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ASSESSMENT OF STAFF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION MANAGEMENT BOARD (SEMB), ABIA STATEFOR IMPROVING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this work is to assess into the staff personnel management challenges of SEMB in Abia State. Four research questions were used for the study. The study was a descriptive survey design. One hundred and twenty (120) principals and one hundred and twenty (120) staff of Secondary Education Management Board Abia State, which comprised of all secondary education management boards (SEMB) zones. This total sample of two hundred and forty (240) was drawn from a population of five hundred and twenty four (524) principals and three hundred and five (305) SEMB staff through stratified random sampling. The researcher developed a rating scale with thirty seven (37) questionnaire items tagged Staff Personnel Administrative Functions Rating Scale (SPAFRS) to help elicit information from the respondents. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Findings of the study were that the recruitment requirements (criteria) for selecting staff were not strictly adhered to by the SEMB staff of Abia State. Also there were inconsistencies in choice promotions, posting, transfers, etc. All these management problems may not help in a long way to achieve the stated objectives (goals) of the secondary education. Some recommendations were made which include that the SEMB staff should avoid favouritism (sentiments) in carrying out their functions rather they should strictly abide by the stated criteria.

Introduction
Staff personnel management is a science that concerns its self with recruitment, selection, development, utilization and accommodation of people and human

resource in an organisation (Obikeze, Obi, Abonyi, 2005). It involves training and other related human endeavour. The human resources of an organisation consist of all individuals in the organisation regardless of their roles. Since recruitment, selection, development, utilization and accommodation of people are integral parts of organisation efforts, personnel management is inherent in all organizations.

Staff personnel management whether in business, industry, church or school, lie at the core of the efficiency of the organisation (Bellow, 2004). It is concerned with the recruitment, welfare, training, promotion, motivation, transfer and discipline of staff (Ibukun, 2004). Therefore, it is glaringly clear that staff personnel management functions hovers around recruitment, selecting, training and development, appointment, promotion, transfer and posting, discipline, supervision, and retirement of its employees for the attainment of its goals.

Abia State has 17 Local Government Areas. This arm of the education ministry is responsible for selection, recruitment, development and discipline, etc. They should follow strictly laid down rules and ensure sound recruitment, selection, transfer/posting, appointment and promotion into secondary school education service. Focusing at this beautiful functions and the recalcitrant/dismal behaviours of some SEMB staff and teachers in secondary school one may ask to what extent do the SEMB abide by the laid down prescriptions? This and many more things (inconsistencies) demands for a study (investigation) of the management functions of the staff personnel of the SEMB. However, from the interactions of the researcher and some SEMB staff and secondary school principals and teachers, it looks as if some teachers were compelled to the job, or favoured by giving them teaching appointment even against their desire. This behaviour is quite contrary to what Bellow (2004) said that education needs competent, willing and adequate staff who will help to facilitate (enhance) the achievement of the goals of the secondary education in Abia State.

Research Questions

This study was guided by three research questions.

1. How do Abia State SEMB recruit secondary school teachers?

2. What are the procedures and guidelines for promoting a teacher by SEMB Abia State?
3. What set of established rules guide the posting/transfer of teachers in public secondary schools in Abia State?
4. Does SEMB ensure that principals and trachers are trained periodically?

Methodology

The research design used for the study is a descriptive survey. Akuezuilo and Agu (2003) stated that a survey focuses on people, opinions, beliefs, attitude, motivations and behaviours. It is appropriate because it collects data from respondents on present conditions and presents it without manipulations.

Two hundred and twenty (240) respondents were selected for participation using stratified random sampling technique (e.g. principals and SEMB staff). Following the scenario, 100 principals and 120 SEMB (those up to grade level 12 and above) were sampled out of the total population mentioned above.

The instrument for data collection from the respondents was a rating scale titled "Staff Personnel Administration Functions Rating Scale (SPAFRS). It has two sections namely: Section A and Section B. Section A was used to elicit information on the personal data: status, principal or SEMB staff etc. Part B of the rating scale comprised of 30 items generated from the research questions. The rating scale was developed on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument was subjected to experts in Measurement and Evaluation and two other senior lecturers from Educational Foundations and Administration department for validation and proper scrutiny (language and sentence structure, vocabulary and simplicity) of the instrument. Their corrections and contributions were used for the final production of the instrument.

The instrument was tested for its internal consistency using Cronbach alpha coefficient. This resulted to a coefficient of 0.86 value. This was done using 15 principals and 15 SEMB staff. The high coefficient value indicates that the instrument is good and suitable for the study.

