

Teachers' Workload Management as a Tool for Effective Delivery of Secondary Education in Edo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Teachers' Workload Management as a Tool for Effective Delivery of Secondary Education in Edo State, Nigeria. The design of the study was a descriptive survey, and the population of the study consisted of 276 public senior secondary school principals in Edo-State, Nigeria. A sample of 110 principals was randomly selected using a stratified proportionate sampling technique. Two research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled: Teachers' Workload Management Questionnaire (TWMQ). Mean and rank order statistics were used to analyze the research questions, while Z-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Findings revealed that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) such as computers, interactive whiteboard, power-point presentation, among others will help in reducing teachers' workload. Subsequently, recruitment of adequate qualified teachers, reviewing work processes and load distribution regularly, ensuring that teachers are not employed to teach more than one subject and prioritizing task for teachers will help to reduce teachers' workload. The study recommended that school administrators should set realistic workloads for teachers to ensure effective delivery of secondary education.

Keywords: Teachers, Work-Load Management, Secondary Education

Introduction

Secondary education is the second rung of the Nigerian education ladder and also, a stepping-stone to higher education. It provides an opportunity for primary school leavers to acquire more knowledge, develop skills and prepare them to leave effectively in our changing society. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined secondary education as 'the education children receives after primary education and before the tertiary. Secondary education is an important factor to be considered in order to achieve the philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria and all around development of the nation whether scientifically, politically, technologically and otherwise. Teachers are professionals and as such the pivotal of the whole educational process. Work is an extremely important component of teachers' lives and health. The ability for teachers to work represents a multitude of benefits including, for example, an opportunity to earn one's livelihood, to provide for the family, to contribute positively and meaningfully to society, and to satisfy one's own drive for achievement. Such work-related outcomes tend to have a very positive impact on teachers' outlook on life and overall health status. At the same time, work can create stress due to the difficulty of the tasks involved, the deadlines associated with the tasks, among others. Hence it is recognized that although work has many positive attributes, it also may affect teachers in a negative manner. Both these positive and negative spillover effects of the work in which teachers are involved

are directly associated to the family life of employees. Obi (2004) has postulated that one of the measures for effective personnel utilization in schools is assigning reasonable workload to teachers. Workload management is very important for effective delivery of instruction. In other words, it is the proper utilization of the human potentials in order to achieve set goals as well as meeting the needs of teachers. According to Zwalchir and Buenyen (2009) teaching is labour intensive, hence, there is need to have responsibilities in such a way that teachers are not over-loaded or under-loaded with work. Overload means excess or too much work for teachers, while under-load is the opposite. The results are over-utilization and under-utilization respectively. There should be a balance to ensure optimum performance. It is imperative for an increased quality and quality assurance in our secondary education today which can be achieved through teachers' workload management.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis that guided the study was Douglas McGregor (1960) management theory Y. This theory states that the average worker does not inherently dislike work, depending on controllable conditions. Work may be a source of joy, satisfaction and will be voluntarily performed. In the same vein, work may also be a source of punishment, stress and will be avoided when possible. The basic philosophy of this theory is that employees must be seen first as human beings and then as workers. This theory further stressed the need to take into serious considerations, the fact that teachers are human beings with psychological characteristics, disposition, expectations, emotions and feelings and as such, demands understanding, setting realistic workload, satisfactory work conditions, love, care, support and trust from the school administrator. It is imperative for school administrators to have a human face and always remember that teachers have blood and feelings unlike machines. Thus, teachers' workload should be realistic and adequately managed to enhance productivity and effective delivery of secondary education in Edo State, Nigeria.

Workload management is a process for determining the proper workload distributions in order to provide optimal performance for employees. Nagwanna (2016) defined workload management as the process of effective workload distribution which is crafted to enable employees to achieve optimal performance and productivity levels. A balanced distribution of workload helps the management of an organization to enhance the productivity of their existing workforce. Teachers are often faced with too many deadlines to be met within a limited span of time. With the ever increasing workload, most teachers become more susceptible to stress and burnouts which impacts the productivity of the school. Organizational productivity and growth needs to be ensured by strategically managing teachers' work distribution which is predominantly done by the school administrator.

