

PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER SHORTAGES IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF DELTA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined perception of parents on teachers' shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State. The descriptive survey design was used. The study population consisted of parents, administrators and teachers of rural primary schools in Delta State. A total of 275 respondents consisting constituted the sample. Proportional stratified sampling technique was used to select 25 schools from 6 local government areas across the 3 senatorial districts in Delta State. The instrument was "Teacher Shortage and Parents Perception Questionnaire (TSPPQ)", validated and its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.83 was used. The research questions raised were answered using percentage for the study. The findings revealed that parents view teachers' shortage to disrupt learning, limit relationship, hinders their children/wards achievement in rural primary schools. It therefore recommends that Delta State Teaching Service Commission should employ adequate teachers and provide good working environment.

Keywords: Teachers' Shortage, Perception of Parents, Rural Primary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Primary education is the foundation a child requires in his or her educational pursuit. The quality of primary education a child gets would determine his performance in secondary school as well as tertiary level. It will equally affect his or her life after school. As such the importance of primary education cannot be overemphasis. It is in this regard that Malotyre and Clark (2016) opined that the attitude of parent determine the quality of education their children or wards receive in primary school. The positive attitude of parents have a positive impact on their children performance and aspiration, help in raising knowledge and increasing understanding and facilitate academic progress through the involvement of parents in their children academic activities. On the other hand negative attitude of parent towards their children education have a negative effect on their academic progress leading to poor academic performance and consequently the withdrawal of such children from school. This makes such children take to street and become menace to the society later in life (Babalola, 2020). All over the world, educational system is confronted with different challenges. The challenges confronting the developed countries differ from the ones confronting the developing countries. In Nigeria, the three levels of education are confronted with various problems ranging from teachers' shortage, class size, school location, resource availability and resource utilization (Adedeji, 2018). In addition, it has been observed that the total number of teachers available in Nigerian primary schools is far below the needed for efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of instructions most especially in the rural areas. According to the UNESCO report (Guardian Newspaper,

2014) the total number of teachers available in Nigeria in 2009 was 466,800 while in 2015, 688,200 teachers will be needed. This shows that Nigeria need to increase its teaching workforce by 6.68% yearly to meet the teachers demand by 2025. Teachers are important factor in any society for many reasons. According to Dasko (2012) a teacher is a person that imparts knowledge on people, shows care when the need arises and possesses the following traits: patience, kindness and love. Lending credence to this is Adewuyi and Ogunwuyi (2012) who suggest various perspectives by which a teacher could be seen in reference to nation building; and they thus view teachers as instructors, culture transmitters, technologists, moral instructors, life-skill and value educators, parents, counselors, sportsmen and play supervisors, public educators, service deliverers, policy makers and policy implementation personnel, religious leaders and disciplinarians. However, teacher shortage is not the exclusive problem in Nigerian educational system, it is a world phenomenon. The UNESCO Report of 1997 indicated that as at 1980, the world with total population of 5.5 billion only had 40 million teachers in its teaching profession which gave the average of one teacher per 112 inhabitants (Guardian Newspaper, 2014). In 1965, there were 100 secondary schools teachers for 150,000 people in Africa (Guardian Newspaper, 2014). The issue can be expressed in terms of the inadequacy of qualified and experience teachers; it can as well be seen as inadequacy of willing and committed teachers in the state public schools. According to Bradley (2019) shortage of teachers in the rural primary schools lies in the distribution of teachers by the government. Parents in rural areas also observed that most teachers in rural primary schools are not willing to do the job and this dim the attitude of parents in sending the children or wards to public primary schools instead the prefer sending them to private primary schools. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2018) also corroborate that many teachers were not willing to teach in rural area especially, those of low income students. Here in Nigeria, Taiwo (2015) reported that when other regions were being plagued with the problem of acute teacher shortages during the expansion brought about by the free education program, Lagos was exempted. He reported that teachers were attracted on account of the urban life of Lagos. According to Makinde 2010) schools in rural areas do not receive their quota of trained teachers while many of the few ones in the rural areas seek frequent transfer into the city because of high opportunities. According to Fadipe (2022) there are four major types of teacher shortage, these are:

