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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' DISTRIBUTION ON TEACHERS' RETENTION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

Edakpor Eloho¹ and Asiyai Romina I.²

1. Department of Educational Foundations & Administration, College of Education Warri, Nigeria.
2. Professor, Department of Educational Management & Foundations Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state. The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. The population of the study was made up of was the 5322 teachers distributed to the 539 public primary schools in the eight local government areas of Bayelsa state. The sample of the study was 428 teachers representing 7%. The instruments for data collection include a check list and a questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using percentages, mean and standard deviation which were used to determine level of teachers' distribution and retention. While the z- test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that teachers were properly distributed among urban schools but poorly distributed among rural schools. Research questions 2 answered for both urban and rural schools showed average mean scores well above the bench mark of 2.50 indicating ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that; government of Bayelsa State should ensure that equity is maintained in the distribution of primary school teachers to promote teachers' retention; government of Bayelsa State should map out effective strategies that could help to monitor teachers' distribution especially in rural primary schools for their retention and should provide better remuneration packages that would help to boost teachers' retention in rural primary schools.

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Introduction:-

Education is considered as the panacea for national development hence nations all over the world place major emphasis on educational policy in designing plans for accelerated development. Consequently, various programmes have been launched in Nigeria aimed at the universalization of access and promotion of equity in educational opportunity for the citizenry. This access to education is entrenched in the National Policy on Education and equity is contained in section 18 of the 1999 Nigeria Constitution, as amended. By supporting this, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014), guarantees the provision of compulsory, free and universal basic (primary) education for every Nigerian child of school age. Perhaps this is in recognition of the fact that a breach at this level of education could cause a major breakdown in every other level in the life of the learners concerned.

Corresponding Author:- Edakpor Eloho

Address:- Department of Educational Foundations & Administration, College of Education Warri, Nigeria.

As the foundation of other levels of education, primary education is basically an indispensable aspect of education in the preparation of human capital for life opportunities and preparation of children for higher levels of education. The primary school is made up of pupils mainly from their mid childhood (5 years) to pre-adolescence age (9 – 12 years). Primary education is the level where appropriate educational foundation is expected to be laid on which the rest of the educational systems rest. The aims and objectives of primary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) are as follow:

1. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;
2. Lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking;
3. Promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity;
4. Instill social norms and values in the child;
5. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the changing environment; and provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulative skills that will enable him/her function effectively in the society within the limits of his/her capacity. It is worthy of note that the successful achievement of the goals of primary education requires the equitable distribution and possible retention of high quality teachers to meet the needs of the pupils and society.

Teacher retention is an aspect of educational research that focuses on how certain factors like school characteristics and teacher demographics determine whether teachers stay in their schools, move to different schools, or leave the profession before retirement (Shehnaz & Uihadi, 2015). Teacher retention is also a procedure laid up for the motivation of teachers by the government and school administrators to ensure their satisfaction and to encourage skilled and competent workers to continue working with the school organizations. Muriithi (2020) opined that the term 'retention' came to limelight in 1970's and early 1980's. Noting further that prior to that time, people got into organizations and stayed for a very long time, sometimes for their entire working life (Muriithi, 2020). In the view of Mbiu, (2019), retention is a deliberate effort by an organization to create a conducive environment which can engage employees for a longer period. Teacher retention is also considered as a system of maintaining teachers within the school or field of education (Kavenuke 2013). The main objective of retention is to ensure that productive and proficient employees do not move from the organization as this could have negative impact on productivity and service delivery (Samwel, 2017).

Teachers' distribution connotes the way available teachers are deployed to schools. It's the systematic movement of teachers after the initial activities of recruitment to schools based on schools' demand. Teacher distribution explains how school administrators arrange for the regular supply of teachers to schools to meet the needs of the individual schools. Adeyemi (2009) sees teachers' distribution as procedure through which the regular employment of the proper kind and number of teachers necessary to accomplish the goals of the school is achieved. Teachers' distribution also includes teachers' selection and systematic movement to schools based on schools' demand for teachers. Although, this expression seems idealistic as most studies in Nigeria and other parts of the world revealed that teachers' distribution may not have been fully based on schools' demand which could account for the perceived disparity between the number of teachers serving in urban schools and those at the rural schools. Probably, teachers' distribution was not carried out in line with the approved standard of 1/35 teacher/ pupils' ratio in public primary schools (NPE, 2014). By supporting this, the report of the African Regional Studies programme of the World Bank (1997) revealed a pitiable scenario in Africa Basic Education- Bayelsa state, Nigeria inclusive. The report highlighted that most schools in Sub-Sahara Africa suffer from inadequate supply of teachers in some schools even though there was oversupply in other schools (World Bank, 1997). Perhaps, to ensure the standard teacher-pupil ratio, the distribution of teachers ought to meet the required number of teachers in the teaching subject areas of the school system. In that case, the distribution of teachers would not be termed improper.

