

Human Resource Management Practices and Performance of Private School Teachers in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The survival of any organization depends on the proper management of its material, financial and human resources. The importance of human resource management in relation to productivity in an organization cannot be over emphasized because it is the life wire of every organization. This study examines the HR practices that can enhance performance from selected private school teachers in Abia state and to determine the HR practices that can endanger their performance as well as their retention at their work place. The population for the study consisted of all teachers in Aba and Umuahia metropolitan city of Abia state, Nigeria. The study is backed up by Ability, Motivation and Opportunity model AMO, which explains the relationship between HR practices and performance. Data was collected using face to face interview from a number of teachers from the selected private schools. Data collected were analyzed using thematic approach. The result of the study shows that of all the human resource management practices by school owners, salary payment mode is the most important. It is recommended that school owners should place importance on salary payment to their teachers as and when due, since it is one of the practices that can make them change from where they are to another school.

Keywords: Firms, Human Resource Management, Performance, Private Schools, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) includes tasks like HR management, employee training, growth compensation management, efficiency, worker relations, health care, employee satisfaction as well as provision of employee services. It includes policies and

practices set to improve organizational efficiency, engagement of employees and work quality (Khan & Adullah, 2019). Human Resource Management could also be seen as the process of employing people, training them, compensating them, developing policies relating to them, and developing strategies to retain them. As a field, HRM has undergone many changes over the last twenty years, giving it an even more important role in today's organization. The importance of HRM in relation to productivity in an organization cannot be over emphasized because it is the life wire and heartbeat of every organization. No matter the industry, all companies have one thing in common: they must have people to make their capital work for them.

Human resource management is the toughest duties of a manager since humans differ in terms of attitudes values, aspirations, motivations, assumptions, psychology and lifestyle. A firm's success depends on the capabilities of its members because poorly recruited staff cannot work effectively to achieve a firm's goal. Most challenges, opportunities and frustrations in an organization are people related.

Like any other industry the private school sector have the teachers as their human resource capital to make things work. The teachers are like the raw materials used to produce the final goods that amount to profit. Human resource are critical for effective education functioning. Human resources were once relegated to second – class status, but its importance has grown dramatically in the last two decades. Again, its new importance stem from adequately recruited, selected and supervised, inducted and adequately rewarded, provided for, properly developed, appraised and promoted on the job. They will be committed to the job, remain dedicated and productive in the educational system. It also represents a significant investment of the educational efforts. If managed well, human resource can be a source of competitive strength for the education. Strategically, human resource must be viewed in the context as the financial, technological and other resources that are managed in any organization (Onah, 2008)

With the human resource practices, effective management of the school is possible and it should be determined through those practices who and why type of skills are needed for the successful implementation of instructional activities. Thus school administrators who are responsible for school management in terms of HRM take on important role (Dagli & Uzunboylu, 2007). Human resource systems are closely linked with business strategies, thus it positively affects business performance as well. (Lee et al., 2010).

Problem Statement

The problem that influenced this study is the fact that it is not well known if the human resource management practices adopted by private school owners are effective at retaining their teachers. Of the human resources in education system, teachers form the basis around which all the operation of school activities revolves. The rate at which

private school teachers' change from one school to another has become a serious concern as to why and what could be the reasons. Hence, private school teachers are always seen jumping from one school to another. This calls for deeper study to unearth the HR practices that are favorable or unfavorable that determines their stay or their leaving the school. Possible gaps in the literature reviewed lead support for the need of this present study. As against most empirical studies which dwelt on companies/industries, In a study of (Foss et al., 2015) discussed that employees who are rewarded for their hard work are more likely to share knowledge, thus the knowledge sharing of human resource management motivates employees, indirectly enhancing productivity. 6 Danish car parts manufacturing companies with more 18760 than employees from which 8855 participated in the research. Data was obtained via survey. This study will be examining the different HRM practices / strategies used by private school owners in Abia state to retain their teachers. The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether the human resource management practiced by private school has any impact on teacher's performance, determine the particular human resource management practices that can make teachers remain, and ascertain the human resource management practices that can endanger their stay in schools.

To achieve these objectives, the following hypotheses stated in null form were proposed.

Ho₁: Human resource management practice like (creating a safe work environment) does not significantly influence teacher's retention in private schools.

Ho₂: Human resource management practice like (strengthening employer – employee relations) does not significantly impact on teacher's performance in private schools.

Ho₃: Some human resource management practices like (payment of salary as and when due) do not have significant effect on teacher's decision to leave a school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Porter & Brophy (2018) posted that effective teachers demonstrate their commitment to teaching by accepting responsibility for pupil learning and behavior. They added further that genuine interest in education and enthusiasm for learning are essential characteristics of effective teachers. However, Durksen and Klassen (2017) proved that global teacher engagement changes over even a brief period of time in starting teachers with a commitment to the profession mirroring the pattern of change in engagement.

