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DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF TEACHERS: IMPLICATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EBONYI STATE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the demand and supply of teachers as well as the factors that affect it with a view to ensuring quality in Ebonyi State public secondary schools. The study is partly ex-post-facto and descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised of the school heads from 206 public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 60 principals and 60 vice principals to represent junior and senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Data were collected through school enrolment records and questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using ratio scale, percentage and mean scores. The result of the data analyzed revealed that the demand for teacher is higher than the number supplied in Ebonyi State public secondary schools. Most of the available teachers teaching in Ebonyi State public secondary schools do not possess the basic qualifications for teaching. These were attributed to the locations of schools, increased students enrolment as a result of the Ebonyi State government free and compulsory secondary education programme, non recruitment of teacher on the basis of the subject area of specialization and government interest in the recruitment and posting of teachers. It was recommended that Ebonyi State government through the school boards should embark on recruitment of qualified teachers devoid of any government interest to achieve the prescribed teacher-student ratio in her public secondary schools while the unqualified teachers should be given time frame of five years to acquire the desired minimum teaching qualifications through Sandwich and distance learning programme. The study concluded that the quality of secondary education in Ebonyi State will continue to wither unless special attention is paid to teachers in terms of allowances provided for teachers in rural areas and those who teach subject that enjoy least interest by teachers.

Keywords: Teacher, Quality Assurance, Public Schools, secondary Education

1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent time, people complain that the type of education provided by most public secondary schools does not meet up with the society's demand in terms of quality. Students outcome do not match the government and parental investment. It is no wonder that Nigerian students do not generally perform well in most public examinations, Chief Examiner's report for the West African Examination Council (WAEC) attest to the performance of students at the May/June senior secondary certificate examination (Omo-Ojugo, 2006). All stakeholders are concerned about why the system is turning out graduates with poor results. To parents, it is questionable whether or not teachers in the public secondary schools are competent to teach effectively. This ugly scenario has been alleged to have contributed to the rising wave of examination malpractices and growing level of violence among students in secondary schools. Even legal pronouncements by the federal government in the implementation guideline for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme (2000) and the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) re-affirmed the poor state of the secondary school system and the need for a deliberate effort of all and sundry to revamp it. No wonder

Ogunsaju (2004) states that the academic standard in all Nigerian educational institutions has fallen considerably below societal expectations.

Quality according to Salami (1992) cited in Aja (2010) connotes standard, efficiency and worthiness. Quality assurance in education is the establishment of standard, assessment, problem solving and monitoring strategies so as to guarantee efficiency and effectiveness in any educational system. Importance of quality secondary education cannot be over-emphasized considering the fact that secondary school supply the bulk of workers in both public and private service in any society as well as feed all the institutions of higher learning. In pursuance of the measures aimed at guaranteeing quality secondary education, the most crucial factor to consider is teachers. Ijaiya (1998) opined that improving the quality of teaching force in school is seen as the key to raising students' achievement. Thus, raising educational standard should be the government's number one priority. Teachers are professionally trained persons who teach students in schools. Their roles and position in any educative process cannot be over-emphasized. That teachers determine the quality of any education system is indisputable that is why the National policy of education succinctly states "No Education system can rise above the quality of its teachers" (FGN 2006). It is also in this regard that the FRN (2004:61) stipulates that the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) will ultimately become the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession hence the setting up of Teachers Registration Council (TRC) in 1993. Also the Baguada seminar reports on quantities and qualities in Nigerian Education (NERC) (1980) as cited by ESA (2005) also shared the consensus that teachers are the main determinants of quality in Education. Teachers can make or mar the school curriculum; therefore, their adequacy and quality for better service delivery needs to be assessed on a regular basis.