The level of teachers' distribution could relate to the retention of teachers especially in rural areas. Ezekiel, (2011) accentuated that adequate number of qualified teachers is necessary for quality attainment in primary education. The stock of teachers in a nation, is determined by the number of teachers supplied to the educational sector. However, the distribution of teachers to public primary schools has been challenged by certain factors which include; Pupils' Population, Political Interference and Inadequate Financing.

Pupils' Population:

Population is the aggregate in statistical figures of all living organisms that can be found in a place at a given time. Pupils' population therefore, is the total number of pupils that are enrolled in a given school system at a given time. The population explosion in Nigerian schools has become a major determinant of teachers demanded for in the

schools. This is so because an increase or a decrease in pupils' enrolment could affect the distribution of teachers. Ebong (2006), writing on "teacher supply and demand, remarked that teacher requirement depends primarily on the number of learners coming forward to be educated", and it can be calculated using the number of children approaching the conventional school age in the population. Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006) relate the reason for population explosion in Nigerian schools to the great awareness that has been created in Nigerians and the realization of the importance of education in the development of any nation. Also, education is seen to have the capacity to maximize the creative potentials and skills of individuals for self- fulfillment and general development of the society (FGN: 2014). Onyeagwu and Nwadiokwu (2018) noted that the enrolment of children into schools has remained higher than the system's capacity to accommodate. They also agree that the awareness of the advantages of education has contributed to classes being overcrowded as everybody wants to be educated. It is believed that the availability of teaching personnel motivates the learners, increases the teachers' efficiency, promotes their productivity and their retention (Ugwanyi, 2013). Teachers' motivation is crucial for their retention and adequately motivated teachers focus more efforts on goal attainment (Asiyai, 2011).

Political Interference:

One major constraint that has been observed to have challenged the effective distribution of teachers among public primary schools in Nigeria is political interference as politics connotes power and every political party has its culture developed from a combination of ideologies. Whawo (1990) asserts that the "ideology of those in power differs; these he noticed could be liberal, dictatorial, capitalistic, communistic and humanistic". He further stressed that those political ideologies strongly mirror the nation's educational system. Olawolu and Quadri (2013) further supported this assertion by opining that even in a multi-party system, the main fact remains that education is a political agent since it must in its own nature, either tend to maintain the status quo or promote change, depending on how it is organized, who organizes it and the purpose to which is put. This can account for the posting and reposting of certain teachers who after the initial employment and deployment, seek for redeployment because of their political affiliations. It is also sad to note that most teachers on the payroll whose designations are rural areas, do not show up in the schools and when complaints are made by school heads, not much is done about it because of their connections with the power players; political gladiators in politics.

Inadequate Financing:

Education finance is the total amount of money allotted to the education sector by the government of a country for the attainment of educational goals. Teachers are the major education resources whose expenditure falls into recurrent expenditure. Unlike other education resources such as school buildings, equipment and facilities whose expenditure could occur once and their maintenance in subsequent times, teachers' expenditure on the other hand, is carried out on a monthly basis from the point of employment to that of retirement. Finance is seen to pose a major challenge to effective teachers' distribution since the economic condition of a nation might be a major factor in determining how financially buoyant the education sector of that nation would be. It also determines further how well the schools will be equipped in terms of human and material resources such as facilities, laboratories, libraries etc.

Although, communities, parents and private sectors have been making efforts in raising fund for education indirectly through setting up of school buildings and handing over same to the government to oversee, providing notebooks and textbooks and providing human resources and equipment necessary to run the schools (Nwafor, 2012), yet the demand for school resources still far exceeds their supply. Hence Ebohinmen (2012) notes teachers' supply was solely based on available resources. The author states further that funds availability facilitates demand for teachers.

Statement of Problem

Bayelsa state has been experiencing a trend in which most professional teachers migrate from rural areas to urban areas. The reason for this massive migration may include among others, most rural settlements in Bayelsa state are associated with peculiar features and are faced with unique situations compared to urban areas. Schools in rural settlements in Bayelsa state, the area of study of this work, have inadequate supply of qualified teachers and experience low level teachers' retention as most of the teachers posted to teach in schools in these rural areas, usually find a means of getting redeployment to an urban settlement where the living and working condition are more preferable (Aremu, 2018). This situation gives room for a gross imbalance in the ratio of teachers to pupils in rural schools.

