

## Teachers' Retention: A Tool For Promoting Quality and Functional Education In Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Maintaining quality and functional education is the function of teachers since they occupy the centre position in teaching and learning. These teachers like any other group of workers want to enjoy reasonable comfort with their families; and a good standard of living on retirement. This paper, among other things therefore state reasons why teachers leave the teaching profession and provides uncompromising basis recommendation in teachers' retention towards enhancing quality and functional education in Nigeria. Some of these recommendations are: improved special salary scale; conducive teaching and learning environment; job security; professional development programmes; welfare packages; social responsibility and societal recognition; involvement of teachers in decision making among others. It concludes that for teachers to effectively discharge duties. For effective and efficient maintenance of quality and functional education in Nigeria, all the recommendations of this paper for teacher's retention must be sincerely and faithfully adhered to.

**Key words:** Teachers, Retention, Quality, Promoting, Functional Education.

### Introduction

Teaching is both vital and strategic profession in the course of national development. It will be very difficult to produce professionals that will manage other sectors of the economy without adequate and qualified teachers. In Nigeria, teaching is reluctantly chosen as a profession, and in fact, the society looks at teachers as those that are unfortunate in life. This may be because government has little concern for the welfare of teachers. Education is given through teaching and learning, and teachers are central in the teaching situation (Abiodun, 2017). Ukeje (2018), without teachers, teaching and learning would not succeed. Hirsh and Emerick, (2016) confirms that, whatsoever a government, and organization or an individual put in place, without a teacher at the centre, there cannot be effective formal education.

Teaching gave birth to all other professions, such as Medicine, Engineering, Accounting, and Law, just to mention but a few. It is a fact that children would not want their mother to leave the home without intention of coming back again. That has not been the case in teaching profession, teachers who are leaders of other professions leave the teaching profession because of glaring unfavorable conditions of service forcing them out of teaching to seek for better jobs elsewhere without any hope of coming back.

Moreover, as that popular saying goes; to whom much is expected much must be given. Since the society expects much from teachers, therefore much must be given to them, in order to stay on their job, meet the much expectation of quality and functional education of the society. Today, society is shifting the problems of education sector on the helpless teachers. The problems of the sector that are mostly shifted directly on teachers include but not limited to the followings: poor student academic achievement, indiscipline, cultism, examination malpractice, high incidence of student dropout, insufficient instructional materials and congested classrooms poor salaries, accommodations, poor recognition and low funding of the sectors (Rafindadi, 2014).

As found out by Idakwoji (2014), a significant percent of the society even tends to see the innocent teachers as being responsible for most of those problems of education in Nigeria. This leads to reducing them to society weeping dogs regarding whatever goes wrong with the education of children. The helpless teachers have decided to rise and minimize their changes in the profession. Some of the measures they put in place as stated by Idokwoji (2014) include, industrial action to press home their demands, better working environment and or availability of required teaching and learning materials and other improved conditions of service. The failure of the appropriate authority to recognize teachers' request have resulted in quitting the profession, especially by the most qualified and experienced ones. In view of the above, measures or steps needed to be taken on order to retain teachers for improve quality and functional education in Nigeria.

### **Teachers' Retention**

Teachers' retention is the ability to keep teachers in service, to function effectively without having any thought of living their job for other job in the society, outside the teaching job. Baikie (2018) viewed teacher retention as an obligation to continue to work as a teacher in the class room or remain a teacher for life, and to handle teaching with all passion, without distraction and discouragement of any kinds. Hirsh and Emerick (2016) argued that teacher retention is a process in which the teachers are encouraged to remain within the teaching profession, to promote qualitative and functional education in Nigeria. In other words, the abilities to keep a teacher in service, through the provision of welfare, incentives, special salary scale, good condition of service fascinating working/teacher friendly environment, promote the stay of a teacher on their jobs, without immediately looking for other jobs and thereby promote teachers' retention.

### **Quality Education**

Quality education refers to educational system that is based on a curriculum relevant, or educational programme who it curriculum is relevant to it learner, the society, gender sensitivities, gender friendly, and it is constantly reviewed, reformed, or even changed with the changing circumstances. Isyaku, (2017), stated that it is a situation where schools are provided with adequate and quality teachers and put all necessary measures in to make them stay on teaching profession and to promote quality and functional education.

### **Functional Education**

A functional education is any educational programme that is capable of producing a positive output in any learner in any nation and functional education provides learners with knowledge on problem solving skills and scientific attitudes as priority for self-reliance in a world full of competition that characterizes survival of the fittest (Abiodun, 2017). Ali (2010) averted that a nation with functional education will ensure the availability of food for people, creation of jobs, provision of service that are goal oriented for sustainable development for its citizens. Idowu (2014), defined functional education as the total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials to the fullest and consequently be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. In recognition of the vital role that functional education plays, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2012) affirms that there is need for functional education at least for the promotion of a progressive, and a united Nigeria. to this end, school programmes should be relevant, practical and comprehensive, while interest and ability should determine the individual direction in education for acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies. Therefore, to achieve this functional education, teachers' retention cannot be compromised.