2. THE PROBLEM

In Ebonyi State, the demand for teachers in both primary and secondary schools increased abysmally with the introduction of free and compulsory primary and secondary education in May 1999. This has probably affected the quality of education at that level in the state. This seeming situation of falling standard of secondary education has left parents with the option of patronizing private secondary schools. It is in this regard that Arowojula (2004) averred that the fall in standard of public schools and parents' aspiration to give the best education to their children has led to greater patronage of private schools. This was evident from the Ebonyi State Government Education Review Committee (2007) report which among other things observed that the standard of secondary education has been watered down in the state as a result of inadequate resources in the sector. It is also on record that there exists a high teacher: student ratio at both primary and secondary schools in Ebonyi State (Nwite, 2007). Teacher student ratio is the number of students enrolled in secondary school divided by the number of secondary school teachers regardless of their teaching assignment. The UNESCO standard and the National policy on Education specify a maximum of 30 and 40 students respectively per teacher (NPE, 2006 UNESCO, 2000) This means that the demand for teachers in Ebonyi State Secondary Schools is relatively higher compared to their supply. Many convincing reasons have been advanced at various for a as being responsible for this ugly trend. Just like any other commodity or services, demand and supply of teachers in any society are largely determined by many market forces. However, Ow'honda (2003) noted that since most education services are publicly provided, demand and supply of teachers is determined largely by political process and national or state economic growth. This might be the reason why some schools have adequate teachers while others are lacking. It is in realization of this disequilibrium that characterizes demand and supply of teachers at one time or the other and at one place or the other that this study was conceived to examine the demand and supply of teachers with a view to guaranteeing quality assurance in Ebonyi State secondary schools.

3. Purpose of the Study:

The main purpose of the study was to analyze the demand and supply of teachers with the view to finding out its implication on quality assurance in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.

Specifically, the study examined:

- (1) The demand of teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.
 - (2) The quality of teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.
 - (3) The factors that affect demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.
- Findings of this study will provide educational planners and administrators with adequate information about teachers' availability in the public secondary schools in Ebonyi state. It will likewise assist in establishing corrective measures with respect to some disadvantaged schools to ensure equity and uniformity in posting teachers to schools in the state and improve the system productivity.

3.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) What is the demand of teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools?
- (2) What is the quality of teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools?
- (3) What are the factors that affect demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools?

4. Method and Material

The research design for the study was partly ex-post-facto and descriptive survey. Three research questions guided the study. Data were collected from report submitted at the Secondary Education Board by the principals while some were collected from the target population. All the principals and Vice-Principals of 206 public secondary schools in Ebonyi State constituted the population. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 60 principals and 60 vice-principals to represent both junior and senior secondary schools across the three educational zones in Ebonyi State which gave a sample of 120 respondents. The researchers used questionnaire for data collection, which had two sections A and B. Section A dealt with demographic data while section B contained items necessary to elicit the needed responses for answering the research questions. The response options were a modified likert rating scale with values attached as follows:

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4

Agree (A) = 3

Disagree (D) = 2

Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

an expert in education measurement and evaluation and two educational administration and planning experts were employed for face and content validity. Their suggestions and comments were incorporated into the final instrument used for this study. To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered two times on 15 principals and 15 vice-principals who were not included in the study at two weeks interval. The correlation between the first and second tests yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.78. This was high enough to consider the instrument suitable for the study.

The data collected were analyzed using ratio scale, percentage and mean scores. To determine the decision rule, mean scores of 2.5 and above were considered positive while those below 2.5 were regarded as negative.

5. Results

Data for research questions were analyzed and presented in tables.

Table 1: Demand for teachers in Ebonyi State public secondary schools.

No of schools	No of students		Total	No of teachers		Total	Teacher: Student Ratio
	Male	Female		Male	Female		
60	26,817	32,869	59,686	576	405	981	1:61

Table 1 above showed that there are a total of 61,686 students in the 60 public secondary schools studied as at July, 2011. The total number of teachers in the schools studied was 981. The average teacher-students' ratio in the schools was 1:61. This was above the prescribed maximum standard of teacher-students' ratio. Details of the analysis revealed that Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State recorded the highest teacher students' ratio of 1:97 while Ebonyi Local Government Area recorded the least teacher-students ratio of 1:48 in the state. This implies that demand for teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools is higher than the supply.

