

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR MEETING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN A PERIOD OF SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

By

Agodo, Theresa Chinma

theresa.agodo@unn.edu.ng

07039843816

Department of Educational Foundations
(Educational Administration and Planning)

Faculty of Education
University of Nigeria Nsukka

Abstract

This study examined the management strategies for meeting teachers' needs in a period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 3454 public secondary school teachers in Nsukka Urban, Enugu state. The multistage sampling technique was used to select 200 teachers (60 male and 140 female), from the 17 public secondary schools in the area of the study. The research instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled "Management Strategies Questionnaire (MSQ)" constructed by the researcher. MSQ is a 21-item questionnaire scored with a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The validity of the instrument was established by 3 experts in the relevant areas. The reliability index was established with Cronbach alpha technique which yielded a value of 0.79. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used as the statistical tools to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, respectively. The findings revealed that the strategies necessary for meeting teachers' professional development needs in a period of socio-political and economic uncertainty among others are; focus on teachers training on relevant skills; reflecting teachers training on current realities; giving teachers a mix of theory and practical training; using up-to date equipments, facilities and materials in training teachers. The findings also revealed that the compensation strategies vital to meeting teachers' welfare needs in the period of socio-political and economic uncertainty among others include: subsidising teachers' transport fare; regular salary increment; providing adequate recreational facilities to teachers; making effective housing allowance program. Based on the findings, recommendations were made, among others, that an agency should be created in the Ministry of Education to cater for teachers' welfare and teachers should be involved in decision making in schools.

Keywords: Management Strategies, Teachers' Needs, Socio-Political, Economic, Uncertainty

Introduction

Teachers are the closest individuals to students. Therefore, they play a role in bringing about positive behavioural changes to students in the school. The teacher's role is that of a mediator, facilitator and monitor (Richards, 2011). The teacher is mostly seen as the most important factor in the teaching learning process because s/he plans, organizes, implements, and evaluates teaching. The teacher tries to lead the students to achieve learning goals by showing effectiveness in content delivery, bringing about the intended learning outcomes (Javaid et al., 2020).

In the teaching - learning process, the teacher implements a series of activities that can be categorized into two namely, instruction and management (Weber, 2014). Weber opines that instruction typically aims to facilitate the learner achievement in specific domains, for example, diagnosing student needs, planning lessons, presenting information, asking questions and evaluating student progress. Whereas, management aims to create and maintain conditions in which instruction can take place effectively and efficiently, for example, respecting punctuality, developing teacher-student relationships and establishing productive group norms. Consequently, good teachers form the foundation of good schools, and it improves teacher's skill and knowledge (Omede & Sani, 2013).

Despite the roles of teachers in the education sector, the teachers' needs are not often considered especially during the period of uncertainty. Period of uncertainty is the time of social, political and economic woes occasioned by unprecedented circumstances. As Ostergard and Yaphe (2014) asserts, teachers' working conditions in many countries were not ideal even before the pandemic. Some had to teach in multi grade classrooms, travel long distances, and receive their salaries late. Overnight, teachers' jobs became more difficult as they had to adapt to remote teaching with limited guidance or preparation. In some cases, teachers had to adopt a hybrid approach, teaching remotely and in-person classes at the same time. In other cases, reintegration into schools has been characterized by periods of intermittent closures or multiple shifts to maintain social distancing norms. In the midst of this turmoil, little attention is paid to the teachers' needs. In most This is also in addition to other tribulations faced by teachers whose profession is mainly characterised with poor infrastructures, insufficient logistics, slackness in the upholding of ethical conducts, low salaries and inadequate reward system (Akubia, 2011).

Most teachers are not committed to the teaching job due to a number of interrelated factors like poor income, delay in payment of salaries, lack of job satisfaction. These factors are contributory to the seemingly declining attitude and commitment of teachers to their professional calling. The lack of commitment manifests in the areas of lack of enthusiasm to work; lack of concern for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities; inadequate preparation for lessons; failure to write lesson notes; careless handling of statutory records among others (Ajayi & Shofoyeke, 2013). These are manifestations of neglect to teachers needs.