### **Retention Strategies Theories**

Scholl (2018), Vroom Expectancy Theory provides some guidance for retaining teachers and employees. These are: valence, expectancy and instrumentality. These components work together to establish a motivational force.

- a. Valence is the degree to which the rewards offered by an organization align with the needs employees seek to fulfill. High valence indicates that the needs of teachers/employees are aligned well with the rewards system an organization offers. Conversely, low valence is a poor alignment of needs with the reward and can lead to low job satisfactions and thereby increase turnover and decrease retention. Valence is therefore the expected satisfaction a person receives from a particular outcome (Remond, 2018). The theory implies that teachers have certain needs to meet, and that they will be willing to stay on the job if the reward system (salary and other benefits) of the education sector are able to meet their needs, if otherwise employers of teachers will not be able to retain their teachers.
- b. Expectancy has several factors that can lead to job satisfaction and high retention rates in an organization. Examples are ability and interest, lack of ability and interest will decrease a person's expectancy (Scholl, 2018). Increasing expectancy in an organization can be done by management discovering what resources supervision and training employees need to make them to be more confident in their abilities (Redmond, 2010). From the above theory of expectancy, teachers need to have interest on teaching before the issue of retention will surface. A teacher that does not have interest on teaching cannot be retained in the teaching profession. Also, in order to enhance the ability of teachers, adequate training, supervision and resources have to be put in place by their employers. If this is done, retention of qualified teachers will be possible.
- c. Instrumentality is the perception of employee whether they will actually get what they desired even if it has been promised by the manager. Increasing instrumentality within an organization will be part of implementing an effective reward system for attainment of specific goals and accomplishment. The variables affecting instrumentality are trust in leaders' control policies (Scholl, 2018). The instrumentalist theory of retention denotes here is that the employer of the teachers must be trustworthy of fulfilling all their promises and abide by the policies of the educational system. If teachers could be this quality in their employers retention of quality teachers will not be difficult (Bello and Adebayo, 2014).

### **Basic Reasons Why Teachers Leave the Jobs**

The act of teaching ordinarily brings satisfaction to teachers and the pupils, this satisfaction is being eroded over time with incessant strikes, lockout, non – payment of salaries and allowances, compulsory and untimely retirement, non – promotion and stagnation (Bello and Adebayo, 2014). Again, one may notice that the rate at which teachers leave teaching profession for other profession is alarming. However, in the research work of Ingersoll (2018), teachers themselves say job dissatisfaction in such that they do not benefit what other people in other professions benefit. According to them, they do not have special allowance, interesting salary packages, welfare packages, but instead their classrooms are congested, offices are factually empty of office equipment, classrooms are dilapidated, instructional materials (real and model) are in shortage or unavailable, promotion is slow and at times untimely and, compulsory retirement.

Similarly, investigation by Redmond, (2018), reveals that most times, teachers leave when they encounter an environment that lacks essential professional supports. These they said include: job dissatisfaction, poor working condition, and salary, inadequate support from parents, administration, colleagues and the public; discipline, management and attendance problems; increase in class size, additional workload, poor motivation of students and lack of space for teachers to participate in key decisions affecting the school. Furthermore, there is lack of induction and monitoring programme for new and experienced teachers, lack of room for professional development especially for the teachers in rural areas.

### **Basic Strategies in Retaining Teachers towards Enhancing Qualitative and Functional Education in Nigeria**

Manpower is the most important resource of any organization. They supply talent, skills,

knowledge and experience to achieve the organization's objectives. In order for an organization to survive and prosper, it must be able to attract, develop, reward adequate and retain human resource. The author of this paper hereby state some strategies needed to retain teachers in our school, and they include but not limited to the followings:

