

Teachers' Demands and the Management of Primary School in the North Central States of Nigeria

Akpakwu Ocheme Simon Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State

Olaitan Temitayo Oluwakemi

Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education, Zing, Taraba State

Sanusi Al-Isah

Department of Education Administration and Planning, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State

Abstract

The paper discusses the concept 'teachers' demands' as the needs of the teachers that is fought for through industrial actions. The paper examines the roles of the teachers in teaching and learning process. The paper highlights the meaning of the concept primary education. The paper contends that if teachers' demands are not met, there would be problems of laxity and indiscipline in the school and work would be left undone and the set goals of the primary school would be unachievable. The paper concludes that stakeholders in education should rise to speak with one voice to condemn the treacherous act committed against primary education by the governments in the North central states of Nigeria. The paper recommends that a law should be put in place to abolish all private primary schools, which their existence has resulted to the total neglect of public schools. Also, all political office holders should not be allowed to send their wards outside the country to school but be compelled to send their children to government public primary schools. This will re-direct the attention of the government to do what is right and just to the teachers, lift the standard of the public primary school and build confidence in the people.

Keywords: Teachers' Demands, Management, Primary School.

Introduction

The quest for the implementation of all legitimate demands of the teachers was the reason for an industrial disharmony between the government and primary school teachers of some states in the North Central States of Nigeria. One may be quick to ask why teachers' demands? The answer to the above question is not farfetched. Teachers' demands in Nigeria arouse as a result of non-satisfaction of the teachers' with their working condition. By working condition here, we mean the various issues that affect the teachers in their work place. These issues according to Ananga (2011) include non-payment of upwardly review salaries and allowances; bad working environment; unfavourable school climate among others.

It could be said that teachers' demands have a link with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is regarded as the positive or negative evaluative judgments people make about their jobs (Weiss, 2002). For Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job. In accordance with these definitions, teacher job satisfaction is conceptualized as teachers' overall affective reactions to their work or to their teaching role (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004).

In Nigeria, teachers are recognized as indispensable human resource and the most important element in the educational system. The teacher was treated as the pivot on which we hinged our educational development. But issues surrounding teachers' demands have not been given adequate attention, which make them unsatisfied. Teachers' satisfaction has been considered as a vital factor for the improvement of the education system and thus has got an unshakeable place in educational researches. Satisfaction is a psychological phenomenon and its concept is highly intricate and subjective. Teachers' satisfaction describes how content an individual teacher is with his or her job. It expresses the extent of match between the teachers' expectations from the teaching and the rewards that the teaching provides. To this end, teachers' demand is one of the key factors in school dynamics and is generally considered as a primary dependent variable in terms of which effectiveness of the school is evaluated.

In recent times, stakeholders in the Nigerian education (teacher inclusive) have lamented continuously on the problems experienced in the education sector. The problems in the educational sector have resulted into decays which have reached an unprecedented level to the extent that most schools particularly primary schools in the North Central States of Nigeria operate under unconventional means without instructional structures; worn out equipment (where they are available at all); overcrowded classrooms among others (Ogbeche, 2009). The teachers are at the receiving end of the debilitating state of the system of education which has defied any meaningful solution. A casual visit to any primary school in Nigeria would reveal the extent to which this level of education has been neglected. Accordingly, educational facilities at the primary level are in a terrible shape;

primary schools in Benue state and Kogi state are in a terrible state apart from those that are located in the state capitals renovated by Universal Basic Education (UBE) Boards (Iwambe, 2014). To worsen the situation in the North Central Nigeria, states like Benue and Kogi refuse to implement the newly approved teachers 'minimum wage of eighteen thousand naira only (₦18,000=) and other enhanced allowances after when such package has been implemented for the other categories of workers in the respective states. This therefore calls for serious questioning.

In his observation, Shafritz (2005) affirms that salary is the main demand which a worker is making of his employment and that what an employee wants is simply to be assigned work that he or she is supposed to do and the amount of money they will earn by the end of the day for such a job and nothing else. Robbins and Judge (2008) assert that teachers derive job satisfaction from such factors as: the job itself, salary, possibilities to advance themselves, supervision, and relationship with their workmates. They argue that of all these job factors, the issue of remuneration and enjoyment with the job itself indicated the greatest correlation to high job satisfaction levels on the overall.