The school administrator has the responsibility of checking teachers' workload to ensure productivity. Nagwanna (2016) opined that workload management ensures high productivity. It is necessary for school administrators to define the organizational priorities of teachers by giving them a clear idea on what they need to achieve and how their performance will be judged. The clarity on these aspects helps teachers to effectively manage their deliverables by giving appropriate time/effort as it requires. The workload of teachers has to be checked against the class size and subjects they teach. Rosenthal (2007) opined that in judging teachers workload, both the number of students per class and subjects the teachers teach should be considered. Mathematics teacher has no problem teaching several classes of 35-40 students, but an English teacher teaching four classes of 40 students may not be able to give proper attention. This means that teaching English is more demanding, and the school administrator will need more teachers in English than in Mathematics. Federal Republic of

TEACHERS' WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE

Nigeria (2012) advises ratio 1:35 for secondary schools. Other countries such as Indonesia, Luxemburg, USA and UK have teacher-student ratios that are lower than 1:35 or 1:40 as prescribed by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013).

Workload should be properly managed to ensure productivity. Zwalchir and Buenyen (2009) opined that the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) such as computers, interactive whiteboard, and power-point presentation, among others will help in reducing teachers' workload. With computers, information or data are stored and retrieved without problems whenever needed. Even in classrooms, teachers use power-point presentation to teach or instruct as many students as possible. The use of computers has reduced the workload of both administrators and teacher. In support of the above, Selwood and Pilkington (2005) asserted that ICT has many potential benefits for teachers, including helping to reduce their workload. In particular, ICT has reduced working hours of teachers, thus enabling them to spend more time on other activities. Ebose (2014) reiterated that the recruitment of qualified teachers is another step in handling excess workload. It is believed that if administrator has enough right type of teachers, the task of the school is three quarter executed. It is like putting the right peg in the right hole. By so doing, the workload is appropriately shared among teachers, resulting in effective and efficient performance (Zwalchir & Buenyen, 2009). School administrators should adopt organizational structure and principle of unity of Command in managing teachers' workload. By this structure, everybody in the chain has his responsibilities or duties to perform and to whom he should report.

School administrators should bear in mind that the number of students and the amount of instructional materials are related in the task of managing workload. If the number of students increases without corresponding increase in teachers, the work is likely to be too much for the teachers and vice versa. But it is better for school administrators to have enough qualified teachers who do their work well and can be confidently delegated. As schools move towards more participative and flat structures where fewer teachers are expected to manage increased workloads, the demands of the environment increases and maintaining the balance between the demands of a career and life responsibilities becomes more difficult (Mullins, 2010). When class sizes increase and support services are decreased, the workload for teachers becomes even more demanding. Teachers must reflect on what they are reasonably able to accomplish. If they are not realistic, two consequences are possible: they may overcompensate and reach burn-out, or they may give up. One example of flexibility is to consider how the teacher is accessing for student mastery. For example, with only thirty students, a teacher might have administered an essay exam. Now with ninety students, grading an essay exam can take considerably more time. One alternative is to combine multiple choice and essay questions; this still maintains high academic rigor and the same level of content mastery, but also provides for more realistic grading requirements. Encouraging participation in professional learning communities will also allow teachers to formulate common assessments which will help reduce some of the work load in regard to testing competence in subject areas. Principals should create opportunities for teachers to support each other.

Allen (2001) reiterated that more students in the classroom may lead to an increase in the variety of learning and behavioural needs, in addition to workload. Many schools are moving to a team-based system of teaching, planning, and problem solving. This can be accomplished through "partner teachers", where two teachers actually share students and divide up the work by groups based on learning needs. Partnering can reduce the preparatory work for each class and allow teachers to focus on teaching level-appropriate skills. Principals ought to schedule time accurately, prioritize tasks, and say "No" to projects that