- a. **Prompt payment of teachers' salary:** It is disheartening but very common in Nigeria to hear that government and its agencies, proprietors/proprietress of schools are owing teachers six or seven month salaries while people in other professions get their salaries as at when due. For teachers to remain in teaching profession there must be adequate provisions for the timely payment of their salaries (Ingersoll, 2018).
- b. **Special salary scale:** There should be a special salary package above that of all other professions for teachers, as teaching is obviously the mother of all professions. Teachers are found often complaining that: "the take home salary cannot take me home; the salary cannot make ends meet; the salary does not commensurate my qualification and work load; my colleagues in other sectors are earning better and higher" (Abiodun, 2017).
- c. **Good welfare packages for teachers:** According to Baikie (2018), a great degree of disaffection among teachers arises when they compare themselves with other professional who enjoy greater prestige and better socio – economic status. Better scheme car loans, soft loans, wardrobe and dressing allowances go a long way to make teachers stay in the job.
- d. **Conducive teaching and learning environment:** As Gyuse (2019) points out that salary is relative term and may not necessarily be a major determinant why teachers may stay or leave teaching. There are other factors than good salary which may encourage teachers to stay in their job. Conducive teaching and learning environment is one of such factors which include good and well ventilated classroom, well equipped laboratories, well equipped libraries, with internet services, air conditioned staff rooms, good manageable workloads, normal class size, availability and usability of instructional materials etc. All these could make a teacher stay on their job, if provided.
- e. **Training and professional development programme:** Individual aspires to attain a high social and economic status in any chosen career especially in the Nigerian context. The tendency to enter into a profession and to stay in that profession will certainly depend on how individual's ambitions and aspirations are realized. When the attainment of an individual ambition and aspirations are certain, there is a better chance to stay in that profession as affirmed by Baikie, (2018). Teachers should be given much more opportunity for professional development to build themselves in their profession with higher knowledge and skills.
- f. **Job security:** The usual practice in the northern region of Nigeria, whereby some teachers will be employed on either part – time or contract basis should be discouraged, if teachers that are qualified, experience and hardworking should be retained. Experience has proven that part – time and contract teacher/staff are always seeking for better opportunities where their job will be secured (Abiodun, 2017).
- g. **Attractive condition of service:** Away from special salary packages for teachers, other fringe benefits like, free medical facilities (for staff/teachers and their family members), educational supports to teachers' children/wards, overtime allowances for extra hours, transfers allowances in lieu of 28 days; timely promotion, good pension after retirement etc, which other professions like medicine, law, engineering etc enjoy and which made people in those professions to stay in their jobs should be extended to teaching profession.
- h. **Involvement of teachers in decision making:** Steinke and Putman (2017), highlights in their research work that teachers feel satisfied when they are included in the decision making at both local and national levels. Thus, if teachers are allowed to participate in policy formulation and decision making in education sector, it will enhance their job satisfaction and will remain in the job.

- I. **Good human relation:** If there is a cordial relationship between school administrators and teachers and between the teachers and school community, in such a way that they see themselves as partners in progress, not like boss and servant relationship. Teachers will love to remain in the job.
- j. **Manageable workload:** In the words of Billingsley (2018), if teachers are assigned with reasonable number of students, 40 pupils per teacher, this will definitely make them love teaching. But in a situation where teachers are faced with 150 to 200 pupils in a class, they will become bored and will be struggling for a way out of the teaching profession. There is also other situation whereby teachers are made to teach more classes and subjects due to inadequate numbers of qualified teacher in a particular subject which causes high workload, and may lead to teacher wanting out of the teaching job for other job (Ezeliola, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Despite our belief in functional and quality education in Nigeria, the government and its agencies are still providing low quality education from elementary to tertiary levels. This may be because of the unwillingness of the government to improve condition of service of teachers. However, the government should understand that teachers are primarily attracted teaching by intrinsic motivation, but extrinsic factor also play a major role in retaining them, if really the priority of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is on quality and functional education, then all the basic strategies towards enhancing education, discussed in this paper will be observed.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the strategies pointed out in this paper towards teacher's retention discussed by the author of this article, the following recommendations will be relevant in retaining qualified teachers in Nigeria schools.

1. In order to raise the status of the teaching profession, there should be the provision of the social security and facilities for the development of the profession and the wellbeing of teachers at all level of the education.
2. Teaching should not serve as dumping ground for other professions. And only those that are qualified professionally should be allowed to engage in teaching. In other word, those that did not have teaching qualification should not be permitted to teach. This will make the qualified teachers to love their profession and the possibilities of retaining them will be very high.
3. The practice of employing young and vibrant teachers as contract staff in Nigerian schools should be stopped.
4. Teachers should be included in the decision making process for all education programme, Ministry and communities on matters that affect them.
5. The government and its agencies should make policies that will promote teachers' recognition in Nigeria.
6. There should be an increased welfare packages for the teachers to include allowance, chalkboard allowance, work load allowance, free medical care for their families, subsidize school fees for their children, house loan, car loan and more. These will make teaching attractive and teachers will definitely remain on their job.
7. Government, it agencies, non – governmental agencies, philanthropists should come to the aid of teachers in providing a conducive environment such as good classroom, modern offices, befitting staff quarters, adequate teaching and learning materials and more for effective teaching and learning to take place. If all is done teachers will not want to leave teaching for other professions since they are enjoying what other professionals are enjoying.

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