The popular chant "No Teacher, No School" by the protesting primary school pupils on the street of Makurdi on Thursday, 24th October, 2013 in support of their teachers attested to the ill-treatment meted out to the primary school teachers in the state (Iwambe, 2014). Education they say is life and the instrument by which life is birthed is the teacher, and today the world is talking about movement from education to knowledge when teachers are relegated to the background in Nigeria. When society fails to place premium on knowledge it becomes doomed, one must be an utmost optimist to say that states like Kogi and Benue in the North Central Nigeria are not doomed. It is against this background that this paper will discuss the ways in which teachers' demands affect the management of primary school in the North Central States of Nigeria.

The Teacher and His Demands

All discussions which relate to teachers and their demands are discussions on leadership, job satisfaction and labour matter. The teacher should rightly be a model and the example in schools; the best thing any country can produce. Aluede (2011) describes the teacher as "the man that makes hard things easy" (p.40). To Awoniyi (2007), the teacher is the "central man" (p.34) in the social and economic development of any nation. The teacher imparts us with the knowledge needed to create new institutions, use new technologies, cope with our environment, and alter our patterns of behaviour. Awoniyi further said that teacher is the leader in that crucial area that is a catalyst for the growth of the closely interrelated economic, political, cultural and demographic systems.

Majasan (1995) defines a teacher as one who teaches (especially young ones), builds up, instructs, trains and guides them for healthy growth and stable adult life. The teacher is also someone who instructs others or provides activities, materials and guidance that facilitate learning in either formal or informal situations. His job goes beyond teaching into moulding young lives, guiding youth, motivating students and general character – training. In other words, a teacher can be viewed as one whose profession includes teaching, instructing, impacting knowledge and innovations, and guiding learners to pass through the learning process.

Good teachers are essential for the success of any national educational programme. It is now generally accepted that the teacher is the pivot on which the success of any programme of educational renewal like the 9-3-4 educational programme hinges. According to Ndagana (2009) teaching involves the interaction of so many personnel and professional elements that is impossible to separate them. But throughout his work, the teacher has only one concern: the development of children under his care. As a matter of fact, as children enter school, a first matter of importance to parents is the teacher. Parents in the opinion of Lawal (2009) expect that the teacher of their children; will be a warm and affectionate person, although he needs not be overtly demonstrative for the children to feel his lovingness. He must accept and respect children, be aware of their stage of growth, and be sensitive to individual differences among them. Lawal further explains that the teacher must accept without prejudice the children immaturity while at the same time opening up the possibilities of more mature behaviour.

Aflalo and Gabay (2012) stated further that teachers have special demands placed on them. They must be persons whose own emotional house is in order. Exposed to children's adoration, hostility, ambivalence, ambition and impulse, the teacher must be sufficiently able to differentiate between the children's need and his, so that he can deal with them with good sense. He must deal with his own biases, fears and anxieties to keep them from interfering with his good judgement. A good teacher therefore to Aflalo and Gabay is a bit of a philosopher, psychologist and sociologist as well as an instructor. It is therefore not surprising that the teacher is saddled with the responsibility of translating the curriculum and breaking it down to meaningful objectivities and goals. The question then is if these tasks is left in the hands of disgruntled person, we need not guess what the outcome will be as we are a witness to the latest impasse between some state governments and their teachers in the north central states in Nigeria.

In many states of Nigeria, Ogbonnaya (2009) stated that primary school teachers are not well paid by the state government. In most state in Nigeria, they are owed salary arrears ranging from three to eight months.

In the north central states of Nigeria for instance, state like Benue and Kogi refuse to implement the minimum wage of ₦18,000 for the primary school teacher after implementing the package for other categories of workers in the two states. Under such conditions, the teachers refuse to attend classes. In Benue state, the teachers of primary schools have been on strike since October 4, 2013 till date. The teachers according to Iwambe (2014) embarked on industrial action to demand that the government of Benue state should honour its agreement to pay them a minimum wage of ₦18,000; provide sufficient instructional materials; and improve school infrastructural facilities. It is sad to note that not one out of these demands was met by the government, not even the most important and pressing one that has to do with remuneration was addressed. The case of Kogi state on the other hand is pathetic as Obahopo (2014) reported that the closure of primary schools in the state as a result of industrial action of teachers to press on their demands is affecting the future of over 1.3 million pupils and their teachers. According to Obahopo, primary schools were closed in Kogi state for six months in 2011, five months in 2012, almost the whole year in 2013 and now close again in 2014 with the teachers vowing not to resume until their demands are met. Similarly, in Plateau state government owes primary school teachers not less than five month salary due to insufficient funding of education in the state. Even in the remaining state in the North Central States of Nigeria where the minimum wage package had been implemented, it was through serious negotiation with the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) of the said state before a mutilated version of the real package is approved. And this has a serious effect on the management of primary school.