The needs of the teachers no doubt call for attention from stakeholders in education. This is because without meeting these needs, teachers will not be motivated to function effectively. Motivating teachers could be in form of ensuring that professional needs like career advancement programmes or well articulated in-service training programmes, sponsored workshops, seminars, as well as their welfare

needs such as sharing of teaching materials to the staff, placing them in well furnished offices, giving them promotion as at when due, advancement in salary scale, and providing incentive based bonuses (Aluede, 2019). The needs of teachers have never been more pronounced as it is in this period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. No wonder Osokoya (2012) opines that teachers' conditions of service do not hold enough incentives to attract and retain the best brains in Nigerian schools, when they are struggling with professional and welfare needs exacerbated by our peculiar financial and political realities. As a result of the weakening attraction to the teaching profession and by extension the resultant dwindling enrolment in the teacher education programmes, those who remain in the profession maintain relatively low social status with associated emotional inconvenience.

Professional development needs of teachers cannot be over emphasized. Addressing teachers' professional development needs is critical in the design of an effective professional development program (Zhang et al., 2015). Professional development is not only a process that contributes to the personal development of teachers but also an important factor in improving the quality of education in schools (Dunn, Hattie & Bowles, 2019). This is because workshops, conferences and seminars within the annual professional development programmes are always effective and helps the teacher imbibe the tenets obtained in delivering global best practices (Villegas-Reimers, 2013).

Most professional development programmes focus on active teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014). Professional development is a social interaction and not merely an isolated experience (Evans, 2014). According to Evans (2014), professional development is not always a formal experience. In other words, professional development occurs implicitly in often unanticipated situations and in unrecognized ways. Teacher knowledge and development may also be successfully constructed through relationship-based approaches. Increasing research exists regarding the effectiveness of these relationship-based approaches, such as mentoring, peer coaching, consultation, and technological approaches (Callahan, 2016).

Another need of the teacher as stated above in this study is welfare package. The concept of welfare package has gained popularity in many organizations as a strategy of improving performance of employees (Andrews, Iroanwusi, & Princewill, 2018) including teachers (Asumah, Kuranch, & Mensah, 2019). According to Ramana et al. (2015) welfare packages are the rewards, benefits, incentives and compensations other than wages or salary that are offered to employees to enhance their well-being at some cost to the employer. Article 8 of the UNESCO charter of 1972 discloses that good working conditions for teachers promote effectiveness in their work and concentration on their professional task. Teachers' welfare schemes involve the ability and the willingness of all educational stakeholders to directly and indirectly making available the provision of housing, payment of allowances, medical care, and a conducive working environment for teachers (Odeku & Odeku, 2014). Moruri, Ogoti and Munyua (2018) opined that adequate levels of earnings, safe and humane conditions of work enhance quality of life of workers and hence their welfare which remains a major qualitative dimension of employment.

To meet these needs require management strategies. Management strategies are the various means through which the weakness of the teachers are being curtailed

through some modalities applied. According to Oleforo (2014), management of teachers can be through the adoption of these management strategies:- supervision, in-service training and compensation, among others. Hence, any teacher that enjoys the influence of the above named strategies is bound to give all his best in discharging his or her duty because he would derive the satisfaction of being a teacher. Nwachukwu (2016) asserts that, acquisition of skills, compensation, supervision, evaluation and managerial support must be present to encourage job performance of school teachers. Adelabu (2015) listed remuneration, teacher competence, working conditions, vocational intent, and career advancement as the key determinants of effective teaching performance. He also points out that supervision, continuous staff development and training, as well as motivational strategies such as payment of salaries, promotions and fringe benefits are viable methods of managing teaching staff for effective job performance.

