

Human Resource Management Practices and Strategy for Retention in Private Schools in Bayelsa State

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Abstract

The sustainability and growth of the school system is dependent on available human potentials. This study investigated the practice of human resource management and retention among private schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study was all the teachers in private schools in Bayelsa State. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. A total of 120 teachers were randomly selected for the study and only 100 responded to the questionnaire (83.5%). A questionnaire titled: “ Human Resource Practice in Private Schools Questionnaire (HRMPPSQ) was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was validated and Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability and the co-efficient value of 0.92 was obtained. The result revealed low level human resource management and retention practice. It further showed that there is no significant difference in the responses of the teachers. The study then recommended among others that there should be trainings, workshops and skills development on best human resource management practice in private schools.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Practice and Private Schools

Introduction

Human resource management is the identification and improvement of human potentials for the growth and attainment of organizational goals. It can therefore not be over-emphasized that the level of performance including profit maximization of any organization is dependent on the ability to attract, develop and hold human potentials for its daily activities. Organizations including the school system should be concerned about the level of available human resource pursuing its set goals. There should be a well developed strategy on the management , development and retention of teachers who through instructional delivery pursue the intention and aspiration of the school (Adeyemi, 2015).

To this end, human resource has been considered as the composition of available teachers and their skills, talents, knowledge, attitudes and values required for performing the activities of the school. This practice should be more strategic to deal with the challenges facing the school as an organization (Okoye & Raymond (2013); (Onukwu, 2018); (Fajana, 2012); (Ogunu, 2001). The sustainability of the school system is quite dependent on the available human potentials. The effective utilization and retention of teachers rather than its mere availability would surely impact students academic performance (Babalola & Ige, 2012).

However, Ofuegbu (2017) noted that the non-fulfillment of the hope of staff in terms of personal and organizational expectations is the main cause of instability, uncertainty and lack of assurance in the school system. The concern therefore should be on how to retain these human potentials for the stability of the school system. The private secondary schools seems to be experiencing high labour turnover. This could also be pointing towards unhealthy human resource practice and strategy. It appears there exist wrong recruitment procedure by the proprietors of these schools and even placement. Considerable good recruitment process is a practice of human resource management that could create stability especially as it concerns teaching profession (Storey, 1995). A good recruitment strategy could create a positive psychological effects on teachers who have gone through a rigorous selection process and are more likely to feel happy and stay more focused in the school system.

There could also be issues relating to promotion and its financial benefits which might cause serious dissatisfaction among staff. Ogonor(2017) asserted that teaching job will be more stable when the salaries and promotion of teachers are made priority in governance. The practice of contentious training and development through opportunities for further studies, seminars, workshops study leave with pay etc for improved performance might reposition the private schools for future educational challenge. In the view of Vanderwiel(2016) 'teachers want and need professional development to remain happy and satisfied in the profession. In the light of this, school administrators need to be supportive in helping them to find worthwhile professional development.

Career progression is quite an initiative that should be taken within a school system that ensures consistent utilization of qualified, suitable experiences with due consideration of personal aspirations through higher placement and responsibilities. It could be a strategy for retention of teachers as it serves as motivation to many. The private school system might adopt this as a strategy for inducing stability of teachers in their schools. Larry(2015) tested the potential implications of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory for teacher reward programs by comparing changes in teachers' job-enrichment opportunities and recognition after choosing one of two

rewards and reported that there should be policy implications for school boards and state legislature to include the influences of intrinsic motivators when negotiating with teacher groups.

