PROMOTING TALENT MANAGEMENT AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: AN INNOVATIVE TOOL FOR QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated how talent management, which is an innovative tool, can be promoted among senior secondary schoolprincipals for quality service delivery in Imo State. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the 244 principals in the 244 Imo State public senior secondary schools. Out of this population, a sample of 150 principals which represents 61.5% of the population was drawn, using a simple random sampling technique. This included 110 male and 40 female principals; 50 from rural areas and 100 from urban areas respectively. The instrument was a 23-item questionnaire and it was duly validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education. The reliability was tested using the test re-test method which was calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded an index of 0.79. Data collected were analysed using mean scores and standard deviation while z-test was used in testing the null hypotheses of no significant difference. The findings of the study revealed that the talent management approaches rural and urban principals can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State include: on-boarding, coaching, mentoring, rotation of teachers' assignments, recognition of outstanding teachers with awards, performance appraisals, diversity/inclusion, among others. It was therefore recommended among others, that principals should adopt the talent management approaches in their schools.

The globalisation process and the social changes associated with it demand the introduction of varieties of changes and innovations in the educational system. The greatest challenge facing Human Resource Management in the world today is meeting the demands of globalisation, which is characterised by innovations. Human capital is considered by all and sundry to be the driver of successful organizations; therefore, employees' development is the crucial elements in the effort of any sustainable development. The quality of human resource in form of teachers, often dictates the extent of the effectiveness of educational programmes (Ibukun, 2004). This has necessitated educational managers to adopt new tactics and skills of bringing out the best from their teachers. The National Policy on Education lends credence to this, when it asserts that principals and teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their professions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). One of the strategies to achieve this is the management of the teachers' talent, which has become a critical function of the principals.

The principals must strive to keep abreast with the new trends of leadership skills in education in order to effectively manage the teachers for quality service delivery in secondary schools. Teachers are the ones who hold the key to the national development; if they are not well-equipped for the teaching job, attainment of a sustainable development will be a mirage (Adieme, 2015). In other words,what makes a particular school stand out among others is how the principal, the image maker, utilises his administrative skills effectively. These administrative skills, according to Kahn in Peretomode (1991), are human, technical and conceptual skills. Ibukun (2004) also asserts that communication skills, leadership skills and decision-making skills are essential for effective personnel management. Hence, principals are required to possess and utilise these skills judiciously in managing their teachers' talents for quality service delivery.

In order to achieve any socio-political, economic and scientific development in a country, there is the dire need for qualified teachers who are equipped with the desired knowledge, skills, competence and commitment, and who are empowered to perform their tasks professionally (Akindutire&Ekundayo, 2012). Parents and guardians have come to realise in this globalised era, that quality education is the only weapon they can bequeath to their children and wards in order to fight poverty in an under-developed country.Onocha (1985) as cited in Olorunsola (2014), opines that quality education is often linked with such indicators as: quality teachers, improved curriculum, good delivery, quality infrastructure, conducive learning environment, provision of adequate learning materials, training and re-training of teachers, improved teacher-student ratio, parental involvement, improved monitoring and superior of learning and quality output, among others. However, if all these indicators are put in place without quality teachers, the magnificent buildings and modernised learning equipment will turn into monuments! Obanya (2007)corroborates with these aforementioned indicators and

stressed that to ensure qualitative or high standard of education, the teaching force must be qualitatively adequate, well educated, professionally prepared, pedagogically skilled and well motivated. Thus, to develop and maintain quality education in the school organisation, teachers' competency skills must be developed by the principals.

Talent management has become a central component of corporate human strategies and has recently gained increasing attention in human resource management /human resource development (HRM/HRD) research (Berger&Berger, 2003).Talent management is considered to be a method that allows organisations to meet the demands associated with increased competitiveness. Armstrong (2012) defines talent as what people have when they possess the skills, abilities and aptitudes that enable them to perform effectively in their roles. When organisations refer to talent, they have in mind primarily young people at the beginning of their professional careers and employees who have been working in the organisation for some time. Sullivan (2004) defines talent management as the integrated process of ensuring that an organization has a continuous supply of highly productive individuals in the right job, at the right time.Gay and Sims (2006) define talent management as facilitating the development and career progress of highly talented and skilled individuals in an organization, using formalized procedures, resources, policies, and processes. Talent management aims at establishing continuous leadership development, which can position an organization to attract highly qualified, external resources while retaining current personnel with significant potentials (Christie, 2005). Armstrong (2012) defines talent management as the process of ensuring that an organisation has the talented people it needs to attain its goals. Thus, the application of talent management in the school organisation by principals will go a long way to achieving the educational goals.