The extent of skills, competency and ability of the human resources of an institution influences its ability to achieve its specified goals and objectives to preserve its attained positions (Hartani, 2015). Meanwhile, workforce competence and pro – activeness is

proportional to the extent at which institutions will achieve their mission and to compete favorably with others.

Cary (2006) in his emphasis on the importance of Human Resource Management in the growth of an industry, institutions and any organization has this to say. For many years it has been said that capital is the bottleneck for any developing industry. I don't think this any longer holds true. I think it's the workforce and the company's inability to recruit and maintain a good workforce that does constitute the bottleneck for production. I don't know of any major projects backed by good ideas, vigor and enthusiasm that have been stopped by a shortage of cash. I do know of industries whose growth has been partly stopped or hampered because they can't maintain an efficient and enthusiastic labor force and I think this will hold true even more in the future.

No organization can thrive without adequate provision of human resource that would suit their requirement. Nwankwo (2000) observed that there is no organization without human resource. Even if the organization has got all the money and materials it requires. It must still require capable people to put them into effective use. It is therefore safe to claim that human resources are about the most important of the three essential resources of an organization. It is equally true to say that human resource are the highest asset of any organization, because no matter the amount of capital invested in an organization, its success or failure depends on the quality of people who plan and execute its programmes.

According to Libert et al. (2020), the confidence environment among the employees is related to job security; the more the job security, the higher the confidence environment, which further develops the employee's commitment towards the organizations workforce.

According to Prabhu et al. (2020), job security includes a certain level of reciprocity. It is claimed that firstly, the organization has to indicate to the employees that their job is safe followed by the workers expressing their confidence regarding the security of the job. This eventually leads to an increased employee's commitment towards a better performance, which in turn have benefits for the organization. Zhao & Zhou (2020) found out that bringing in the right employee allows the business to use the most of its resources and has a positive effect on overall efficiency and minimizes training and development cost.

Theoretical Review

Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) model is used to back up this study. This is human resource model that explains the relationship between HR practices and

performance by analyzing HR approaches that improve ability, motivation and opportunity. It highlights the three separate work system elements that form employee characteristics and affect organizational progress. HR professionals can use an individual's ability, motivation and opportunity to measure their performance. A company that prioritizes all three elements can enjoy more success than an organization that only prioritizes one or two. If employees perform optimally, the organization can achieve its goals. Institutions can optimize the three elements to enhance employees' performance and achieve their objectives. HR professionals can use an individual's ability (A), motivation (M) and opportunity (O) to measure their performance (P). We can represent the information with the following equation: $P = AMO$. The AMO framework was first proposed 11 years after Blumberg and Pringle's (1982) work by Bailey (1993), and later developed by Applebaum et al. (2000). Features of AMO model include 1. Proactive Employee Behavior. 2. Human Resource Practice and 3. Leader Member Exchange. One of the weakness of this model is its theoretical development has been stagnant, and without deep consideration of the variables relationships and interactions. In this study human resource approaches like good working conditions, suitable environment and salary payment as and when due can make the teachers to perform optimally and help their schools to achieve their aims.

Empirical Review

Anekwe and Anekwe (2020) investigated the extent to which effective human resource development practices could enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in River State, Nigeria. Five research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses were formulated in line with objective of the study. Descriptive research design was adopted and the population of the study was 8,452 secondary school teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size comprised of 265 teachers drawn through cluster sampling technique. A researcher development questionnaire titled Teachers Performancethrough Effective Human Resource Development Practices Inventory (TYEHRDPI) was used for data collection. Mean, used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that development of human resources is essential for educational institutions to have motivated teachers and ensure high performance. The study, therefore recommended that in – service trainings and development programs should be organized regularly for teachers.

A study conducted by (Glaister et al., 2018) examined the relationship between HRM practices, employee performance, training and developing skills, recruit process, and overall business performance. The survey was sent to 800 Turkish companies with no less than 50 employees. 198 companies responded with eligible surveys. Based on the result, it was concluded that effective HRM strategies have a positive relationship with overall employee satisfaction and business performance.

In a study of (Foss et al., 2015) discussed that employees who are rewarded for their hard work are more likely to share knowledge, thus the knowledge sharing of human resource management motivates employees, indirectly enhancing productivity. 6 Danish car parts manufacturing companies with more 18760 than employees from which 8855 participated in the research. Data was obtained via survey. A study conducted by Collins & McNulty, 2020, claimed that off- the job training imparts improved efficiency, while on-the-job training doesn't improve on-the performance.

