WORK PLACE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' MORALE IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Organisations that fail to see the importance of morale in the work place often suffer in the long run. Maintaining staff morale is as important as maintaining customer relations. This study focused on the relationship between work place conditions and teachers' morale. Ten out of 17 secondary schools in the area were sampled using systematic random sampling technique. A researcher-designed questionnaire entitled "Work Place and Teachers Morale Questionnaire" (WTMQ) was administered on 145 teachers in the sampled schools using purposive sampling technique. The data obtained was analysed using Pearson product-moment correlation method. The study revealed a significant relationship between class size and teachers' morale, reward system and teacher's morale as well as school facilities and teacher's morale. It showed a non-significant relationship between workplace accessibility in schools and teachers' morale. The study suggests an aggressive rehabilitation of school facilities, prompt payment of teachers' salaries and other emoluments.

Keywords: Work place, morale, reward system, work place accessibility.

Introduction

Employee morale describes the overall outlook, attitude, satisfaction and confidence that employees feel at work. When employees are positive about their work environment and believe that they can meet their most important needs at work, employee morale is positive or high. If employees are negative and unhappy about their workplace, and feel unappreciated and as if they cannot satisfy their goals and needs employee morale is negative or low. There is a general belief that unhappy employees are unlikely to be productive work force; As Ejiogu, (1990) noted that the quality of education in any given society depends considerably on the number and the quality of its personnel.

Healthfield, (2013) defined employee morale as the employees outlook, optimism, self-concept, and assured belief in themselves and their organization its mission, goals, defined path, daily decisions and employee appreciation. Faith in self and faith in their organization are both important factors in positive employee morale. The existing climate in Nigerian schools appears to indicate that many teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs and when this happens: they tend to withdraw physically from teaching or remain there to constitute serious danger to the school effectiveness. Tattrie, (2008) amplified this very much when she said "Employees who don't feel inspired or motivated by their employers are less likely to do their best on the job. Employees with low morale might demonstrate low productivity in such forms as neglecting work to take care of personal errands, or gossiping with co-workers".

The teaching profession and teachers' career have been characterized by irregularity in the payment of salaries and allowances, unsatisfactory conditions of service, poor public image and unsatisfactory work conditions; one wonders whether teachers can derive any satisfaction from their jobs. If teachers are dissatisfied with their work; they are unlikely to

have positive attitude toward their work. This study, therefore, sets out to investigate the relationship between work place conditions and teacher's morale and attitude to work.

Literature Review

The concept of work place looked at situations that confront teachers in their schools which they are unprepared for. They include government reform programmes to raise standard of achievement among students which require increase commitment from teachers, more dynamic, complex interventionist leadership by head teachers to ensure that schools continue to develop. Paradoxically, however, most reforms have failed to give parallel attention to workplace conditions, leaving many teachers feeling de-skilled, bewildered, angry and demoralized. Day (1999) observed that if governments are serious about raising standards of achievement and thus standard of teaching, then it is important to understand how the conditions for teaching is central to both job effectiveness and satisfaction of teachers. The author attributes low teacher morale to changes in occupational and organizational working conditions which have had the universal consequences of intensifying work in schools.

Research world-wide about the quality of teaching and learning in smaller classes as reported by the teachers, 'students and other stakeholders' confirms the significance of class size to effectiveness classroom teaching. Price (1999) identified the role of smaller class sizes in quality teaching when he said the North Caroline State Education Agency has an initiative underway to hire additional 100,000 new teachers for their classrooms. He said North Carolina had got $25mill already under this programme. The idea is to get class size down in the early grades where we know small class size is most important to the quality of teaching and learning that takes place. Oyebade (2000) was of the opinion that teachers in public secondary schools are allocated many teaching periods with large class sizes thus hindering students' performance and teachers' effectiveness. Atolagbe (2004) in Slavin (1989) reported that management of pupils' behaviour is easier in smaller classes, where pupils:

- appear to be more absorbed in what they are doing,
- attend more; participate and spend more time on task, and
- interrupt lessons less frequently.

Galton (1996) observed that, those aspects of teaching that promote pupils' achievement are all present in greater amounts in the smaller classes. He further observed that pupils are challenged more often, they get longer periods, with the teacher, more time is spent on the task than routine management and pupils in such classes also receive greater amounts of feedback on their work. Teachers' morale refers to the happiness, satisfaction and rewards a teacher derives in his job. It is the amount of confidence and optimism that teachers have on their job. Oyedeji (1998) noted that, in order to achieve higher productivity, employees' needs must be provided and their morale boosted. Udoh, Akpa and Gong (1990) defines staff morale "as the happiness derived by workers in their job" it is their belief that under suitable conditions, people will perform better at work than when work under unsuitable conditions. Very often employers under estimate the importance of building morale in the workplace. Managers are rarely concerned about employees' morale, team spirit etc. All that matters is performance and results. These are no doubt very good managerial intentions, but what managers must realize is that if they wish to extract good results and performance from their employees on a constant basis, it is vital that there is a good team spirit and employee morale.

In recent decades, morale among teachers has declined in many countries due to low public image and appreciation of teachers' work. Etheridge (1999) emphasized the importance of appreciating teachers work. They not only work from 8:00 to 5:00, 8:00 to 3:00 as some people want to say, but they do lesson plans at night, they grade papers, they take our children to all the special events and work in the evenings. So, I hope that we will remember them and appreciate them always". Arikewuyo (1994) noted that teaching has no professional pride and that there are "better callings in the society than teaching". Day (1999) reported that more than 40 percent of English school teachers wanted to leave teaching while only 19percent felt that the society appreciated their work.