Table 2: Quality of teachers in Ebonyi State Public Secondary Schools

Teachers with teaching qualification						Teachers without teaching qualification				
NCE	B.ED	BA	B.SC	M.ED	TOTAL	DEGREE	HND	OND	OTHERS	TOTAL
379	106	80	134	38	737	76	144		24	244

Table 2 revealed that 70% of the teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools have requisite teaching qualifications while 30% are teaching without requisite qualifications. Details of the analysis showed that Ishielu Local Government Area has the highest number of teachers without requisite teaching qualifications while Onicha Local Government Area has the least number of teachers without requisite teaching qualifications.

Table 3: Factors that affect demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State Secondary Schools.

S/N	ITEMS STATEMENT	RESPONSES				N	FX	X	DECISION
		SA	A	D	SD				
1	School location affect demand and supply of teachers in secondary schools	120	180	40	10	120	350	2.92	Agree
2	Students population affect demand and supply of teachers in secondary schools	25	50	25	20	120	32	2.67	Agree
3	Teachers' subject area of specialization affect demand and supply of teachers in secondary schools	340	120	50	5	120	415	3.46	Agree
4	Teaching qualification affect demand and supply of teachers in secondary schools	40	60	100	40	120	140	1.17	Disagree
5	Government interest affect demand and supply of teachers in secondary schools	240	120	40	0	120	400	3.33	Agree

Table 3 above indicates that school location, students population, teacher's subject area of specialization and government interest affect demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools while majority disagree with item 4 which means that teaching qualification does not necessarily pose a problem in the demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools.

6. Discussion

The findings of the study showed that all the local government area had teacher-student ratio above the prescribed maximum standard in the National Policy on Education. This is an indication that there is urgent need for more teachers to meet the needs of public secondary schools for effective implementation of the free secondary education of Ebonyi State Government. Also there is presence of unqualified teachers in almost all the secondary schools studied. This leaves much to be desired in terms of guaranteeing quality secondary education in Ebonyi State secondary schools. On the factors that affect demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools, the analysis revealed that school location, students population, subject area of specialization and

government interest greatly affect demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools while availability of qualified teachers; that is those who possess teaching qualification and are willing to take to teaching profession is not a major factor affecting demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools. What this implies is that employment of qualified teachers to teach in Ebonyi State secondary school depends on government political will and not on unavailability of qualified teachers. These findings are in tandem with Okokwa cited in Nwaeke (2006) who observed that resources allocation and distribution in the education sector is always characterized by political consideration instead of the principle of equity. This condition according to him has helped to exacerbate imbalance in educational resources distribution. Corroborating the finding, Enaohwo (2000) maintained that educational resources in Nigeria are allocated to satisfy political interest groups instead of the felt needs. He opined that resources rationalization instead of political expediency should be the basis for resource distribution which according to him will go a long way to correct the imbalance in the allocation of educational resources caused by the use of subjective or political consideration.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study made an analysis of demand and supply of teachers in Ebonyi State secondary schools as well as the factors that affect it with a view to ensuring quality in the free and compulsory secondary education programme of Ebonyi State Government. The study's findings generally showed that the demand for teachers is higher than the government is capable of providing in her public secondary schools hence the high teacher-students ratio observable in almost all the public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Also some teachers teaching in the Ebonyi State public secondary schools do not possess the minimum standard/qualification for teaching. These from the findings were attributed to school location increased students' population, teachers' subject area of specialization and government interest in the recruitment and posting of teachers.

For quality assurance to be guaranteed in Ebonyi State public secondary schools, it is hereby recommended that:

- (1) Ebonyi state government through her school boards should as a matter of urgency embark on recruitment of qualified teacher devoid of government interest to achieve the policy provision of teacher-students ratio in her secondary schools.
- (2) Unqualified teachers still teaching in the secondary schools should be given deadline of about five years to acquire the desired minimum teaching qualifications through Sandwich and distance learning teacher training programmes or face termination.
- (3) Teachers serving in the rural areas as well as those teaching special core subject like English Language, Igbo Language, Mathematics, Basic Sciences, Introductory technology, Physical Health Education (PHE) ad Christian Religious Studies (CRS) should be given special allowance as an incentive to motivate others who were not interested.
- (4) Special provisions in terms of funds should be provided by the government and arrangement made to involve private partnership in the management of public secondary schools as in the case of health programme of Ebonyi State. This will not only make the free and compulsory secondary education of the state sustainable but qualitative.

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