The Meaning of Management

The term 'management' has been defined in various ways. Akpakwu (2012) defined it as a process of getting the work done in order to get the objectives of the organization accomplished in a pre-planned way. According to Musaazi (1982), "Management is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organized human and material resources within a social system. In such a social process, there is always a structural hierarchy comprising the subordinates and superordinates. Sherlekar (1994) described it as a guideline, leadership and the control of the efforts of a group of people towards some common objectives. Management has also been seen as the effective organization and utilization of the human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives (Yawe, 2010). It is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of task in achieving the goals and objectives of an organization.

Considering the meaning of management in the school sector, Nwadiani (1998) described management as a variety of sequential and related activities that are designed and carried out in order to effectively and efficiently achieve the goals of teaching and learning in relation to the needs of the society. This achievement could be made through effective planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, directing, motivating, controlling, budgeting and evaluating programmes as well as undertaking risks and handling of uncertainty (Olagboye, 2004; Uyanga, 1995).

Relating the meaning of management to primary school, we can therefore refer to educational management at the primary school level as the process of coordinating activities and making decisions that would lead to the attainment of the goals of primary education but unfortunately because of the unfavourable working climate in some states in the North Central part of Nigeria, the reverse is the case.

Primary Education

All over the world, primary education has been regarded as the most patronized by people. This perhaps may be due to the fact that it is the foundation of the whole educational pursuit, which is expected to provide literacy and enlightenment to the citizens (George, Olayiwola, Adewole and Osabuohien, 2013). The importance of primary education can therefore be seen in the sense that all beneficiaries of the other levels of education by necessity have to pass through this level (Adebayo, 2009). What this means is that primary education, the education given in an institution for children aged 6-11 years constitute the bedrock upon which the entire education system is built.

According to National Policy on Education (FRN) (2004), Primary Education is the "Education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus" (p.14). This definition is in consonance with the World Bank (2006) definition which stated that, "Primary Education sometimes referred to as elementary education, refer to the education programmes that are normally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other sources such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music" (p.22-48) which serve to develop pupils' ability to sustain and use information about the immediate environment and the nation.

The goals of primary education as stated in the National Policy on Education section 4(16) of FRN (2004) is to:

- i. inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy skills, and the ability to communicate effectively;
- ii. lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;

- iii. give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- iv. mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- v. develop in the child the ability to adapt to his/her changing environment;
- vi. give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his/her capacity;
- vii. provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

For any government to achieve the above goals in Nigeria, requires putting the right peg in the right hole. By this, it becomes imperative for government to put in place all the factors that will facilitate the achievement of these objectives and also ensure their maintenance. According to Akale in National Teachers' Institute (NTI) (2002) stated that teachers are the most important resource in education programme. To ensure the best possible quality in the teaching workforce, the policies implemented by the government must take into account the interplay of certain critical variables that influence teachers' career such as pre-service training, recruitment policies, remuneration and continuing education programme. Teachers should be given both local and international scholarship to upgrade and update their knowledge and skills in order to influence changes in education. They should be encouraged to further the spirit of enquiry and creativity and assisted to fit into the social life of the community and society at large. This will go a long way in realizing the above stated objectives.

Teacher's Demands and the Management of Primary School in the North Central Nigeria

On the basis of conventional thought, funding is the most significant challenge with developing North-central education system. recent development in the educational sectors of state like Benue, Kogi and Kwara have shown that increased funding is the panacea to North-central educational system. Budgetary allocation to education sector in Benue and Kogi states since 2005-2013 has been grossly inadequate (see table 1).

Table 1: North-Central States' Education Budget from 2005-2013 in Billions

States	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Benue	44.91	46.3	44.84	64.65	63.29	89.49	71.6	159.78	130.992	715.852
Kogi	31.31	33.89	45	52.37	78.669	78	80	126.411	132.6	658.25
Kwara	33.9	35.66	60	66.5	72.2	67	60.61	85.1	94.4	575.37
Nasarawa	25.42	29.05	35.46	55.7	58.3	87.5	81.506	104	108	584.936
Niger	33.79	42.08	50	55.45	69.09	111	129	94.05	83.7	668.16
Plateau	29.4	31.9	45	63.02	79.5	74.864	86.562	115	133.5	658.746
Total NC	198.73	218.88	280.3	357.69	421.049	507.854	509.278	684.341	683.192	3861.314

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/01/fg-states-lgas-squander-ngr-in-9-years>

The table above shows steady increase in budget allocation to education in the North-Central zone during the period under review. In spite of the increase, funding for Benue and Kogi states' education sector is grossly inadequate due to the large size of the two states.

