

Human Resource Utilization 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 utilization 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 study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. 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.

Keyword: *Human resource, Utilization, Academic achievement, Government Secondary School*

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Background to the Study

No organization can grow beyond the caliber of its people. This is because the primary resource through which any organization can achieve its aim is the people that run the activities of the organization. This importance has been the driving force behind all human resource activities, including in schools. However, the importance of utilizing human resources in schools takes a greater importance, especially as schools are places where people are equipped to drive innovation and excellence.

There is no doubt therefore that the building up and efficiency of an organization, whether private or public, depends to a large extent upon how effective human resource are utilized in the organization to attain its desired objective. It must seek and obtain the willing co-operation of the people who work there. Management must work with employees and must therefore develop programmes, and policies that will enable it to obtain the best result from the employees.

Direct definition of the concept of human resource management are littered in the literature. According to Nwachukwu (2006), human resource utilization has been used to describe the aspect of management that encompasses all activities from finding employee for employment to their full utilization at work and planning for their retirement. According to Gbosi (2003), 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. Human resource utilization is a part of the larger process of human resource management which include other functions such as recruitment, employment, training, redeployment, transfer, safety and departure of employees from an organization. Human resource utilization is therefore concerned with ensuring that the other processes of human resource management are aimed at optimal utilization of available employees to ensure effective implementation of the school policies and programmes. This is because as Ejiofor and Eze (1994) averred, in schools qualified and resourceful manpower acts as a centre of gravity for other factors of production such as land, labour and capital.

In Rivers State, the question has not been if there are adequate human resource personnel, rather the question has been to what extent has the available human resource been utilized in advancing the educational agenda of the state. Successive governments have attempted to employ teachers at the primary and secondary levels to drive the advancement of learning at these levels. However, this has not yielded the desired results. 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." This is quite important at the secondary school level because of 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.

To this end, the Rivers State Government at the state and local government levels, private school owners, school managers and even Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have attempted to improve human resource utilization 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. However, the result obtained is not commensurate with the outcome obtained so far. It has become imperative to understand empirically the extent to which human resources are effectively utilized in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of human resource utilization in government secondary schools on the academic achievement of students in Obio/ Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of the present study included:

- i. To examine the degree of utilization of available human resource in Public secondary schools in Obio/ Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- ii. To examine the factors that will improve the effective utilization of human resource in public secondary schools in Obio/ Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study

- i. To what extent are the available human resources utilized for academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/ Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- ii. What are the factors that improve the effectiveness of human resource in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

- i. **Hypothesis One:** The extent available human resources are utilized for academic achievement of students do not differ significantly based on their years of working experience.
- ii. **Hypothesis Two:** The factors that improve the effectiveness of human resources in public secondary school do not significantly differ based on their years of working experience.

Literature Review

Human Resource Utilization in Secondary Schools

People employed in our secondary school as resource can be utilized in the same way as that of financial and other material resource are utilized to produce the highest benefit. The highest assets of an organization are its human resource, this is because no matter the amount of capital invested in an organization, its success or failure depends on the quality of the people who plan and execute its programmes.

Gbosi (2003) defined human resource utilization as the ability of an institution to use human resource effectively. The availability of human resource in the secondary school is the first step in the right direction. Its provision should therefore be matched with optimum utility in order to ensure effective implementation of the secondary school management. It is against this backdrop that the issues of underutilization and over utilization are brought into focus in our public secondary school system today. The deepening economic crises in the less developed countries of the world have made it imperative that the available human resources be maximally utilized to avoid colossal wastes.

Basically to Eric (2011), human resource utilization is the creation of conditions such that the members of the organization can achieve their own goals best by directing their efforts towards the success of the enterprise. The contribution of Mack-Ben (2002) and laid important groundwork in what was formerly known as the "MANPOWER FIELD", and is today most frequently known as the "HUMAN RESOURCE FIELD".