Meanwhile, collective negotiation is becoming more popular in the current work place where employees are allowed to discuss on issues that will improve their welfare for enhanced job performance. Could this be properly practiced in private owned schools? Hence, the need to review the current practice in private schools in Bayelsa State. According to the study by Seyoum (2011), there exist poor labour relations, inappropriate planning of teachers and staff, lack of proper recruitment and selection procedures, poor performance appraisal system, absence of facilitating training, and high turnover of teachers which resulted to critical weaknesses and limitations to function properly in selected secondary schools of East Shoa Zone. Similarly, Raed & Ren-Qian (2016) asserted that there is a variation in the number of institutions that actually apply the good practices of human resource. Adding that some practices are given more attention than the others revealing the current state of human resource strategies adopted in Palestinian institutions. Cameron and Grootenboer (2018) reported that a variety of human resource management processes were been utilized by school leaders at the functional level with little cognizance of the strategic possibilities nor an human resource management evidence based structure of practices. They noted that there is great potential for use of expertise and practices by school leaders for recruitment and selection of teachers as part of a suite of human resource management practices which may indeed lead to school improvement and eventually to improved social and economic outcomes.

Hashmi (2014) also reported that some of the educational leaders are striving to meet the educational requirements of the times and to face challenges while using the learnt strategies of human resource management to promote teachers' efficiency for the improvement of their schools. Weeks (2019) asserted that improvement in the teacher retention rate can provide educators with information, including an action plan, to implement a beginning teacher mentoring program.

Gaytan (2008) examined the perceptions held by high school business education department chairpersons regarding the characteristics of individuals entering and remaining in the teaching profession and characteristics of schools that have been successful in recruiting and retaining business education teachers. The findings revealed that attrition is higher for beginning (first 3 years) and near retirement business education teachers; and schools with higher levels of minority, low income, and low-performing students experience higher business education teacher attrition rates. Although Njuguna (2010) discovered that public schools in Kiambu East to a reasonable extent utilized best human resource

management practices such as training, vigorous selection process, compensation, and supervisory support. The researcher reported further that performance appraisal and employee participation in decision making have been practiced to a very little extent.

The theoretical link to this study is the Herzberg's theory of (1959) which focuses on two broad categories of factors, determine employee retention rate. They include motivator and hygiene factors. The motivator factors lead to employees satisfaction whereas the hygiene elements cause dissatisfaction. Motivator factors according to the theory include recognition, achievement, work, growth, and advancement. On the other hand, hygiene factors include a relationship with boss, supervision, salary, relationship with colleagues, work conditions and the company's policy.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that effective recognition of these factors would constitute best human resource practice in schools and would therefore facilitate teachers retention in Private schools.

Over the years , attention have been on public schools and how to improve teachers professional stability using recruitment, continuous training, promotion and its financial benefits and ten allowing teachers to form groups that will enable collective negotiations as strategies for retention. Much have not been reported on same issue with regard to the practice in private owned secondary schools especially in the state which have assumed major stakeholders in the provision of secondary education in line with government policies. It has therefore become imperative to investigate this practice among private schools in Bayelsa State.

Statement of the Problem

There seems a high level turnover of human potentials in privately owned schools in Bayelsa State. The rate at which teachers in some schools change job is pointing towards unhealthy human resource practice. A personal observation by the researcher shows that new set of teachers are recruited in different schools at the beginning of every new session usually at first-term. Teachers change jobs to work for companies that make them feel valuable, offering the opportunity for empowerment, career and personal growth, and the development of new skills (Huat See, Morris, Gorard, Kokotsaki, & Abdi, 2020); (Butcher& Kritsonis, 2007).

However, some teachers have noted issues relating to poor working conditions, poor remuneration, uncertain career progression and inability of school management to motivate them. It has also been observed that the school management of some private schools frown at teachers who embark on further studies for so many reasons including attractions from competitors. This happenings could result to

inability of the teachers to fulfil personal and general school aspirations just as Vanderwiel(2016) noted that the ability to recognize needs within oneself seems to be one particular factor that can help a teacher to stay in the profession. However, the support from the administration would help stability in the profession just as Oke, Ajagbe, Ogbari and Adeyeye (2016) pointed that for teachers to be retained in schools, certain management issues as they affect teacher education, must be thoroughly evaluated.