- a. **Over Shortage:** This refers to the over vacancies of teachers to be filled. Such shortages take into consideration the specialization needed as well as the number of quantity desired which is however in short supply.
- b. **Hidden Shortage:** These include teachers that teach subjects in which they do not know or specialize. These categories of teachers fall in the category of teachers that are being mal-employed. Such teachers work in the areas which they do not fit according to their qualifications.
- c. **Suppressed Shortage:** This is a situation where a subject is under-represented in the time table because of a lack of suitable teachers.
- d. **Modernized Shortage:** This relates to teachers who are formally qualified but already out of touch with current development in their fields. Such teachers need a short orientation through seminars,

workshops, conferences, and the likes. Teacher shortage can also take the form of in-balance or disproportion in teacher's student's ratio in schools. Researchers have shown that teachers are almost always in short supply in schools (Taiwo, 2015). For instance, it is arguable that a supply - demand balance or even an over-production in the number of teachers does not guarantee sufficiency in every subject area. Teacher shortage can also be subject - oriented in nature. According to Makinde (2010) well qualified Language and Science teachers especially women, are concentrated in urban areas, thus resulting to shortage of language and science teachers in rural areas. Similarly, Adeyemi (2011) observed that science teachers were in less proportion compared to non-science teachers in schools. Retirement had also been fingered as one of the major cause of teacher shortage. Some teachers disengaged on the account of age or length of service. These groups of people have worked for a stipulated period of time. Those in this category are eligible for full pension after their disengagement. They are those who have reached the mandatory 60 years of age or have served the maximum 35 years in service as a result; they are due for retirement or disengagement from the service of teaching service commission of the state. Finding conducted by Ingersoll (2011) showed that few percentage of vacancies were due to retirement. Adeyemi (2011) and Adeogun (2019) both agreed that retirement of teachers without a corresponding replacement mean that shortage will persist. According to Smithers and Robinson (2013) excessive workload on the teachers such as administrative duties, preparation of lesson notes, conduct of continuous and end of the term evaluations in the school might be another reason why some of them disengaged from teaching. In addition to this, many times teachers are expected to be in charge of school club activities and other school activities. Adequate numbers of teachers are needed to carry out these activities in the school. Smithers and Robinson (2013) opined that poor salary structure as one of the major causes of attrition of teachers underpins teaching as an attractive profession. According to Makinde (2010) expansion in the school enrolment should lead to recruiting more people to teach students. This recruitment will bring all sorts of teachers: some among them would be dedicated while others not dedicated, thus, leading to a shortage of committed and intelligent teachers in another perspective. Adeogun (2019) was of the opinion that the inability of government to pay decent salaries to teachers is as a result of under-funding of educational sector which consequently resulted in shortages of qualified teaching personnel as the proportion number of teachers demanded are not supplied on one hand, while some of those on ground opted-out due to what he termed indecent "wage". However, government is willing to raise school facilities but does little for teachers' empowerment and welfare. The required numbers of teachers in Nigeria are 694,078, available teachers are 499,202 gap is 194,876 (UBEC NPA Report, 2024). The effect of teacher shortage is not limited to poor quality of instructions and poor students' academic performance, but also has significant effects on both the schools' administrators and the teaching personnel. Investigation by Smithers and Robinson (2013) shows that the head teachers are left to bear the brunt of finding people and living with consequences of appointing staff not of the desired caliber, but also in many cases, they have to do a lot more teaching themselves in order to plug the gaps. According to Smithers and Robinson (2013) the extra stress on teachers as a result of plugging the gap for teacher shortage is emerging in various ways from shouting at