The instrument were distributed to the respondents by the researcher and her

two assistants and collected immediately for high percentage return. Out of the 240 copies shared only 4 copies were not well filled while 236 were correctly filled and used for data analysis. For data analysis, the mean scores and standard deviations were used in answering the researchquestions.

Research Question 1

How do Abia State SEMB recruit teachers?

Table 1: Showing Mean Rating Scores and Standard Deviation of staff of SEMB and Principals on recruitment of teachers in Abia State

S/N	Question Items	SEMB Staff			Principals		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Staff are recruited at every commencement of school session	2.31	0.98	D	2.42	1.0	D
2	Only those with Degrees in education, B.Sc Ed, B.A Ed, B.ed, PGDE etc are recruited	2.29	1.00	D	2.37	1.1	D
3	Favouritism is used in most recruitments	3.40	0.71	SA	3.45	0.8	SA
4	Recruitment of staff is on principal's demand (request)	1.79	0.92	D	2.20	0.8	D
5	Politics and bribery influence the appointment of principals of secondary schools	3.10	0.83	A	2.98	0.9	A

6	Teachers with NCE, OND, TCII, TCI and Diploma certificates are not recruited as teachers in secondary schools	1.78	1.05	D		1.98	1.2	D
7	Only those who pass the interview are recruited	1.20	1.44	D		2.01	1.2	D
8	Interviews are always conducted before recruitment	3.11	0.94	A		2.48	1.0	D

In table 1, items 3, 4, 5 scored above the criterion mean of 2.50 both for SEMB staff and principals. Their standard deviations were less than 1.00. So, it is the opinions of the SEMB staff and principals that favouritism is used in most recruitment; recruitment is not based on principal's request and that politics and bribery influenced the appointment of principals of secondary schools. However, both parties disagreed that only those who pass interview are recruited; that teachers with NCE, OND, TCII, TCI and Diploma certificates are not recruited as teachers into teaching service in secondary school in Abia State. Both also disagreed that recruitment is done at the commencement of every session and that not only those with B.Sc Ed, B.Ed, B.A. Ed,344 PGDE etc are recruited into the teaching service at the secondary school level.

Research Question 2

What are the procedures (guidelines) or rules for promoting teachers by Abia State SEMB?

Table 2: Mean Rating scores and standard deviations of guidelines in Abia State (Procedures for promoting teachers)

S/N	Question Items	SEMB Staff			Principals		
		$\overline{x}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{x}$	SD	Decision
9	Staff promotion is done based on clearly defined procedures (guidelines)	3.55	0.91	SA	3.38	0.51	SA
10	There is favouritism in conducting promotion interview exercise	3.62	0.76	SA	3.42	0.94	SA
11	Promotions are used to pay back conscientious and exceptional teachers	2.26	0.48	D	2.02	0.35	D
12	Promotion is done on external supervisor's report	2.20	0.99	D	2.29	1.02	D
13	Implementation of promotion on salaries are delayed	3.25	0.71	SA	3.70	0.64	SA
14	Promotion interviews are done every 3 years	2.56	0.81	A	2.42	0.79	D

15	Regular promotions are used to motivate teachers in general	3.75	0.93	SA	3.80	0.98	SA
16	Teachers are notionally promoted every 3 years	3.68	0.88	SA	3.70	0.89	SA
17	Principal recommend for promotion of teachers	1.39	0.60	SD	1.52	0.72	SD
18	Promotion interview performance guarantees teachers promotion	2.38	1.00	D	2.41	0.96	D
19	No specific time for promotion	1.86	0.34	D	2.12	0.30	D
20	Promotions are not used to work salaries	2.33	0.56	D	2.41	0.67	D

In Table 2 the mean ratings of the SEMB staff and principals, for items 9, 10, 13, 14, 15 and 16 were above 2.50 criterion mean of acceptance on the four point rating scale and their standard deviations are less than 1 (one). This indicates that SEMB staff and principals were of the opinion that staff promotion was based on certain criteria, that there is favouritism, promotion interview exercise, implementation of promotion is always delayed, promotion interviews are done every three years, regular promotions motivate teachers and that teachers are notionally promoted every 3 years, while items 11, 12, 18, 19 and 20 were disagreed by both SEMB staff and principals. However, both strongly disagreed in item 17 only showing that principals do not recommend for promotion.

Research Question 3

What set of established rules guide the posting/transfer of teachers?