Secondary schools like other formal organization need human beings to execute their programmes and achieve set goals. The human resource constitutes the number one resource requirements in the secondary. The students form the first level of human resource. The teaching and other non-teaching staff forms the next human resource genre. Others include the mail runners, gate clerks, messengers, cooks, as well as educational planners and administrators among others.

Anderson (2009) discovered that teachers who regularly monitor and supervise their students' learning by checking students' work and helping individual student to overcome errors and learning difficulties are likely to have student who exhibit higher level of academic achievement,

Orluwene (2016) and Adesina (1999) discovered that human resource played important role in the academic achievement situation than any other factor of production and that the quality of education lingers upon the qualities of teachers available. Edward (1991) found that as school's condition improved from one category for example, from poor to fair students, standardized achievement scores raised an average of 5.45 percentage points.

Hallack (2010) emphasized that the availability, relevance and adequacy of educational resource items contribute to academic achievement and that unattractive school buildings, crowded classrooms, non-availability of playing ground and surrounding that have no aesthetic beauty can contribute to poor academic performance.

Igwe (2016) is of the view that human resource (teachers) is utilized through school administration, student management, classroom teaching and school environmental management. However, teaching and non-teaching staff of secondary schools have their different ways of carrying out their duties.

Fundamentally, human resource serves as the operators or facilitators in the processing mechanism. To succeed in their hard assignments, they have to be properly trained and qualified. Such education and training are needed to provide them with expertise and skills to impact knowledge, to provide guidance and counseling to students, to shape their entire behavioural patterns so that they will become useful adults.

Conclusively, human resource utilization involves obtaining, developing, reward, motivating and managing the members of the organization. Indeed, it means getting the organization right, providing effective motivation and leadership, obtaining and developing the right people, paying and treating them fairly and getting them involved in working productively.

Relevance of Human Resource Utilization on Academic Achievement

Teaching staff competence and attitude ultimately determine the level of success the school will achieve. Training programmes can improve both competence and attitudes. It is individual staff who executes the plans, policies and procedures of a school. If they do not know how to execute these or are poorly utilized, even the best of strategies cannot help the school. The school culture and standard practices determine how teaching staff go about their roles. When a teaching staff moves from one school to another, she or he takes along the style he/she has become accustomed to. If the new school has a different culture and way of doing things, the new teaching staff can cause conflict or even ridicule. Such negative feedback can result in the teaching staff losing all the enthusiasm that he/she brought in, as without motivation performance suffers. Induction, training and making new teaching staff familiar with the culture and practices of the school is important for both experienced teaching staff and new staff.

Human resource utilization in education is important for several reasons. Peretomode (2003), highlighted the importance of human resource utilization in education to include the following:

- a. It makes certain that those who graduate from different levels of educational system receive the desired skills and knowledge.
- b. It identifies the current and future human resource requirements, so that there will be no shortage of human resource to work towards the realization of the organizational goals.
- c. It ensures that the staff regularly undergoes development programmes to enable them carry out their present and future duties properly.
- d. Its selection and placement of staff is based on laid down principles to avoid favoritism that may mar the realization of educational objectives.
- e. It provides the grading and evaluation system of staff which enables the employee and the educational authorities to know how far the employee has fared during a specific period.

Methodology

For the study, the descriptive research design was adopted. This research design was taken in order to describe and assess the extent of human resources utilization on 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. However, only teachers in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area were used in the study. The final sample for the study was made up of 384 teachers.

A researcher-developed instrument was used for data collection titled "Human Resources Utilization for Academic Achievement Questionnaire" (HRUAAQ) and was divided into three section A, B and C. Section A elicited 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 extent the available human resources are utilized for academic achievement. It has 6 items that were responded using 4 points Likert format of very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), low extent (LE) and very low extent (VLE). They are weighted 4 point, 3 point, 2 point and 1 point respectively. Thus a maximum of 24 marks and a minimum of 6 marks are expected of.. Furthermore, Section C elicited information on the factors that improve effective utilization of human resources. It is made up of 6 items responded using 4 point Likert format of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. On that note they provided a maximum of 24 marks and a minimum of 6 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 0.807 and 0.823 were obtained for sections B and C respectively. The instrument was administered on all the sampled staff of in their respective schools. 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.