In this study, the management strategies for meeting teachers' needs in period of socio- economic and political uncertainty are; supervision management strategy, in-service training management strategy and compensation management strategy. Supervision is carried out to reduce failures in the education system and to determine whether teachers master their tasks professionally or not (Okoro & Ezeonwumelu, 2017; Ozdemir & Yirci, 2015). Supervision is basically directed at two aspects, namely academic and managerial supervisions (Ibrahim, 2018). Ramadona and Wibowo (2016) observes that supervision activities are expected to help teachers because some of them do not yet know the types, procedures and mechanisms in obtaining information used for the development of their professionalism. Development of professionalism requires in- service training.

In-service training is a fundamental aspect for the enhancement of teachers professionalism related to the teacher's vision to improve the quality of their work. Ekpoh, Oswald and Victoria (2013) opines that teachers who attend in-service training perform effectively in their work concerning knowledge of the subject, classroom management, teaching method and evaluation of students. According to Kazmi, Pervez and Mumtaz (2011), in-service training for teachers enables the teachers to be more systematic and logical in their teaching style. This training motivates the teacher to expect compensation.

To achieve the stated goals at this level of education, teachers have to be adequately and timely compensated to make them perform their statutory duties effectively. When teachers are well compensated, their morale could be boosted, thereby enhancing effective job performance and reverse is the case when compensation of teachers is not commensurate with their efforts (Henry, 2015). According to Osibanjo, Pavithra and Adeniji (2014), compensation is a great determinant of cordial employee-employer relationship and also a factor that binds both the employees and the employer together. It relates to the welfare of the employees with special references to monthly pay and other rewards which employees are entitled to, in accordance with the conditions of service. Hence, the need to study management strategies for meeting teachers' needs in period of socio-economic and political uncertainty.

Statement of Problem

Over the years, the teaching profession is mainly characterised with poor infrastructures, insufficient logistics, and slackness in the upholding of ethical conducts. Other factors associated to the dearth of quality delivery in the teaching profession is low salaries and flawed reward systems. Most times, most teachers are seen hawking wares during official school hours while some absent themselves from classes in pursuit of other economic-oriented ventures, to the detriment of their students. In some cases, teachers refuse to write their notes of lesson as well as carrying out other assigned responsibilities because their needs are not met which is often translated to be necessitated by lack of motivation. Lack of motivation among teachers may manifest in their unwillingness to participate in school activities, poor attendance, unexpected absence, late coming, lack of additional training, dearth of innovative approaches to teaching and non-stimulating teaching methods. While some of these problems are associated to welfare related issues, there are concerns that enhancing teachers' professionalism could help mitigate these challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate management strategies that could be applied to meeting teachers' professional development and welfare needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate management strategies for meeting teachers' professional development needs in this period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. Specifically, the study sought to:

4. Find out the in-service training management strategies necessary for meeting teachers professional development needs in a period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.
5. Identify compensation management strategies necessary for meeting teachers' welfare needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

2. What are the in-service training management strategies necessary for meeting teachers professional development needs in a period of socio-political and economic uncertainty?
3. What are the compensation management strategies necessary for meeting teachers' welfare needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this study at 0.05 level of significance.

4. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers' responses on the in-service training management strategies necessary for meeting teachers professional development needs in a period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.
5. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers responses on the compensation management strategies necessary for meeting teachers' welfare needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised all the 3454 public secondary school teachers in Nsukka Urban. A representative sample of 200 teachers from the population of 3454 teachers in Public Secondary schools in Nsukka were selected using multistage sampling technique. The schools were divided into smaller clusters. From the clusters, the schools were stratified based on location, and finally using systematic sampling every 5th teacher were selected from the list, starting from a random point, until the desired sample size of 200 was reached (60 male and 140 female). The research instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled "Management Strategies Questionnaire (MSQ)" constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items, scored on a four-point Likert scale of SA, A, D, and SD. These responses had corresponding weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The reliability index was computed by allocating questionnaires to 30 teachers in Enugu Urban. The responses were subjected to a Cronbach Alpha Analysis which yielded an index of 0.79. Face and Content validation were established by 3 experts, one from the Measurement and Evaluation unit, and two from Educational and Administration and Planning unit, in the Departments of Science Education and Educational Foundations, respectively, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Mean ratings of 2.50 and above are considered as the criterion mean. T-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

1. **Research Question 1:** What are the in-service training management strategies necessary for meeting teachers' professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty?