Table 3: Mean rating scores and standard deviation of SEMB staff and Principals on established guidelines for posting/transfer of teachers in Abia State

S/N	Question Items	SEMB Staff			Principals		
		$\overline{x}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{x}$	SD	Decision
21	Transfer is based on staff demand	2.42	0.64	D	2.38	0.57	D
22	There is favouritism in transfer of teachers/ appointment of duty principals	3.24	0.31	SA	3.42	0.47	SA
23	Teachers can be transferred on their principals demand	3.34	0.88	A	3.21	0.86	A
24	Some transfers are made on punitive measures	2.94	0.98	A	3.11	0.95	A
25	Transfers are made on the request of lack of teachers by principals	3.47	0.84	SA	0.92	3.70	SA
26	There is defined guidelines for transfer of teachers/ posting	2.22	0.56	D	0.61	2.36	D
27	Teachers are posted/ transferred based on their relationship with SEMB staff	2.02	0.65	D	0.52	3.21	A

In Table 3, items 22 and 25 were strongly agreed by both group of respondents saying that there is favouritism in transfer/posting of teachers. Also that transfers are made on the request of lack of teachers by principals. In item 23 and 24, both SEMB staff and Principals agreed that some transfers are made on punitive measures can be transferred on principal's demand. While on the other hand items 21, and 26 were disagreed by both SEMB staff and principals indicating that staff is not transferred on his or her demand, but can be transferred on principal's wish. Again, some transfers are made on punitive measures and that is no defined guideline but in case there is it is not strictly followed. Lastly, in item 27, that SEMB staff disagreed that posting/transfer of teachers are based on relationship while principals agreed to that item.

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Research Question 4

Does SEMB ensure that teachers are trained periodically?

Table 4: Mean Rating scores and standard deviations of SEMB staff and Principals on training/development of teachers periodically in Abia State

S/N	Question Items	SEMB Staff			Principals		
		$\overline{x}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{x}$	SD	Decision
28	SEMB organize workshops, and seminars for teachers once in 3 years	3.50	0.63	SA	3.27	0.81	SA
29	SEMB do not approve relevant in-service training for teachers with pay	3.29	0.89	SA	3.41	0.82	SA
30	SEMB sponsors only SEMB staff for national conferences	1.65	0.94	D	3.70	0.94	SA
31	SEMB provide supportive supervision (clinical) as a way to develop staff	3.33	0.69	SA	3.81	0.61	SA
32	SEMB organize orientation lectures and exercise for new employees	2.53	0.73	A	2.21	0.70	D
33	SEMB conduct induction exercise for newly employed teachers	2.61	1.32	A	2.44	1.13	D
34	SEMB organize lectures and workshops on duress by the government	1.77	.099	D	1.91	0.89	D

35	Development programmes are provided by SEMB appropriate to staff needs	2.46	0.88	D	2.21	0.97	D
36	SEMB approve/sponsors teachers for development training e.g. national conferences on favouritism	1.97	0.63	D	3.02	0.87	A
37	SEMB organize seminars wherever a new curriculum is introduced into the school system	3.20	0.72	A	3.06	0.80	A

Table 4 mean scores indicated that in items 28, 29, 30, 31 were strongly agreed by SEMB staff and Principals. This implies that SEMB do organize workshops and seminars for teachers; do not approve pay for attending relevant in-service training; provides supportive supervision to teachers. Principals strongly agreed that SEMB sponsor only SEMB for national conference while both agree that SEMB organize lectures and seminars whenever a new curriculum is introduced into the school system. Lastly, it also revealed that items 32, 33, 34 and 35 were disagreed by both respondents. This again revealed that both SEMB staff and principals organize orientation and induction exercises for new employees (teachers); that SEMB do not organize lectures and workshops on government pressure (duress); that development programmes organized are not appropriate to staff needs and lastly that SEMB do not agree sponsorship for teachers to attend national conferences on favouritism as indicated by SEMB staff scoring mean value.

Discussion of Results

Recruitment: Following the indications in research question one, it was observed through their mean scores that there is favouritism in recruitment of staff, recruitment was based on principal's demand, politics, bribery and corruption influences appointment of principals of

secondary schools in Abia State. The demand of Principals for recruitment is considered appropriate because they are in charge of these schools and will be in the best position to identify areas of need for recruitment of teachers. This is in contrast with what Bello (2004) recommended that "The board need to meet its demands based on the returns of vacant position in schools made by the head teachers request". The finding of not only those with education qualifications are recruited indicates that both OND, NCE etc are recruited by the SEMB. It was also indicated those who did not do well in the recruitment interview were also taken; this is in agreement that favouritism, politics and corruption influences the choice of those to be recruited.