Teachers have been poorly remunerated; their salaries are paid irregularly, while promotion and rewards for workmanship are not usually done at the right time. Omidiji (1990) observed that, the promotion of teachers has been grossly neglected. Consequently, nobody is proud to identify himself as a teacher and that is why when you ask young people of today what career they would like to take up in future, they hardly wish to become teachers in life. This is because they view teaching as a dumping ground for frustrated and unemployed citizens who have to be helped because they could not be fixed anywhere else. Atolagbe (2011) observed that most of the teachers we find in the classroom are not prepared to teach. Teaching has become necessary for them, having failed to find the jobs of their dreams. This position was echoed very well when Amire (2008) said "Teaching in the university today is no longer fashionable. Many of the graduates coming back to take up teaching appointments in the university are those who failed the interviews of private companies like banks, oil companies and other high profile firms. When they don't have elsewhere to go, they take up teaching".

Methodology

This study was a descriptive research. It was a survey of work place conditions for teachers of public secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The school population was the 17 public secondary schools in the Local Government Area, while the teacher population was the 510 permanent teaching staff in the schools. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select 10 out of the 17 schools while 154 teachers were selected as teacher sample out of the 345 teachers in the sampled schools. A researcher designed instrument entitled "Work place and Teachers' Morale Questionnaire" (WTMQ) was used to get relevant information from respondents. The data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Statistics.

The following research hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between classroom size and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between reward system in schools and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between school facilities and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant relationship between work place accessibility and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Class Size and Teachers Morale

Variables	Values	N	r-value	df	Table value	Decision
Class size Morale	X = 8625 Y = 7400	10	0.87*	9	0.602	Rejected

* Significant at P > 0.05

Table 1 showed that the calculated r-value (0.87) is greater than the table value 0.602 at 0.05 alpha level. This implies that there was a significant relationship between class size and teachers morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 2: Reward System and Teachers Morale

Variables	Values	N	r-value	df	Table value	Decision
Reward system Morale	X = 7550 Y = 7400	10	0.80	9	0.602	Rejected

* Significant at P > 0.05

Table 2 revealed that, calculated r-value (0.80) is greater than the table value (0.602) at 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between reward system in schools and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Table 3: School Facilities and Teachers Morale

Variables	Values	N	r-value	df	Table value	Decision
School facilities Morale	X = 6950 Y = 7400	10	0.79	9	0.602	Rejected

* Significant at P > 0.05

From table 3, calculated r-value (0.79) was greater than the table value (0.602) at 0.05 significance level. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between school facilities and teachers' morale. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 4: Work place accessibility and Teachers Morale

Variables	Values	N	r-value	df	Table value	Decision
Work place accessibility Morale	X = 6700 Y = 7400	10	0.45	9	0.602	Accepted

Table 4 showed that, calculated r-value (0.45) is less than the table value (0.602) at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis is accepted and implies that, there is no significant relationship between work place accessibility and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Summary of the Findings

The significant test of the operational hypotheses revealed that:

i. There was a significant relationship between class size and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

ii. There was a significant relationship between reward system in schools and teachers' morale.

iii. There was a significant relationship between school facilities and teachers' morale.

iv. There was no significant relationship between accessibility to workplace and teachers' morale in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Discussion of Findings

The research finding as shown in Table 1 revealed a significant positive relationship between class size and teachers' morale. Classes are disproportionately over crowed and over populated; teachers spend most of the periods meant for quality teaching on class control and class discipline management. Majority of them said they are tired and worn out even before the breaks in an attempt to maintain class discipline and order. Very many of the teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the level of school facilities present in their various schools. There is high linkage between reward system in schools and teachers' morale. The study found out that, low level of morale was very well linked with irregular payment of teachers' salaries and benefits and near absence of programmes and platforms for appreciating teachers' contributions to national/ state goal attainments.

Table 3 revealed a significant relationship between school facilities and teachers morale. Teachers in the sampled schools were demoralized by a near state of absence of basic teaching and learning facilities in their schools; Textbooks were absent and the little available were outdated and worn. Classes are inadequate and overcrowded, chairs, tables and writing materials were virtually nonexistent, office space for teachers were luxury and work place comfort was absent.

Table 4 revealed a non-significant relationship between workplace accessibility and morale because most of the schools were located in urban centres, and ease of getting to work place is always there, either through public vehicles or school buses, while a significant number of respondents said they have their personal means of transportation, however they complained

about the state of intra-city roads where they ply every day and its negative effect on the conditions of their vehicles. However, these have not substantially affected their morale negatively.

Conclusion

The study found out that, teachers' happiness on their job is a strong indicator of school productivity. It found out that, over the years, the comfort, happiness and state of mind of school teachers have been taken for granted by the government, the ministry officials and their immediate bosses (principals) in school. Teachers, like any other person are always in the state of needs, foremost are the urge to meet psychological needs of the Maslow order; and when they failed to attain these needs, they are always unhappy and less productive. One can then conclude from the findings of this study that teachers in public secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area are highly demoralized as a result of their inability to find happiness in their different work places.

Recommendations

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

i. Government should make workplace comfortable. This is because comfortable environment is more than aesthetic, as careful attention to design can give a boost employee happiness.

ii. The Nigerian society, especially parents and guidance of students should change their attitude towards teachers.

iii. Give teachers credit for a job well done, institute programmes based on set milestones and this can serve as a powerful way to commend employees for making an impact. Teachers at various levels of education in the country should be qualified for national merit awards and national productivity awards.

iv. There is the need to embark on aggressive school facilities rehabilitation. More classes must be built, teaching and learning materials to help teachers in their work must be provided. It will never be out of place for government to plan new schools to complement the existing grossly inadequate overpopulated and understaffed public schools.

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