Bartra et al., (2007) in their research suggested that there are positive associations between HRM functions and cost – effective outcome. The data was collected via a survey from 132 healthcare facilities in Victoria, Australia. In addition, the results indicated that women reported higher levels of negative interaction regarding human resource management, in opposite to male employees. Other organization factors as strategic goals clarity, company history, and organizational culture also have an impact on the perception of human resource management efficiency.

(Renee Baptiste 2008) in their study addressed the positive benefits of HRM on employees. 51 employees from a local government organization participated in the survey. The results indicate that additional management support increased employee wellbeing. It can be argued that increased employee wellbeing has a positive impact on organization performance.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methodology was adopted for this study. The population of study consists all teachers in the selected private schools of Umuahia and Aba metropolitan cities of Abia state, Nigeria. A purposeful decision was taken to select three schools each from the two metropolitan cities in Abia state which is Aba and Umuahia, knowing that a replication of the response could be gotten in other schools in other states of the federation.

Table 1: showing number of schools and number of teachers.

NO	School name	Metropolitan city	Number of teachers
1.	Jacobseed International Schools	Aba	26
2.	Career Builders Academy	Aba	20
3.	Wonderland International Schools	Aba	22
4.	Divine Lift International Schools	Umuahia	26
5.	Bright Star Academy	Umuahia	18
6.	Best Choice International School	Umuahia	20

Source: Researcher Field Observation

Thematic approach will be used in this study for data analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for: identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. Qualitative data will be collected from the teachers using in- depth interview which will entail recording their responses on phone recorder, playing back the recorder, transcribing the responses, presenting and subjecting them to analysis. Below are few out of some research questions used to elicit information from the teachers.

Table 2: Showing analysis of in – depth interview

Questions	Themes within data	Enough data extracts to demonstrate prevalence of the theme
1. Does your school actually practice human resource management?	They do, to some extent	<p>Teacher1 (Jacobseed International School Aba): If I understand what you mean by HRM, they do but not to the teachers satisfaction.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Jacobseed International School Aba): Yes they practice it to an extent.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Career Builder Academy Aba): Yes they practice some. Not enough human resource practice is displayed.</p>
		<p>Teacher 2(Career Builder Academy Aba): They do practice human resource management in our school.Though personally, i don't feel the impact.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Wonderland International Schools Aba): Yes they do practice HRM here, but not actually the way we want it. But they are trying.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Wonderland International School Aba): Yes the school owner/management practices human resource management. I think this helps them in their program development and school growth.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Divine Lift International Umuahia): I don't think so.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Divine Lift International Umuahia): If I understand what you mean, they do but not impactful.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Bright Star AcademyAcademy Umuahia):Honestly, I don't think so if I know what you mean by that.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Bright Star Academy Umuahia): Aunty, to tell you the truth, I don't understand what you mean by human resource management.</p>

Questions	Themes within data	Enough data extracts to demonstrate prevalence of the theme
		<p>Teacher 1 (Best Choice International School Umuahia): They do practice HRM but to our satisfaction, but they try.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Best Choice International School Umuahia): Yes they do Practice.</p>
<p>2. What are the HRM practices that can make you stay back or leave your present school</p>	<p>Delay in salary payment, poor working conditions, poor human relations/feedback mechanism</p>	<p>Teacher 1 (Jacobseed International School Aba): In our school, the director is trying in salary payment but sometimes it does not come as and when due. A good rapport with the management can go a long way to make me stay back. I can work here as long as am paid well and respected, but if am owed repeatedly it can make me to look for work elsewhere. Also when I am given incentives or compensated for jobs well done, it goes a long way to motivate me.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Jacobseed International School Aba): I can be in this school as long as the teacher / management relationship is good. Also if the management takes interest on the teachers' welfare it will be a great motivator for me. Good salary package can make me to remain but meager salary or constant delay in salary payment can make me want to withdraw. A school where the owner or administrator takes interest in the teachers' opinion will be a place for me to stay back.</p>
		<p>Teacher 1 (Career Builder Academy Aba): A good salary scale can enhance my performance at work and also make me to stay back. Also if the relationship of the management of the school with the teachers is good it can make me not to think of switching to another school. Personally I am afraid of too much work load, as some school managers are in the habit of giving teachers more</p>