would overload teachers. Principals can do that by talking with their teachers about their goals and setting clear expectations. There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to successfully managing teachers' workload. In general, principals should know teachers' competencies and let them have a say in how, when and where they do their work. Principals should review work processes and load distribution regularly to see if it can help lighten teachers' burden. Setting aside specific interruption-free periods during the work week can result in increased productivity and a less stressful work environment. Interruptions prolong the workday and are symptomatic of a crisis-centered (Allen, 2001). Teachers' work-load management has emerged as a strategic issue and a key element of an organization's employee retention strategies. School administrators need to be aware of the changing needs of teachers and setting realistic workload in order to retain their teachers' morale, commitment and satisfaction, and reduce sources of stress and problems at work.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Mahmood and Yakub (2016) investigated Teaching Workload and Performance: An empirical Analysis on Selected Private Universities of Bangladesh. The study was conducted to endeavor the relationship between workload and performance for university teachers. It was revealed that most independent variables are positively and strongly correlated with the dependent variables except time spent on teaching and implementation of new technology, administrative activities and implementation of new technology which are negatively correlated. The study indicates that to perform better, workload management should be appropriate and adjusted. The study recommends that university management; academic researchers and trainers should formulate and implement an effective workload management system.

Miguel and Rui (2014) investigated Teachers' workload: Evidence and Ambiguity on Professional Identity in Portugal. The study aimed at describing and analyzing secondary level teachers' actual workload, and relies on the empirical data available concerning different national contexts as well as the description of teachers' work composition. This description was obtained through enquiries about the daily work of teachers from different subjects. The methodology used focused on multiple case studies, and inquiries were conducted in two Portuguese secondary schools. The results of these inquiries indicated that teaching can no longer be considered as a soft profession, particularly due to the workload and the need to develop very different but simultaneous skills. Lack of resources available at school and consequence of traditional socialization characteristics make teaching a never ending job. The researchers recommended that registered values for planning teachers workload, deserve a closer look. Most likely, they should be analyzed through data only possible with other methodological instrument.

Peters (2013) examined Workload, Stress and Job Satisfaction among Waldorf Teachers. The study was based upon six narrative interviews, conducted using an open design. The interviewees were chosen through personal contacts to three Waldorf schools. The findings of the study revealed that attitudes to teaching profession in general or specific stress-factors are directly related to the way a given workload is subjectively experienced. However, through the experience of increased self-efficacy and greater autonomy, there is an increase in professional satisfaction. The study recommends that teachers' personal commitments should be taken as positive factors in meeting particular challenges they may have to face in school.

Sugden (2010) conducted a study on Teacher Workload as a Formula for Maximizing Teacher Performance and Well-Being in Canada. The purpose of the study was to determine;

TEACHERS' WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE

how workload intensification impacts teacher performance and well-being, whether or not workload intensification was a primary factor in teachers' choosing to leave the profession early, and a formula for maximizing teacher performance and well-being. Findings of the study revealed that lack of perceived effective administrative support in the Department of Education, district office personnel, and school administrative personnel, exacerbates these problems. The study recommends that administrators should address identified current teacher workload issues.

From the review of previous empirical works, a lot of researches were conducted in western developed countries and Asia. There is a great difference in the perception of workload between other countries and the Nigerian context. It can be said that a research gap exist and needs to be filled through an empirical investigation. Therefore, this present study intends to fill this gap by examining Teachers' Workload Management as a Tool for Effective Delivery of Secondary Education in Edo State, Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Work has taken precedence over teachers' personal lives, while some teachers are willing to make such sacrifices majority are striving to attain a healthier balance between the realms of work and life. Teachers are flooded with work such as writing of lesson notes, filling of school diary, marking of scripts, teaching more than one subjects, classroom management, and so on and most of the time; they wind up the day without the work being done. Workload can create stress due to the difficulty of the tasks involved and deadlines associated with the tasks. Hence it is recognized that although work has many positive attributes, it also may affect teachers in a negative manner. The researchers observed that most teachers in secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria are not conscious of the dangers of unrealistic workload, and they stand the risk of increased stress level, family instability, fatigue and diverse health challenges. In this respect, the basic question which forms the problem of the study therefore is: how teachers' workload management will enhance effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically it seeks to:

1. Ascertain the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria.
2. Examine the implications of teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study;