Consequently, the number of permanent teachers posted by the government to rural public primary schools is always too low compared with the number of pupils available in the schools. The rest teachers found in rural schools are either communities' employed teachers, teaching practice students or those employed by Parents/Teachers' Association (PTA), and always on adhoc basis. Hence, rural schools' administrators are severally challenged with the difficulty of developing strategies to help teachers working in their schools become more efficient and to achieve a higher rate of retention. It is against the importance of the teacher, the role of the learner and the realization of the aims and objectives of primary education, that this researcher intended to examine teachers' distribution as probable determinant of teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the Study:-

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study was set to;

1. Find out the level of teachers' distribution in rural and urban public primary schools in Bayelsa state.
2. Determine ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of teachers' distribution in rural and urban public primary schools in Bayelsa State?
2. In what ways does teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the opinion of urban and rural teachers regarding the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state.

Methodology:-

The study adopted the descriptive research design based on the ex-post facto because of the descriptive nature of the research. The population of the study was the 5322 teachers distributed to the 539 public primary schools in the eight local government areas of Bayelsa state. The sample of the study was 428 teachers representing 7%. The instruments for data collection include a check list and a questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using percentages, mean and standard deviation which were used to determine level of teachers' distribution and retention. While the z-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results:-

Research Question 1.

What is the level of teachers' distribution in urban and rural public primary schools of Bayelsa State?

Table 1:- Mean and standard deviation analysis on the level of teachers' distribution in urban and rural public primary schools of Bayelsa state.

Variables	School Location	Number of Schools	Pupils' Enrolment	Number of Teachers Required	Number of Teachers Available	Teacher-Pupil Ratio	Remark
Bayelsa State	Urban	31	14,724	421	523	1:28	Proper Distribution
	Rural	76	18,645	533	399	1:47	Poor Distribution

Source: Field work 2022

Table 1 showed the analysis of level of teachers' distribution in urban and rural public primary schools of Bayelsa state. To meet up with the approved teacher-pupil ratio of 1:35, the 31 urban schools sampled in Bayelsa state required a total of 421 teachers as against the 523 as shown on the table with an average teacher-pupil ratio of 1/28. However, the results revealed that the level of teachers' distribution in rural schools of poor. The 76 rural schools sampled showed a total of 399 teachers as against the 533 teachers required thereby revealing a shortfall in the number of teachers required. Thus, it can be concluded that there is proper distribution of teachers in urban schools while there is poor distribution of teachers in rural public primary schools in the state.

Research question2:

In what ways does teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state?

Table 1:- Mean and standard deviation analysis on the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools of Bayelsa state.

S/N		Urban schools			Rural schools			Urban and Rural Schools		
		Mean	SD	R	Mean	SD	R	Mean	SD	R
1.	Effective teacher deployment policies can help to increase teacher retention level	3.28	0.49	+	3.10	0.71	+	3.19	0.6	+
2.	Pattern of teachers' distribution in the state affect their level of stay in the school.	3.25	0.46	+	3.04	0.63	+	3.15	0.55	+
3.	The more the number of teachers in a school the more they desire to stay in that school	3.00	0.55	+	2.82	0.72	+	2.91	0.64	+
4.	Teachers hardly stay in a school where the members of the community do not value education	2.90	0.62	+	3.30	0.58	+	3.10	0.6	+
5.	Most teachers strive to work their way from a school where the community is hostile.	2.96	0.81	+	3.18	0.88	+	3.07	0.85	+
6.	Teachers stay in a school where the management policy is flexible	2.88	0.74	+	2.92	0.62	+	2.90	0.68	+
7.	The age of teachers distributed to a given school can determine their willingness to stay.	2.56	0.93	+	2.42	1.09	-	2.49	1.01	-
8.	The level of experience teachers transferred to a school determine the level of teacher retention in that school.	3.10	0.48	+	2.74	0.99	+	2.92	0.74	+
9.	The presence of experienced teachers in a school acts as an encouragement for new ones to stay	3.00	0.40	+	2.88	0.79	+	2.94	0.59	+
10.	The quality and availability of infrastructural facilities in schools where teachers are posted to affect their desire to stay in the school.	2.94	0.51	+	2.98	0.83	+	2.96	0.67	+
Average Mean		2.98	0.60	+	2.93	0.78	+	2.96	0.69	+

Source: Field work 2022

KEY: R = Remark, + = Agreed, - = Disagreed

Data in Table 2 revealed mean rating and standard deviation on ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in Bayelsa state. Available result publicized that respondents agree in all the items with mean rating above the benchmark rating mean score. In specific, for urban schools, respondents agree on effective teacher deployment policies, community hostility, pattern of teacher distribution in the state, the quality and availability of infrastructural facilities, presence of flexible management policy, the age of teachers distributed to a given school, the presence of experience teachers in the school and the level of experienced teachers transferred to the school with mean rating 3.28, 3.25, 3.00, 2.90, 2.96, 2.88, 2.56, 3.10, 3.00 and 2.94 respectively.