It has therefore become obvious that there is a disconnect between individual growth needs and that of the schools system. What then is the human resources practice in these schools in terms of recruitment, staff training, development and motivation that will facilitate retention for intense performance of the schools. Hence, this study was carried out to investigate human resource practice among private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of human resource best practices in private secondary schools in Bayelsa State?
2. What is the strategy for retention of human resource in private secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

Hypotheses

H01. There is no significant difference between the views of female and male respondents on strategies for human resource retention in Private Secondary schools in Bayelsa State

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey research. The population of the study was all the teachers in private schools in Bayelsa State Nigeria with a total population of 1,053. However, a total of 120 teachers were randomly selected for the study and only 100 of them (83.5%) submitted their responses accordingly. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study titled: "Human Resources Practice in Private Schools Questionnaire (HRMPPSQ). The questionnaire has a section for gender and items that dealt with human resources best practices on a 4-point Likert type rating scale coded as very high (VH), high (H), low (L) and very low (VL). A mean of 2.50 and above was considered high. The teachers in various schools were requested to assess the human resource management practice in their schools. Two experts in the Department of Educational Management University of Benin carried out face and content validity of the questionnaires. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was

carried out and the result reliability indicated co-efficient value of 0.92. A google-online form was designed and used for the administration of instruments and distributed to the various accessible whatsapp platforms of private school teachers. This is to ensure that reasonable response were received from teachers due to the Covid 19 panemic period and aviod gathering large number of teachers at a time. It is also more convinient for the teachers to willingly respond to the questionnir items throuth their mobile phone at ease. A total of 100 responses hit the inbox of the researcher. The data collected were descriptively analyzed using mean. The hypothesis was tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of human resource best practice in private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

To answer research question 1, the teachers in private schools in Bayelsa State assessed the level of human resource best practice on a 4 point rating scale. Data collated were descriptively analyzed and the result presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Analysis of Human Resource Best Practices in Private Schools in Bayelsa State

HUMAN RESOURCE BEST PRACTICE	N	MEAN (\bar{X})	REMARKS
Recruitment	100	2.81	High
Induction	100	2.50	High
Performance Appraisal	100	2.50	High
Collective Negotiation	100	1.55	Low
Total Average		2.34	Low

Critical/Theoretical Mean = 2.50, N = 100

The data in Table 1 revealed low level human resource best practice among private schools in Bayelsa State. Although the item analysis indicated that the practice in terms of recruitment is high with a mean score of (2.81), the practice of induction is also high with a mean score of (2.50) and performance appraisal is also high with a mean score of (2.50). However, the practice as it concern collective negotiation was rated low with a mean score of (1.55).

Research Question 2: What is the strategy for retention of human resource in private secondary schools in Bayelsa State

To answer research question 2, the teachers in private schools also assessed the identified strategies for human resource retention on a 4 point rating scale. They responses were descriptively analyzed and the result presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Human Resource Retention Strategies in Private Schools in Bayelsa State

RETENTION STRATEGY	N	MEAN (\bar{X})	REMARKS
Training and Skills Development Opportunities	100	1.98	Low
Promotion	100	2.35	Low
Career Progression	100	1.81	Low
Incentive Pay/Soft Loan	100	2.22	Low
Total Average		2.09	Low

Critical/Theoretical Mean = 2.50, N = 100

The data in Table 2, showed that the strategies for retention of human resource in private schools is low with a mean score of (2.09). The item analysis revealed that training and skills development is low with a mean score of (1.98); promotion strategy is low with a mean score of (2.35) career progression strategy is low with a mean score of (1.81) and incentive pay/soft loan is also low with a mean score of (2.22).