However, as important as funding, teachers are important instrument in education. They are also the pivot on which the educational process hang. Teachers play a major role in the whims and caprices of the educational system. They can influence the teaching-learning outcomes either positively or negatively because they determine the quality of instructional delivery and also influence quality education when it comes to implementation of the curriculum and educational policies. But it has been observed that many factors affect teachers' achievement in their mandate. For instance, primary school teachers in some states in the north central part of Nigeria are facing numerous challenges relating to their work. These problem ranges from non-payment of teacher's minimum salary package and security to acute shortage of infrastructures and instructional materials. Okonkwo (1997) listed teachers' demand facets as follows (see table 2).

Table 2: Facets of Teachers' Demand

Teachers Demand Facets	Description
Pay	Demand concerning salaries and remunerations.
Promotion	Denying teachers their promotion and appropriate authority responsible for their day-to-day activity.
Benefits	Denying teachers opportunities for further education, development and training.
School policies	Confining teachers through the use of school policies, syllabus and administration to repetitive activities, methods and programmes.
Operating conditions	Poor administrative and organizational climates in the school system.
Nature of teaching	Non-professionalization of teaching in Nigeria, lack of teachers' recognition and low status.

Source: Okonkwo (1997).

The problems enumerated in the above teachers demand facets table can be applicable to teachers' demands struggle in Benue state and Kogi state. It is these demands that forced the teachers to embark on strike action in Kogi state since 2011 to date, and in Benue state since October 2013 to date. The main issue then with teacher's demands and management of primary school is that when teachers embark on strike, their morale would be low and this would lead to general laxity and indiscipline in the schools (Ogbonnaya, 2009). Also, their work will be left undone during the strike and the entire school system suffers the repercussion. Fagbamiye (1987) observed that teacher's lack of dedication to duty has led to a fall in the standard of education. This belief goes to reinforce the idea that teachers do not deserve better treatment than what they are getting at present.

Furthermore, the manager of primary schools is grievous bearing in mind of his position and the dual roles he is expected to play. First as a teacher whose right to good life has been infringed upon and second, as a head teacher/manager whose duty is to co-ordinate the activities of other teachers/divergent groups in order to achieve the objectives of the school. The task of achieving these goals is a herculean one because the head teacher will require the efforts of other teachers to get things done. With the teachers on strike, nobody among them will be willing to render their services to the school and the school activities will be grounded totally.

In addendum, considering the importance of primary education as the foundation of other levels of education, adequate care should be taken to ensure that it is organized properly. Continuous strike of primary school teachers will make the objectives impossible. It is obvious that unless the teachers are provided with the drive that would energize them, their best would not be attained and the accomplishment of the educational goals would be difficult.

Equally, it is important to note that the primary concern of every management is the accomplishment of set goals. At the primary school level, the management wants to achieve among other things: inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy skills, effective communication, laying foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, citizenship education, character and moral training, development of manipulative skills and providing basic tools for further education. How can these objectives be achieved when teachers are in and out of classroom due to strike? It becomes difficult and practically impossible for the management of primary school to achieve the above set goals of the primary school.

Conclusion

The general conditions under which the primary school teacher work in Nigeria is pathetic and teachers are therefore left with no alternative than to change the situation through industrial action as we are experiencing strike today and tomorrow in Nigeria. No doubt, when two elephants fight, definitely it is the grass that suffers. Incidentally, the grasses are the pupils/students, parents, head teacher/management of primary schools, society, and even the striking teacher: let us all rise and speak with one voice to condemn this treacherous act committed against primary education by the government because a stitch in time saves nine.

Recommendations

The National Assembly should make a law that will abolish all private primary schools, which existence has resulted to the total neglect of public primary schools, all political office holders should not be allowed to send their wards outside the country to school but be compelled to send their children to government public primary schools, all government personnel that is civil servant should have their children schooling in public primary schools and all members of the public should also patronize public primary schools. This will re-direct the attention of the government to do what is right and just to the teachers, lift the standard of the public primary school and build confidence in the people.

Also, the administration, control and funding of primary education should be put under exclusive list

with federal government taking total responsibility over its administration. An agency like TETFUND to be named PEFUND that is primary education fund be established and all limited liability company in Nigeria should release two per cent (2%) of their profit to a common purse. This money should be used by federal government to run primary education through the primary boards of the various states that makes up Nigeria.