Consequently, data in table 2 showed mean rating and standard deviation on ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in rural schools with all the items exceeding the 2.50 benchmark score except item 7 which states that the age of teachers distributed to a given school can determine their willingness to stay with a mean score of 2.42. Respondents agree that effective teacher deployment policies, pattern of teacher distribution in the state, the

level of experienced teachers transferred to the school, number of teachers in a school, community hostility, the quality and availability of infrastructural facilities, flexible management policy with mean rating 3.10, 3.04, 2.82, 3.30, 3.18, 2.92, 2.74, 2.88 and 2.98 respectively.

In the same vein, when both locations were combined, the average mean score for all items indicate a mean rating above the benchmark score of 2.50. Hence, all the respondents agreed on item 1-6 and 8-10 as ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in both urban and rural schools with mean rating 3.19, 3.15, 2.91, 3.10, 3.07, 2.90, 2.92, 2.94 and 2.96 respectively. While item 7 is not a way teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in both urban and rural schools as indicated in the mean rating of 2.49. Also, the grand mean of 2.98 and 2.93 for urban and rural schools respectively indicate respondents have similar views on the ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in both urban and rural schools.

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference between the opinion of urban and rural teachers regarding the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state.

Table 3:- Z-test of difference between urban and rural teachers on the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	DF	Z-Calculated	Z-Critical	Decision
Urban teachers	124	2.98	0.60	426	1.5581	1.960	Not Significant
Rural Teachers	304	2.93	0.78				
Urban & Rural Teachers	428	2.96	0.69				

Table 3 shows z-test of difference between urban and rural teachers on the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools. The result revealed that the z-calculated value of 1.5581 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960 at degree of freedom 426 and 0.05 level of significance. Hence hypothesis one above is upheld. Thus, there is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers regarding the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state.

Discussion:-

Findings on level of teacher's distribution in rural and urban public primary schools in Bayelsa state.

Table 1 showed the analysis of level of teachers' distribution in urban and rural public primary schools in Bayelsa state. To meet up with the approved teacher-pupil ratio, the 31 urban schools sampled in Bayelsa state required a total of 421 teachers as against the 523 as shown on the table and an average teacher-pupil ratio of 1/28. Thus, indicating that urban schools in both states have teacher pupil ratio less than the approved teacher-pupil ratio by National policy on Education (2014) and further indicate that the distribution of teachers to the urban schools is proper.

However, the results revealed that the level of teachers' distribution in rural public primary schools is improper since the 76 rural schools sampled showed a total of 399 teachers as against the 533 teachers required. showing an average teacher – pupil ratio of 1/47 thereby indicating a short fall in the required number of teachers going by the approved teacher-pupil ratio by the National Policy on Education (2014). Thus, it can be concluded that there is improper distribution of teachers in rural public primary schools in the state.

Ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state.

The findings for research question 2 shown in Table 2 indicate the ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention in Bayelsa state. They include: effective teacher deployment policies can help to increase teacher retention level (3.28) community hostility (2.96), pattern of teacher distribution in the state (3.25), the quality and availability of infrastructural facilities (2.94), presence of flexible management policy (2.88), the presence of experience teachers in the school (3.00) and the level of experienced teachers transferred to the school (2.74). The age of teachers distributed to a given school (2.56). These are ways teacher distribution influence teacher retention in public primary schools in Bayelsa state. his finding agreed with Acom (2010) who found that factors of job satisfaction such as good school environment, flexible management policy and effective teacher deployment policies

made teachers more committed and enhance their retention. The finding also concurs with Sutchter, Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2019) who reported that working conditions and management policy improvement increased the likelihood of teachers remaining in their schools.

The hypothesis tested in this regard revealed that there is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers regarding the influence of teachers' distribution on teachers' retention in public primary schools. This implies that respondents in both urban and rural locations have similar perceptions on the ways teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention.

Conclusion:-

The study concludes based on the findings that the level of teachers' distribution in public primary schools in Bayelsa State is not proper in rural areas but proper in urban areas and that teachers' distribution influence teachers' retention.

Recommendations:-

The following have been recommended:

1. Government of Bayelsa State should ensure that equity is maintained in the distribution of primary school teachers to promote teachers' retention.
2. Government of Bayelsa State should map out effective strategies that could help to monitor teachers' distribution especially in rural primary schools for their retention.
3. Government of Bayelsa State should provide better remuneration packages that would help to boost teachers' retention in rural primary schools.

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