Table 1: Mean scores on the in-service training strategies necessary for meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

SN	in-service training management strategies in meeting teachers' professional development needs	Male Teachers		Female Teachers		Overall		Dec.
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1	Focusing teachers training on relevant skills	3.11	0.72	2.97	0.76	3.06	0.74	Agree
2	Reflecting teachers training on current	3.10	0.73	3.05	0.79	3.08	0.75	Agree

	realities								
3	Giving teachers a mix of theory and practical training.	3.02	0.75	2.97	0.82	3.00	0.77	Agree	
4	Using up-to date facilities in training teachers.	3.15	0.80	2.89	0.86	3.06	0.83	Agree	
5	Training teachers on the use of technological gadgets.	3.13	0.78	3.02	0.81	3.09	0.79	Agree	
6	Training teachers to pursue new opportunities.	3.06	0.87	2.99	0.76	3.03	0.83	Agree	
7	Making the training effective in the teacher's classroom engagement	3.07	0.81	3.09	0.77	3.08	0.79	Agree	
8	Focusing on making teachers have good knowledge of the training.	3.19	0.77	3.04	0.76	3.14	0.76	Agree	
9	Making training content clear.	3.02	.80	2.65	.95	2.83	.87	Agree	
10	Providing technical support for teachers training	2.54	.88	3.02	.97	2.78	.92	Agree	

Data from Table 1 show the mean responses of male and female teachers on the in-service training strategies vital to meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. From the Table, all the responses are greater than 2.5 which is the criterion for accepting a response as agree. Therefore the respondents agree with the item statements on the in-service training management strategies in meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

2. What are the compensation management strategies in meeting teachers' welfare needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty?
3. **Table 1: Mean scores of teachers on the compensation strategies necessary for meeting teachers' welfare needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.**

SN	Item Statement	Male Teachers		Female Teachers		Ove		
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD			
4.	Subsidizing teachers' transport fare	3.10	.62	3.04	.70	3.07	.66	Agree
5.	Regular salary increment	2.85	.78	2.72	.77	2.78	.77	Agree
6.	Providing adequate recreational facilities to teachers	2.65	.78	2.88	.82	2.76	.80	Agree
8.	Making effective housing allowance program.	2.78	.81	2.79	.75	2.78	.78	Agree
9.	Making teachers benefit from health programs	2.83	.74	2.92	.69	2.87	.71	Agree
10.	Making teachers feel valued by asking them of their ideas on issues of concern	2.97	.81	2.90	.84	2.93	.82	Agree
11.	Promoting teachers safety on the job	2.69	1.0	2.58	.86	2.63	.93	Agree
12.	Introducing interest free loan to teachers	2.57	.99	2.70	1.0	2.64	.99	Agree
13.	Disbursing grant to teachers on occasion of uncertainty	2.54	.88	3.02	.97	2.78	.92	Agree
14.	Giving out allowances leaves to teachers regularly	3.02	.80	2.65	.95	2.83	.87	Agree

Data from Table 2 also indicated that both male and female teachers accepted that the above item statements are the compensation strategies vital for meeting teachers' welfare package needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. This is because the all the responses are greater than 2.5 criterion for accepting an item as agreed response.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on the in-service training strategies in meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Table 3: t-test analysis of significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the in-service training strategies necessary for meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

SN	Variable	\bar{X}	SD	N	t-value	df	p-value	Remark
1	Male Teachers	3.11	0.45	60	3.29	198	0.00	S
2	Female Teachers	2.54	0.80	140				