References

- Adebayo, F. A. (2009). Parent preference for private schools in Nigeria. *Ibadan Journal of Educational Studies*, 1, 1-6
- Aflalo, E. & Gabay, E. (2012). An information system for dropout prevention. *Journal of Education and Information Technologies*, 17, 21-30
- Ajayi, I. A. (2007). Achieving universal basic education in Nigeria: Strategies for improved funding and cost effectiveness. *The Social Sciences*, 2, 342-345
- Akale, T. (2002). *Revamping Public Secondary Education*. Paper presented on the need for capacity building of school managers and teachers in Nigeria. Micom Ada, Ousun State.
- Akpakwu, O. S. (2012). *Educational Management: Theory and Practice*. Makurdi: Destiny Ventures
- Aluede, O. (2011). Managing Bullying Problems in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Some counselling interventions for implementation. *The African Symposium*, 2, (1), 138-145
- Ananga, D. E. (2011). Typology of school dropout: The dimensions and dynamic of dropout in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31, 374-381
- Awoniyi, S. (2007). Millennium Development Goals on Education and the future of the Nigerian child: *Journal of gender and development*, 7, (1), 31-39
- Fagдемиye, B. (1987). Making schools effective in Nigeria. *Journal of Education Research*, 5(1), 65–78.
- George, T. O., Olayiwola, W. K., Adewole, M. A. & Osabuohien, E. S. (2013). Effective service delivery of Nigeria's public primary education: How active are non-state actors. *Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 22-34
- Iwambe, D. (2014, June 22). In defence of primary school teachers in Benue. *Blueprint*, Pp.1-2
- Lawal, M. (2009, July 12). The teacher and vision 2020. *Daily Trust*, D6-D7
- Locke, E. A. (1976). Toward a theory of task motivation and incentives. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1297-1349). Chicago: Rand McNally
- Musaazi, J. S. (1982). *The Theory and Practice of Educational Administration*. London: Macmillan Press
- Ndagana, J. M. (2009). Rebranding Nigeria: The Role of Teacher Education. *Sahel Journal of Teacher Education*, 1, 1-12
- Nwadiani, M. (1998). Management in Education. In M. Nwadiani (Ed). *Educational Management for Sub-Sahara Africa*. Benue City, Nigerian Society for Educational Planning (NSEP) in association with Monose Amalgamates.
- Obahopo, B. (2014, May 15). Nigeria: NGO petitions presidency over plight of Kogi teachers. *Vanguard*, B2-B3
- Ogbeche, C. (2009, July 11). Crisis in Education Sector: Whither Nigeria? *Leadership Weekend*, 23
- Ogbonnaya, O. N. (2009). Social and Political Context of Educational Administration. Nsukka, Chuka Educational Publishers.
- Olagboye, A. A. (2004). *Introduction to Educational Management*. Ibadan: Daily Graphics Nigeria Limited
- Okonkwo, O. (1997). An investigation into the problems of teachers' management in Kwara State Secondary Schools. *Studies in Educational Planning and Administration*, 1(2), 49–58.
- Robbins, S. P. & Judge, T. A. (2008). *Essentials of Organizational Behavior*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Shafiriz, J. M., Ott, S. & Jang, Y. S., (2005). *Classics of Organization Theory*. Belmont, USA: Wadsworth.
- Sherlekar, S. A. (1994). *Modern Business Organization and Management based contingency approach to the organization*. Girgaion Bombay: Himalayah Publishing House.
- Skaalvik, F. & Skaalvik, B., L. (2010). A study of organizational commitment, attitude towards work and job satisfaction of post-graduate teachers, *Journal of Educational Research and Extension*, 41(2), 1-15.
- Uyanga, R. E. (1995). *Theories, Theme and Issues in Educational Management*. Lagos: Hall of Fame Educational Publishers
- Wajasan, F. S. (1995) *A Guide to School Effectiveness in Nigeria*. Ibadan. Laville Publications.
- Weiss, R. (2002) *Modern education for the junior high years* (2nd ed). Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.
- World Bank (2006). School Education in Nigeria: Preparing for Universal Basic Education. *Human Development*, 2, 22-48
- Yawe, A. A. (2010). *Educational Management*. Katsina-Ala: Eddison Publishers
- Zembylas, M., and Papanastasiou, E. (2004). Job satisfaction among school teachers in Cyprus. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42, 357–374.
- <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/01/fg-states-lgas-squander-ngr-in-9-years>

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