1. What are the perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria?
2. What are the implications of teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey, and the population of the study consisted of 276 public senior secondary school principals in Edo-State, Nigeria. A sample of 110 principals was randomly selected using a stratified proportionate sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled: Teachers' Workload Management Questionnaire (TWMQ). This instrument consisted of a total of 16 items, and it was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A elicits information on principal's personal data, while section B seeks information on the issues raised by the various research questions and hypothesis of the study. The instrument was structured using the rating scale of Strongly Agree(SA), Agree(A), Disagree(D) and Strongly Disagree(SD) and their scale was rated as follows: SA=4 points, A=3 points, D=2 points and SD=1 point respectively. The TWMQ was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The comments, constructive criticism and recommendations of these experts were built into the final draft of the instrument. This was done in order to ensure that the instrument measure what it is designed to measure, so as to provide information that will be relevant to the decision that will be made. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, the researchers adopted the use of Cronbach Alpha statistics to get the coefficient reliability of 0.81. Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument.

Mean and rank order statistics was used to answer the two research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. All points were added and divided by 4 to get the criterion mean of 2.50. All items with the criterion mean of 2.50 and above were accepted while items below the criterion mean of 2.50 were rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State?

TEACHERS' WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE

Table 1

Weighted mean and rank order scores on the strategies for teachers' work-load management

| S/N | Statement | Experienced Principals N = 73 | | Less Experienced Principals N = 37 | | Mean Set $\bar{X}_1 \bar{X}_2$ $X \frac{1}{2}$ | Rank | Decision |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|-----------|
| | | \bar{X}_1 | Rank | \bar{X}_2 | Rank | | | |
| 1 | Allowing teacher-student ratio of 1-35 | 2.81 | 4 th | 2.96 | 3 rd | 2.89 | 3 rd | Agreed |
| 2 | Teachers are not employed to teach more than one subject. | 2.70 | 6 th | 2.95 | 4 th | 2.83 | 5 th | Agreed |
| 3 | Reviewing work processes and load distribution regularly | 2.74 | 5 th | 2.92 | 5 th | 2.83 | 5 th | Agreed |
| 4 | Allocating realistic workload to teachers. | 3.00 | 1 st | 3.00 | 2 nd | 3.00 | 2 nd | Agreed |
| 5 | Prioritizing task for teachers | 2.62 | 8 th | 2.76 | 7 th | 2.69 | 7 th | Agreed |
| 6 | Teachers should have a say in the allocation of task | 2.23 | 9 th | 2.11 | 9 th | 2.17 | 9 th | Disagreed |
| 7 | Employing adequate qualified teachers | 2.93 | | 2.81 | 6 th | 2.87 | 4 th | Agreed |
| 8 | Adopting the principle of unity of command | 2.64 | 7 th | 2.51 | 8 th | 2.58 | 8 th | Agreed |
| 9 | Use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reduce teachers' workload. | 2.96 | 2 nd | 3.08 | 1 st | 3.02 | 1 st | Agreed |
| | Aggregate mean | 24.63 | | 25.10 | | 24.88 | | |
| | | 2.74 | | 2.79 | | 2.76 | | |

Table 1 indicated that items 1-5 and 7-9 had weighted mean score above the criterion mean of 2.30 and thus, were agreed as the perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. Similarly, item 6 had weighted mean score below the criterion mean of 2.50 and thus were disagreed as the perceptions of experienced and less

TEACHERS' WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE

experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria.

Research question two: What are the implications of teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 2

Weighted mean and rank order scores on the implications of managing teachers' work-load

| S/N | Statement | Male Principals N = 61 | | Female Principals N = 49 | | Mean Set $\bar{X}_1 \bar{X}_2$ $X \frac{1}{2}$ | Rank | Decision |
|-----|---|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|----------|
| | | \bar{X}_1 | Rank | \bar{X}_2 | Rank | | | |
| 10 | High level of teachers' morale and productivity | 2.97 | 4 th | 2.78 | 6 th | 2.88 | 4 th | Agreed |
| 11 | Promotes teacher-student relationship | 2.03 | 7 th | 2.98 | 2 nd | 2.51 | 7 th | Agreed |
| 12 | Improves teaching/learning processes | 3.18 | 1 st | 2.92 | 3 rd | 3.05 | 2 nd | Agreed |
| 13 | Effective classroom management | 3.05 | 3 rd | 2.86 | 5 th | 2.96 | 3 rd | Agreed |
| 14 | Sets clear goals and expectations | 2.17 | 6 th | 2.88 | 4 th | 2.53 | 6 th | Agreed |
| 15 | Reduces stress | 3.13 | 2 nd | 3.12 | 1 st | 3.13 | 1 st | Agreed |
| 16 | Lightens teachers' burden | 2.72 | 5 th | 2.57 | 7 ^h | 2.65 | 5 th | Agreed |
| | Aggregate mean | 19.25 | | 20.11 | | 19.71 | | |
| | | 2.75 | | 2.87 | | 2.82 | | |