Questions	Themes within data	Enough data extracts to demonstrate prevalence of the theme
		<p>subjects than they can handle. This can make me leave the school for another.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Career Builder Academy Abia): Once there is equal treatment among myself and colleagues I will be comfortable. Proper compensation policy will also make me to stay back and also boost my morale for work. Poor teacher feedback can also discourage me. I like schools where the owner will from time to time seek our opinion or contribution for the growth of the school.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Wonderland International School Aba): Our school is good like any other private school. Am so much interested in my salary. It is not enough. I think my pay and that of others is very small. It is not commensurate with what we put in. It should be scaled up for me and others. Am also concerned with the absence of leaves like the public schools have it. Also sometimes the management doesn't care about our opinion.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Wonderland International School Aba): The things that can make me reconsider leaving my present place of teaching is non - payment of salary and poor working conditions / environment. There are no career development activities / opportunity that can drive us as teachers. Again there is no training to develop the teachers and this is not good for us here. A good working condition can sustain my stay and also good teacher / management relationship can also sustain my stay.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Divine Lift International School Umuahia): Our school is good like any other private school. Am so much interested in my salary. It is not enough. I think my pay and that of</p>

Questions	Themes within data	Enough data extracts to demonstrate prevalence of the theme
		<p>others is very small. It is not commensurate with what we put in. It should be scaled up for me and others. If it continues without change, I can look for a better place. Am also concerned with the absence of leaves like the public schools have it. Also sometimes the management doesn't care about our opinion.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Divine Lift International School Umuahia): The things that can make me reconsidering leaving my present place of teaching is non - payment of salary and poor working conditions / environment. There are no career development activities / opportunity that can drive us as teachers. Again there is no training to develop the teachers and this is not good for us here.</p> <p>Teacher 1 (Bright Star Academy Umuahia): The things that can make me reconsider leaving my present place of teaching is non - payment of salary and poor working conditions / environment. There are no career development activities / opportunity that can drive us as teachers. Again there is no training to develop the teachers and this is not good for us here. A good working condition can sustain my stay and also good teacher / management relationship can also sustain my stay.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Bright Star Academy Umuahia): School owners are in the habit of paying meager salaries to teachers. It worries me. Am always contemplating leaving my present place of work because of how small the salary is. At times the salary is delayed. Appreciation of our input by the school owner can make me work harder and put in my best at all time. Also promotions and remunerations that come with it can make one perform better. An environment where the</p>

Questions	Themes within data	Enough data extracts to demonstrate prevalence of the theme
		recruitment process of the teachers is poor can hinder the stay of qualified teachers who wouldn't want to partner with unqualified ones.
		<p>Teacher 1 (Best Choice International School Umuahia): I can perform best in an environment that am well appreciated, well paid and also in a conducive environment. Though the salary is not always enough but the management tries to pay. It does come as and when due and sometimes it is delayed. Here the school lacks supervision from the management bringing about high level of indiscipline on the part of students and teachers too. Also poor appraisal of the teachers gives me concern and can make me contemplate moving to another school. Salary increment can make me perform better.</p> <p>Teacher 2 (Best Choice International School Umuahia): - I don't think in my own opinion that the school is practicing the human resource management thing. They pay salary when they want. They don't really regard us. On their own they can issue sack letter. There is so much indiscipline here I don't know about other private schools. Also our rapport with the management is poor. Working conditions and environment are not always favorable to us. These and other things make one to be searching for better places. But if there is good working condition with good salary I can continue with them.</p>

Discussion of Findings

The result from the interview speaks volume of how much salary payment mode is a big concern to virtually all the teachers. The teachers want their salary to be paid as and when due, to be commensurate to their input/performance and not to be unnecessarily delayed. Findings also show that some school owners are less concerned about their teachers

welfare and development due to lack of programmes geared towards upgrade and appraisal. Most school owners don't focus on their employee health and wellbeing not knowing that it could endanger productivity in their industry. It was also found out that the feedback mechanism of most of the schools is very poor as a result of very poor employer – employee relations. They care less about the opinion and contribution of the teachers towards the school. Teachers see this as a big oversight and at the end of the day productivity is endangered breaking even in the industry is difficult. Of the human resource management practices used by private school owners that endanger the teachers stay, is poor conducive environment and working conditions. According to the teachers, this can make them decide to leave the school.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that school owners should take salary payment as and when due serious since it is one of the most HRM practice that can make them contemplate moving from where they are to another place. It also concludes that education is a veritable means of human resource management and nation building.

- School owners should maintain absolute good relationship with their teachers by developing a good feedback mechanism to enable them know the teachers mind and allow them the opportunity of contributing their quota to the school development.
- Human resource management should be a special department full blown to see to the affairs of the teachers and other stakeholders associated with the school.
- The study recommends that HR planning in private schools must ensure the recruitment, selection and placement of talented and committed teachers and staff in schools. Besides, training and development should be continuous, comprehensive and result oriented.
- Private school owners should strategize to make sure that they pay salary as and when due, since it is one of the human resource practice that is common to all the teachers likely to make them quit their job. Also private school owners should make their salary package attractive so as to sustain their teachers as well as strategize to stop delay in salary payment.
- Recruitment and hiring of qualified staff should be done with utmost care to avoid endangering productivity which in turn minimizes profit generation.

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