Promotion of Staff: On promotion exercise conducted by SEMB, it is revealed through this study that there are clearly defined procedures for promotion; favouritism in conducting promotion interview, financial implementation of promotion are delayed, teachers are notionally promoted every three years and that regular promotion motivates staff. However, promotion for every 3 years is ideal but it is observed from this study that the performance of the staff (teacher) is not strictly used for promotion which could have been a very good strategy to promote only those of high quality as principals' performance (ability) and hence national development. Also, it shows gross irregularity in promotion of staff in Abia State. So, to say that promotion is not based on years of experience, hard work not performance reports of supervisor in Abia State is not an over statement. This development is very dangerous for the secondary education system in Abia State because it will demoralize hard working, conscientiousness, dedication and commitment of teachers and in turn hinder national development.

It is even blatant that SEMB strongly agree that there is favouritism (IMM) in the posting and appointment of duty principals. Such irregularity may breed annoyance, headiness and bitterness in teachers who are supposed to be appointed thereby the system should not expect someone who is denied of his/her right (privilege) especially in status and finance to do wonders. The above finding is in consensus with Obiorah (2004) who accentuated that there is favouritism in

promoting teachers to duty secondary school principals.

Transfer of Posting of Teachers: It was found from the study through research question 3 that transfer of teachers are made most times on favouritism and sentiments not considering the usefulness of the staff at the place of posting. That transfers are guaranteed based on the principal request. It also showed that there is lack of strict adherence to rules and regulation on transfer of staff because a teacher can be transferred based on request from government official. This finding concurred with Obiorah (2004) that irregularities exist in teachers transfer in secondary schools. This cannot be surprising when you look at the way teachers are transferred in secondary schools today. The secondary school system can be marred as a result of undue transfer whether inter/intra local government; inter or intra zonal transfer of teachers. These anomalies can harm drastically the terrain of education thereby affecting the performance of both the teachers and the students vis-à-vis national development of country.

Staff training/development: Hence, the respondents revealed that SEMB organizes seminars and workshops once in three years but not under duress; provides and ensures supportive supervision; organises orientation and induction for newly employed staff and organize seminars for teachers whenever there a new school curriculum introduction. Again, SEMB do sponsor only SEMB staff to national conference; they appoints and sponsors teachers based on favouritism for national conferences and lastly do not organize staff development programmes according to staff needs. This shows that SEMB knows and appreciates the need for staff training and is trying as much as they can to uphold training and re-training of their staff although it is not regular. This will in a long way help to improve on the teachers' competences, skills, knowledge, attitude and aptitude to be able to handle their chores effectively and efficiently too. This is good for even the best teachers because they need to be retooled, rejuvenated, and keep abreast of new trends and conventions in each subject area. This is in line with Aroh (2005) who said that virtually all teachers have the pre-requisite knowledge and skill to teach within their own subject area, it is almost inevitable that they need some orientation and induction which was supported by Okereke (2005) who

observed that staff training and development of teachers leaves much to be desired because it will help to minimise problems confronting new and serving teachers to contribute maximally to the work of the school.

Conclusion

The frequency and extent to which school officials is able to manage his staff determines to a large (great) extent the productivity of the school (Nwankwo, 2005). This is also applied to the SEMB as school managers (executives). It will not be palatable if staff selection, recruitment, promotion, transfer/posting and training / development are still done on favouritism and political sentiments. This will hamper the progress of our secondary school system thus impeding national development in our country. The SEMB although they are autonomous institutions with its own specified system and guidelines (procedures) should endeavour to allow any of their staff go contrary to the laid down procedures (principles) in carrying out their roles.

Recommendations

The researcher having made some findings recommended that

1) The SEMB Abia State should ensure that the laid down rules for recruitment, transfer and posting of staff be strictly monitored.
2) The SEMB should try to maintain a good and healthy organizational climate by their staff management practices via clearly setting up laid down objectives, rules and regulations abiding the members of staff to help achieve the NPE goals for secondary school education in our state vis-à-vis our country Nigeria for national development.
3) The SEMB should find a way to financial implement promotion allowance (arrears) in the salaries of teachers without delay so as to motivate them to be dedicated and committed to their employment chores wherever they are.
4) The SEMB should avoid sentiments in the selection, recruitment, promotion, staff development, transfer and posting of teachers as it will go a long way to ameliorate headiness and wipe out bitterness in the minds of teachers they managed for the purpose of achieving set targets for national development.
5) The appointment of duty principals from teachers by the SEMB officials should be meticulously done based

on the set criteria to avoid breeding annoyance, discouragement and demoralization of the staff. In that case, the most qualified both in certificate, year of experience and grade level (status) should be considered.

6) The SEMB should endeavour to use promotion examinations in form of oral or written interviews for recruitment so as to identify the right quality of staff. This will enhance the performance of our students (future of tomorrow) because the NPE states that a nation cannot rise more than its teachers. It is a give and take thing. Whatever the teacher gives is what the students will receive. Therefore, better teaching, better understanding, better performance and increased productivity for national development.

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