S = Significant, $\alpha = 0.05$

The result of the study as presented on Table 3 represents the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the in-service training strategies vital to meeting teachers' professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. The result shows that the calculated t-value of 3.29 was obtained with the degree of freedom of 198 and a probability value of 0.00. Since the probability value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance, it means the result is significant. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the in-service training strategies necessary for meeting teachers' professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty is not rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the in-service training strategies in meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the compensation strategies in meeting teachers' welfare package needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the significant difference between the Mean Ratings of male and female teachers on the compensation strategies necessary for meeting teachers' welfare package needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

SN	Variable	\bar{X}	SD	N	t-value	df	p-value	Remark
1	Male Teachers	3.15	0.48	60	-0.11	198	0.91	NS

2	Female Teachers	2.98	0.84	140
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NS = Not Significant, $\alpha = 0.05$

The result of the study as presented on Table 4 represents the t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the compensation strategies in meeting teachers' welfare package needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty. The result shows that calculated t-value of -0.11 was obtained with the degree of freedom of 198 and a probability value of 0.91. Since the probability value of 0.91 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance, this means the result is not significant. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the compensation strategies in meeting teachers' welfare package needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty is not rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that both male and female teachers shared the same opinion on the compensation strategies in meeting teachers' welfare package needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty.

Discussion of Findings

The first findings of the study is that, the in-service training management strategies necessary for meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty include focusing teachers training on relevant skills; reflecting teachers training on current realities; giving teachers a mix of theory and practical training; using up-to date facilities in training teachers; training teachers on the use of technological gadgets; training teachers to pursue new opportunities; making the training effective in the teacher's classroom engagement; focusing on making teachers has good knowledge of the training; making training content clear; providing technical support for teachers training. This finding agrees with the findings of Mazzotti, Rowe, Simonsen, Boaz and VanAvery (2018) who revealed that teachers need to have the skills, knowledge, commitment, awareness, and motivation in providing students with the necessary skills. Dunn, Hattie and Bowles (2019) believe that Professional development is not only a process that contributes to the personal development of teachers but also an important factor in improving the quality of education in schools.

The second finding of the study is that, the compensation management strategies observed as vital to meeting teachers' welfare needs in the period of socio-political and economic uncertainty include: subsidising teachers' transport fares; regular salary increment; providing adequate recreational facilities for teachers; implementing effective housing allowance programmes; making teachers benefit from health insurance schemes; promoting teachers' safety on the job; introducing interest free loans to teachers; disbursing grant to teachers on occasion of uncertainty; giving out allowances leaves to teachers regularly. This finding is in line with the opinion of Nwachukwu (2016) who ascertained that, acquisition of skills, compensation, supervision, evaluation and managerial support must be present to encourage job performance of school teachers. It also supports the view of Adelabu (2015) who listed remuneration, teacher competence, working conditions, vocational intent, and career advancement as the key determinants of effective teaching performance.

Conclusion

It is pertinent to say that neglecting the needs of teachers in this period of socio-political and economic uncertainty will not have positive effect on the educational system. Therefore, engaging management strategies to meet teachers' personal development and welfare needs are a necessity. These management strategies in meeting teachers professional development needs in period of socio-political and economic uncertainty are the in-service training management strategies and compensation management strategies through: Focusing teachers training on relevant skills; reflecting teachers training on current realities; giving teachers a mix of theory and practical training; providing adequate recreational facilities to teachers among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

12. Government should establish agencies within the Ministry of Education to cater for teachers' welfare. This will underscore the importance attached to teachers' wellbeing and will, in no small way, motivate teachers to perform their duties optimally.
13. Government should create enabling environment that will enhance teachers' personal development. This could be in the form of scholarships for further studies, grants for conferences and paid leave for career advancement programmes.
14. The government should integrate peculiar allowances into the pay package of teachers. This will help bridge the earning gap that exists between teachers and other civil servants in the employ of government and help engender a sense of belonging among teachers.
15. School administrators should ensure that teachers are involved in decision making in the schools. This will help ensure that they understand their roles as stakeholders in the school, thus give their best in delivering quality content regularly.

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