Result Presentation

Research Question One: To what extent are the available human resources utilized for academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean scores of the respondents on the extent, the available human resources are utilized for effective academic achievement

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	N	\times	STD	Ranking
1	Science teacher	131	161	49	43	384	2.99	0.96	3
2	Art teachers	179	181	24	-	384	3.40	0.61	2
3	Technical teachers	99	123	90	72	384	2.65	1.06	5
4	Social science teachers	191	175	12	06	384	3.43	0.63	1
5	Vocational science teachers	109	171	54	50	384	2.88	0.97	4
6	Non-teaching staff	92	106	91	95	384	2.51	1.11	6
	Aggregate Mean						2.98		

Table 1 shows that the means scores of items 1-6 are 2.99, 3.40, 2.65, 3.45, 2.88 and 2.51 respectively. Since the criterion mean is 2.50, it is then deduced that the mean scores for the 6 items (items 1-6) are greater than the criterion mean. A critical look at the table 1 revealed that except non-teaching staff all others like the science teachers, art teachers, technical teachers, social teachers and vocational science teachers are approximately utilized at a high extent for effective academic achievement. However, in hierarchy based on their mean scores, it is obvious that the social science teachers are the most utilized human resources for effective academic achievement followed by the art teachers, science teachers, vocational science teachers, technical teachers and then the non-teaching staff. As indicated by the aggregate mean of 2.98 the available human resources generally are utilized at approximately high level for effective academic achievement.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that improve the effective utilization of human resource in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean scores of factors to improve utilization of human resource

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	N	\times	STD	Ranking
7	Provision of enabling and conducive environment for teaching and non-teaching staff	133	177	54	20	384	3.10	0.83	3
8	Provision of quality training and retraining programmes	169	172	31	12	384	3.30	0.75	1
9	Provision of good working conditions	148	151	65	20	384	3.11	0.87	2
10	Combination of various leadership styles as occasion demands them.	89	107	91	97	384	2.49	1.11	6
11	Free flow of communication and initiative between the rank files within the school management system	103	127	85	69	384	2.69	1.06	5
12	Good student management	137	151	62	34	384	3.02	0.94	4
	Aggregate Mean								

In table 2, it is shown that the mean scores of items 7-12 are 3.10, 3.30, 3.11, 2.49, 2.69, and 3.02 respectively. A critical observation on the items' mean scores revealed that except for item 26 which relates to how combination of various leadership styles can improve the effectiveness of the available human resources in the public secondary schools in Obio/ Akpor Local government Area all others had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. hence it is perceived that the factors that can help to improve the effectiveness of human resource in public secondary schools in Obio/ Akpor Local Government Area are; the provision of enabling and conducive environment for the teaching and non-teaching staff, provision of quality training and retraining programmes, provision of good working conditions, free flow of communication and initiative between the rank files within the school management system and good student management.

Again, table 2 also revealed based on the items mean scores that improvement of the effectiveness of the human resources can best be achieved by the provision of quality training and retraining programmes, followed by provision of good working conditions, provision of enabling and conducive environment for teaching and non-teaching staff, good student management, free flow of communication and initiative between the rank files within the school. Management system and then combination of various leadership styles as occasion demands.

Hypothesis One: The extent available human resources are utilized for academic achievement of students do not differ significantly based on their years of working experience.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis on the years of working experience influence on the mean scores of the staff on the extent available human resources is utilized for effective academic achievement.