Research Hypothesis:

H₀₁. There is no significant difference between the views of female and male respondents on strategies for human resource retention in Private Secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

T-test analysis was used to test the null hypothesis state and the result is presented in Table 3

Table 3: T-Test Analysis of the Views of Male and Female Teachers on the Strategies for Human Resource Retention in Private Schools in Bayelsa State

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	48	2.94	0.50	98	0.34	7.14	Accepted
Female	52	2.90	0.46				

The data in table 3, shows that the t-cal. Value of .34 is less than the t-critical value of 7.14 thus, the null hypothesis(H₀₁) is therefore accepted that there is no significant relationship between the views of male and female teachers on the strategy for

human resource retention in Bayelsa State Schools.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed low level human resource management best practice in private schools in Bayelsa State. However the item analysis indicated high level practice in terms of recruitment, induction and performance appraisal. This is expected because the proprietors of this schools would want teachers to perform to expectation in their assigned duties. Hence, make special arrangement for employment of best candidates and also ensures adequate induction to enable them quickly settle on the job. However, many may not be happy about teachers forming groups for collective negotiation as shown in this study. The study agreed with the report by Seyoum (2011) that there exist poor labour relations leading to teachers weaknesses and limitations to function properly in selected secondary schools of East Shoa Zone. This study further affirms the reports of Cameron and Grootenboer (2018) and Raed & Ren-Qian (2016) that there is a variation in the number of institutions that actually apply the good practices of human resource. Nevertheless, the findings of Njuguna (2010) is in disagreement with this study that public schools in Kiambu East have reasonably utilized best human resource management practices such as training, vigorous selection process, compensation, and supervisory support.

The findings of research question two showed low level retention strategy among private schools in the state. All the identified strategies for retention of human potentials in organizations recorded low mean score in the schools. This study is also in agreement with the findings of Ogonor (2017) that teaching job will be more stable when the salaries and promotion of teachers are made priority in governance. A situation where teachers change school at the beginning of every session is an evidence that there exist unhealthy or low level human resource retention strategy in the schools. It is therefore emphasized that many private schools could not adequately retain their valued human potentials for the attainment of expressed objectives. Some of these schools are quick to pursue immediate profit thereby ignoring the strategy of ensuring continuous training and skills development of teachers, continuous promotion with its financial benefits attached, not considering the career growth and progression and also not interested in implementing good incentives like soft loans that will facilitate the retention of teachers. Many do not consider the nature of school business and the individual aspirations of teachers. This study therefore affirms the assertion of Ofuegbu (2017) that the non-fulfilment of the hope of staff in terms of personal and organizational expectations is the main cause of instability, uncertainty and lack of assurance in the school system. This study, is also in agreement with the findings of Vanderwiel (2016) that 'teachers want and need professional development to remain happy and satisfied in the profession. Also in agreement is the assertion of Huat See, Morris, Gorard, Kokotsaki, and Abdi (2020); Butcher and Kritsonis (2007) that teachers change jobs to work for companies that make them feel valuable,

offering the opportunity for empowerment, career and personal growth, and the development of new skills.

The hypothesis however, showed that there is no significant difference in the response of teachers as it concern human resource retention strategy among private schools in Bayelsa State. The implication, is that there is no evidence to prove that respondents' gender status affected their views on strategies for human resource retention strategies in private schools in Bayelsa State.

Conclusion

The study concludes that human resource management best practice and retention in private schools in Bayelsa State is low. Attention should therefore be focused on the strategies for retaining human potentials for the sustainability of the private schools whose impact in the provision of basic education to citizens has become so obvious. This findings is in agreement with *Oke, Ajagbe, Ogbari and Adeyeye (2016) that for teachers to beretained in schools, certain management issues as they affect teacher education, must be thoroughly evaluated.*

Recommendation:

Based on the findings and discussion on this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Private Schools owners should be encouraged to improve the level of human resource best practices in their schools.
2. There should be trainings, workshops and skill development on best human resource management practices in private schools.
3. School administrators and propriators should pratice continous promotion with financial benefits to teachers, allow them join groups for effective collective negotiations.
4. State government should support private schools in terms of financial subventions to enable them meet up with the practice retaining good teachers through good application of incentive measures.

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