Table 2 showed that items 10-16 had weighted mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 and thus, were agreed as the implications of teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for managing teachers' work-load for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State.

Table 3

Weighted mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management

| S/N | Principals | N | X | SD | DF | Z- observed | z- critical | Sig. level | Result |
|-----|---------------------|----|------|------|-----|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Experienced | 73 | 2.74 | 1.05 | | | | | |
| 2. | Less experienced | 37 | 2.79 | 1.01 | 108 | 0.24 | 1.96 | 0.05 | Not significant |

Table 3 shows a summary of mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State. The z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.24, while the critical z-value stood at 1.96 using 108 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value, the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. By implication, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the results as presented in table 1 revealed the perceptions of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. These strategies include; use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reduce teachers' workload, allocating realistic workload to teachers, allowing teacher-student ratio of 1-35, employing adequate qualified teachers, reviewing work processes and load distribution regularly, teachers not employed to teach more than one subject, prioritizing task for teachers, and adopting the principle of unity of command. The finding is consistent with the findings of Zwalchir and Buenyen (2009) who opined that the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) such as computers, interactive whiteboard, and power-point presentation, among others will help in reducing teachers' workload. With computers, information or data are stored and retrieved without problems whenever needed. Even in classrooms, teachers use power-point presentation to teach or instruct as many students as possible. In support of the above, Selwood and Pilkington (2005) asserted that ICT has many potential benefits for teachers, including helping to reduce their workload. In particular, ICT has reduced working hours of teachers, thus enabling them to spend more time on other activities. This finding is also in line with Ebose (2014) who reiterated that the recruitment of qualified teachers is another step in handling excess workload. This finding is in line with McGregor (1960) theory which stressed the need to take into serious considerations, the fact that teachers are human beings with psychological characteristics, disposition, expectations, emotions and feelings and as such, demands understanding, setting realistic workload, satisfactory working conditions, love, care and trust from school administrators.

The findings from the results as presented in table 2 indicated the implications of teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. They are; reduces stress, improves teaching/learning processes, effective classroom management, high level of teachers' morale and productivity, lightens teachers' burden, sets clear goals and expectations and promotes teacher-student relationship. This finding agrees with the findings of Nagwonn (2016) who opined that workload management ensures high

productivity. This finding is also in line with Allen (2001) who reiterated that principals should review work processes and load distribution regularly to see if it can help lighten teachers' burden. Setting aside specific interruption-free periods during the work week can result in increased productivity and a less stressful work environment. Interruptions prolong the workday and are symptomatic of a crisis-centered.

The findings as presented in table 3 revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria. The reason for the no significant difference could be that they do not have divergent but the same views on strategies for teachers' work-load management for effective secondary education delivery in Edo State. This finding agrees with the findings of Mahmood and Yakub (2016) who stated that workload management should be appropriate and adjusted.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that teachers' work-load management will enhance effective secondary education delivery in Edo State, Nigeria, through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reduce teachers' workload, allocating realistic workload to teachers, allowing teacher-student ratio of 1-35, employing adequate qualified teachers, prioritizing task for teachers, reviewing work processes and load distribution regularly.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. School administrators should set clear goals and objectives for teachers to ensure effective delivery of secondary education in Nigeria.
2. School administrators should encourage teachers to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) such as computers, interactive whiteboard, and power-point to lighten their burden.
3. There should be regular training of teachers to develop their professional competence, confidence and knowledge about work-load management.
4. School administrators should provide a satisfactory working condition for teachers.

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TEACHERS' WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE

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