Years of Working Experience	N	Mean	Std	df	T-Cal	T-Crit	Decision
16-30 years	178	18.00	5.51	382	0.378	1.960	Not significant
1-15 years	186	17.77	6.19				

Table 3 revealed that the mean scores of staff who had worked for 16-30 years and those for 1-15 years on the extent available human resources are utilized for effective academic achievement are respectively 18.00 and 17.77. The standard deviation of their scores are 5.51 and 6.19 respectively: so based on their mean scores it could be deduced that the staff who had 16-30 years working experienced had a higher mean score than their counterparts who had 1-18 years working experience by a mean difference 0.23.

Obviously when this mean difference was subjected to an independent t-test analysis, a calculated t-value of 0.378 was obtained at a df of 382 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that the mean scores of staff on the extent available human resources are utilized

for effective academic achievement did not differ significantly based on the years of working experience.

Hypothesis Two: The factors that improve the effectiveness of human resources in public secondary school do not significantly differ based on their years of working experience.

Table 4: Independent t-test on the influence of years of working experience on the mean scores of staff on factors improving effectiveness of human resources

Years of Working Experience	N	Mean	Std	Df	T-Cal	T-Crit	Decision
1-15 years	186	17.48	5.93	382	0.713	1.96	Not significant
16-30 years	198	17.91	5.75				

In table 4, it is shown that the mean scores of the staff with 1-15 years and 16-30 years working experience on the factors improving the effectiveness of human resources are 17.48 and 17.91 respectively. The standard deviations of their scores are 5.93 and 5.75 respectively. Based on their mean scores it is revealed that the staff with 16-30 years working experiences had a higher mean score than those with 1-16 years with a mean difference of 0.43.

Furthermore, when the mean difference was subjected to independent t-test, a calculated t-value of 0.713 was obtained at a df of 382 at 0.05 level of significance: hence the years of working experiences did not significantly influence the means scores of the staff on the factors improving effectiveness of human resources. So the null hypothesis is accepted and retained.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings in table 1 is a clear indication that human resources like arts teachers/technical staff and non-teaching staff are adequately utilized for effective academic achievement in public secondary school in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Comparatively, human resources like science teachers, technical staff and vocational science staff are over utilized. This could be attributed to lack of human resources recruitment planning. For instance some special subject teachers were made to teach both junior and senior secondary sections of these schools, which made the teaching work uncomfortable for them. In schools that are science oriented, majority of the students offer sciences and in this case the science teachers were over utilized to enhance effective teaching and learning. In like with the above findings, Gbosi (2003) indicated that the provision of these human resources should therefore be matched with optimum utility in order to ensure effective implementation of the school objective.

A look at table 2 revealed that the respondents identified provision of enabling environment for teaching and non-teaching staff, provision of quality training and retraining programmes, provision of good working conditions, combination of various

leadership styles as occasion demands them, free flow of communication and initiatives within the school system and good student management as the factors that improve human resource for effective academic achievement in public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Their reasons for responding in this way might be attributed to the fact that providing conducive teaching and learning environment for the teachers will help them discharge their duties well; qualified training and retraining programmes for them will expose them to acquiring new skills and knowledge; good working condition will motivate them into effective teaching, combination of various leadership styles as occasion demands will showcase the competence of a given leadership; free flow of communication and initiatives will deepen and sustain better understanding and cooperation between the teacher and school management thereby leading to uniformity of purpose and accelerated goal attainment. This finding is in line with the findings of Maduagwu (2006) that when principals and staff have cordial relationship, it can affect academic achievement positively. It is also in line with the findings of Eyimina (1990) that employee training and development improves employee job performance and morale. The discoveries of Ajdemrana (1998) that motivation actually leads to increase in job performance and the outcome of lack of motivation is poor attitude to work is also in support of this finding.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in the light of the findings from the present study

- i. Staff of public secondary schools should be properly managed and utilized for the growth of educational system.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Staff needing training and development programmes should be identified and helped to grow so that their services can be effectively utilized for improving academic performance of students in schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

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