachers are not well remunerated, this could be the reason why teaching profession is no longer attractive hence the reason for incessant resignation, teachers' attrition problems, migration of highly trained teachers to other professions as well as truancy among primary school teachers in the study area. In addition, this study agrees with the findings of Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen (2015), who observed poor remuneration/compensation packages among their respondents.

The findings of the study on the roles of incentives in the retention of primary school teachers as presented in Table 2. However, this result tallies with the findings of Onwurah and Anurugwo (2007) who observed similar findings. Also, the findings of this study are in correspondence with the findings of Shukia (2009) who noted that effective incentive packages improve teachers'

abilities, school's overall effectiveness as well as retention of teachers. This findings agrees with the findings of Barkhuizen (2014), who observed that teachers' incentives, remuneration and compensation attract new employees, satisfy the older generation and motivates teachers to stay within teaching profession.

The finding of the study on problems of administration of incentive packages as presented in Table 3. The trend showed that lack of good office space for the teachers, salaries of teachers are not paid on time, no provision for funds for in-service courses of teachers, staying on one cadre/level for years, promotion of teachers are not by protest, lack of facilitative instructional supervision to schools, poor and irregular payment of teachers allowances were major problems of administration experienced in the study area.This finding corroborates with the findings of Onwurah and Anurugwo (2007) who observed similar result. Similarly, the findings tally with the findings of Oke, Ajagbe, Ogbari and Adeyeye (2016); Oke and Dawson (2012) who suggested the above problems as some of the factors as poor working conditions responsible for teachers' attrition.

The finding of this study on strategies for improving primary school teachers' incentives. The results revealed that effective communication, teachers' satisfaction, effective and conducive working environment, provision of health subsidy as well as provision of fund for in-service training. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Onwurah and Anurugwo (2007) who observed similar findings. Similarly, this finding is in consensus with the findings of Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen (2015) who revealed that good incentive, remuneration and compensation packages, work-life balance, performance and career development as some of the improvement strategies for primary school incentives.

The finding of the study as presented in Table 5 shows there is significant difference between the mean scores teachers on adequacy of incentives and teachers retention/workforce implying that adequacy of incentives for primary school teachers plays a positive role in teacher's retention/workforce. This finding is consensus with the findings of Agboola and Offong (2018) who observed a significant relationship existed between occupational incentives (job security, remuneration, promotion, welfare) and teacher retention in private secondary schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that adequacy of incentive administration for primary school teachers is a dynamic and effective tool for reviving the value of education and retention of teachers in the study area.

Recommendations

In view of the inadequacy effect on development of staff on their career, work-life balance, emotional, psychological, mentally and socially, bearing in mind also that it can lead to other benefits such as commitment, dedication to service and job satisfaction. The researchers recommended the following:

i) there is need therefore for well trained professional counsellors to be employed in all the primary schools in the study areas so that they would work hand in hand with the school administration, authourity and government in the area of canvassing for effective remuneration and retention policies.

ii) The government, school administrators and various authourities should be encouraged to live their highest values to be honest, sincere, listen to their conscience and try to do the right thing at all times with respect to remuneration, incentive and compensation packages.

iii) Counsellors should sensitize the government on the need for great commitment, effective structuring and setting up of standard for determining the adequate incentive packages in effective teaching and learning profession.

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