the children, more tiredness, headaches, absences, and illnesses, ultimately to higher levels of resignation than there need be. The shortages are causing further shortage, by either taking over classes or covering for absences. At least head teachers are to some extent in control, but many of the consequences of under-recruitment and extra load are passed down to the teaching staff. This has resulted in raised stress levels which have shown up in a spectrum of behaviors as mentioned above. The stumpy pupil accomplishment of rural schools is attributable to the predicament of insufficient supply of high-quality teachers (World Bank, 2010). This is sustained by copious investigations showing that pupil's success is most universally a direct effect of teacher presence and quality (Oghojafor, 2014). Prominently, this apparent verity is not distinctive to rural schools in Delta State, this is a widespread problem for rural schools all around the world, and where teacher turnover is high and hiring is difficult (Monk, 2007). Stinebrickner (2021) draw attention to the inclination for high quality and accomplished teachers who increasingly reject posting to rural schools for better condition of service elsewhere. While specific numbers for teacher transfers in Delta State stay impossible to differentiate, a separate research finding indicated that the prospect of a teacher transferring from a lower socioeconomic school to a school with higher socioeconomic standing is higher than in the contrary trend (Krei, 2020). To further single out this problem, Ingersoll (2011) claims that teacher turnover is the primary reason for the teacher shortage in rural areas. However, Obodochi (2013) opined that most parents in the rural areas of Nigeria are skeptical about the primary education of their children because of teachers' shortage and lack of teaching and learning facilities in rural primary schools as such put up negative attitude towards their children's education at level. It could also be that most rural dwellers in Nigeria are more interested in achieving short term immediate development of their children as such prefer sending their children to learn vocational trade or assist them in farm work but parents in urban areas have a positive attitude to education of their children and wards owing to their perception about education and the value they attach to education and its effect on the future of their children. Parents view teachers' shortage as disadvantageous to their children and probably making extra lessons or home learning; making the persons to lose interest and value for the education of their children. It dim parents interest that they prefer their children/wards to join them in the farm or shops since they are not learning much as a result of teachers' shortage (Adeogun, 2019). Primary education is the foundation of education and is very vital to a child's educational development Okoh (2015). But in spite of the importance of primary education to children's educational development, the attitude of parents towards their children education in unsatisfactory and remains a big impediment to primary education, it could be as a result of teachers' shortage and lack of teaching and learning facilities in rural primary schools.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State?
2. What are the effects of teacher shortage on Delta State rural primary schools?
3. What strategies are employed by school administrators to manage teacher shortage rural primary school in Delta State?

4. What are parents' perceptions of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State?

METHOD

The descriptive survey design was used. The study population includes 1,353 public primary school heads and 5,400 teachers from Delta State. A total number of 275 respondents consisting of 25 school heads and 250 teachers were selected from 25 primary schools from Delta State. In selecting primary schools, proportional stratified sampling technique was used. The 25 schools were selected from 6 local government areas across the 3 Senatorial Districts in Delta State. Two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from each senatorial districts given a total of six LGAs across the state. A questionnaire self - designed and titled "Teacher Shortage and Parents Perception Questionnaire (TSPPQ)", validated and its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.83 was used. The research questions raised were answered using percentage for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Causes of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
1	Lack of teaching and learning facilities	116(42.2%)	42(15.3%)	88(32%)	29(10.5%)
2	Lack of social amenities	156(56.7%)	61(22.2%)	34(12.4%)	24(8.7%)
3	Low student's enrolment	120(43.6%)	77(28%)	50(18.2%)	28(10.2%)
4	Poor working condition	118(42.9%)	78(28.4%)	59(21.5%)	20(7.3%)
5	Poor teachers' distribution	66(24%)	71(25.8%)	83(30.2%)	55(20%)

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows the causes of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State. The respondents agreed that lack of teaching and learning facilities, lack of social amenities, low student's enrolment, poor working condition and poor teachers' distribution among the causes of teacher

Table 2: Effects of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D
1	High level of stress on the school administrators and teachers	71(25.8%)	66(24%)	83(30.2%)	55(20%)
2	Poor quality of instruction	156(56.7%)	61(22.2%)	34(12.4%)	24(8.7%)
3	Lower the standard of education	120(43.6%)	77(28%)	50(18.2%)	28(10.2%)
4	Poor students' academic performance	118(42.9%)	78(28.4%)	59(21.5%)	20(7.3%)
5	Negative attitude of parents and students to academic	42(15.3%)	116(42.2%)	88(32%)	29(10.5%)

Source: Survey, 2023

shortage in rural primary school.

Table 2 shows the effects of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State. The respondents agreed that high level of stress on the school administrators and teachers, poor quality of instruction, lowers the standard of education, poor students' academic performance and negative attitude of parents and students to academic are effect of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State.

Table 3: Strategies are employed by school administrators to manage teacher shortage rural primary school in Delta State

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
1	Adjustment in the scheme of work	104(37.8%)	66(24%)	79(28.7%)	26(9.5%)
3	School administrators helping out sometimes	90(33.7%)	60(21.8%)	56(20.4%)	69(25.1%)
4	Assigning roles to staff members who are qualified	60(21.8%)	89(32.4%)	56(20.3%)	70(25.5%)
5	Making use of substitute teachers	103(37.5%)	52(18.9%)	44(16%)	76(27.6%)
6	Equitable distribution of teachers	100(36.4%)	85(30.9%)	56(20.4%)	34(12.4%)

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows the strategies are employed by school administrators to manage teacher shortage rural primary school in Delta State. The respondents agreed that adjustment in the scheme of work, school administrators helping out sometimes, assigning roles to staff members who are qualified, making use of substitute teachers and equitable distribution of teachers are strategies are employed by school administrators to manage teacher shortage rural primary school in Delta State.

Table 4: Parents' perceptions of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
1	Disrupt learning	103(37.5%)	66(24%)	79(28.7%)	26(9.5%)
2	Limit relationship	90(33.7%)	60(21.8%)	56(20.4%)	69(25.1%)
3	Hinders their children/wards achievement	60(21.8%)	89(32.4%)	56(20.3%)	70(25.5%)
4	Reduces educational opportunities	104(37.8%)	52(18.9%)	44(16%)	76(27.6%)
5	Marginalizes their children/wards	71(25.8%)	66(24%)	83(30.2%)	55(20%)

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 4 shows the parents' perceptions of teacher shortage in rural primary schools in Delta State. The respondents agreed that parents views teachers' shortage to disrupt learning, limit relationship, hinders their children/wards achievement, reduces educational opportunities and marginalizes their children/wards rural primary school in Delta State. The outcome of the analyzed data showed that lack of teaching and learning facilities, lack of social amenities, low student's enrolment, poor work condition and poor teachers' distribution among the causes of teacher shortage in rural primary school in Delta State.

Supporting the findings is Smither and Robinson (2013) who found that in different states, poor teacher's salary was the major barrier to entering the profession. Also supporting this finding is Adeogun (2019) who found that teachers who disengaged from teaching in public schools were due to poor teacher's salary. Poor working conditions affect teachers' level of satisfaction hence their unwillingness to continue teaching. Inadequate space for teaching and learning with students, inadequate library, laboratory equipment or proper administrative services is likely to create resentment among teachers and influence their decision to cease working in the education system. However, Smithers and Robinson (2013) did not support this finding and remarked that excessive workload on the teachers make some of them to disengaged from teaching. The findings revealed that effects of teacher shortage in Delta State rural primary schools among others include high level of stress on the school administrators and teachers, poor quality of instruction, lowers the standard of education, poor students' academic performance and negative attitude of parents and students to academic. The findings corroborate the findings of Lunenburg and Ornstein (2018) who reported stress on the teaching staff and school administrators, poor quality of instruction, poor students' academic performance among others as effects of teacher shortage. Strategies commonly adopted by the school administrators, analyses of the results showed among others that existing staff are overloaded with assignments and multiple responsibilities while unprofessionally qualified teachers are sometimes appointed to serve on temporary basis; use of substitute teachers and increase in class size. These findings is in agreement with that of Ingersoll (2011) and Taiwo (2015) that school administrators who are faced with serious shortage of teachers used to appoint temporary teachers who are not professionally qualified and overload the existing staff with assignments and multiple responsibilities to ease the effect of the shortage. Parents view teachers' shortage to disrupt learning, limit relationship, hinders their children/wards achievement, reduces educational opportunities and marginalizes their children/wards rural primary school in Delta State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, lack of teaching and learning facilities, lack of social amenities, low student's enrolment, poor working condition and poor teachers' distribution among the causes of teacher shortage in rural primary school. Parents view teachers' shortage to disrupt learning, limit relationship, hinders their children/wards achievement, reduces educational opportunities and marginalizes their children/wards in rural primary schools in Delta State.

Based on the conclusion, to improve the situation of teacher shortage the following were recommended that:

1. For people to take up teaching profession, Delta State government should have a special salary scale structure for teachers. This would attract young and vibrant professionals with specialized skills who are presently tramping out of the universities and colleges into the teaching job. This will consequently help to retain them.
2. Delta State Teaching Service Commission should employ adequate number of teachers to schools. This will help the school administrators to reduce multiple assignments and responsibilities being given to

the existing staff in the school. It will also help the school administrators in reducing the ratio of teachers to students, and stop the habit of relying on substitute teachers such as corps member and teaching practice students.

3. In addition, recruitment of teachers will eliminate or minimize stress being experienced by school administrators and teachers.

4. Delta State government should provide good working environment classrooms equipped with teaching aids, laboratories, well ventilated and furnished staff rooms, well equipped libraries with textbooks for students and teachers for effective teaching – learning process.

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