Talent management focuses broadly on developing high potential employees who will foster the achievement of organisational goals. According to Baum and Kokkranikal (2005), the continued success of any organisation is dependent on the employees' contribution and commitment. Successcan no longer be measured alone by the amount of money a company has; rather, thetalent it possesses in the form of its employees' skills and competencies, leading to organisational capability, have become the key to success in today's highly competitive knowledge society. Horton (2002) opines that the talent management process helps to leverage the strengths of individuals and to unleash their creative potentials. Hence, talent management aims to identify, obtain, keep and develop those talented people in an organisation.

Horton (2002) further enumerates the main reasons why managers should adopt the talent management approach as follows:to motivate people and to encourage better performance, to increase flexibility among the workforce, to change employee behaviour and to give employees access to job progression and creativity. As Obanya (2014, p. 455) puts it "teachers are key factors in the education process and every meaningful reform of education should always pay due attention to the teacher factor." Cheese (2008) also posits that talent drives improvements in productivity, quality, innovation and customer satisfaction. Hence, talent management is also necessary

toeducate and develop employees with regard to their work, social values, andbehaviour – each employee is an individual with different perceptions anda different personality (Lockewood, 2006).Horvathova(2011) also asserts thatthe main benefit resulting from a correctly set and applied system of talent management is that talented employees are identified, appointed to appropriate positions where their potentials are better utilised.Hence, the notion of talent management in organisations is based with the fact that employers who are with the best employees win.Systematic application of talent management in schools will promote good leadership, freedom and autonomy, highly incentive work, opportunities for professional advancement and talent retention (Armstrong, 2012). Employees who are being educatedand developed are usually very interested in working towards organisational goals.According to Collings and Mellahi (2009), these employees are communicative, cooperative,proactive, respectful, customer-friendly, willing and able to constantly learn. Hence, talent management provides talents with opportunities to grow in their current job roles and to move forward to the roles of a higher level.

Berger and Berger (2003) succinctly advocate that in applying talent management to the area of organization's development, the talents should be offered a chance of improving their strong points, individual overall performance, as well as particular competencies. The organization should also enable them to advance in their career. A special development program should be worked out for the talents, and in close cooperation with their managers, it should be implemented. Horvathova (2011) posits that the identification of talents should be made on the basis of assessment or appraisal of the employees' current performance and aforecast of their potentials. According to the experience from many companies that have already applied talent management, themost efficient ways of talent development are methods of on-the-job or learning directly at a workplace with the support of a manager, a coach or a mentor (Armstrong, 2012).Clunies (2007) maintains that the best talent management initiatives are those that arealigned with human resource functions such as: performance appraisals, management development, other training and development functions, compensation, career development, recognition programme, diversity/inclusion, onboarding, recruiting and engagement. Hence, the goal of talent management is to create a high-performance, sustainable organisation that meets its goals and objectives.

Statement of the Problem

The world has realised that the best gift a nation can offer to every child is a qualitative education and that teachers are the key actors in actualising this dream. However, over the years, the quality of education that is being provided for students has been of great concern to educational managers as well as educational stakeholders in Nigeria. As the demand for education and employment opportunities increase by day, poor quality and inexperienced teachers are recruited into the education system to fill the vacuum. However, most of these teachers did not study the subjects they teach. This has led to low academic performance of students, especially in external examinations,

because as the saying goes, one cannot offer what he does not have. Secondary education which is meant to prepare students for useful living in the society and higher education seems to be battling with managing the influx of students in the system rather than meeting the global standards of teaching. Most principals seem to be dwelling in the archaic pattern of assigning teachers their roles/subjects once they are posted to their schools and doing little or nothing to develop them.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Ministry of Labour and Employment has proposed bringing the unemployed youths into the education system as a means of reducing the unemployment problem in the country. As inexperienced teachers flood the education system, there is need for the principals to identify and develop these talents in order to achieve the educational goals. Hence, the problem of this study bothers on how principals can apply talent management skills in bringing out the best from their teachers for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to promote talent management among senior secondary school principals for quality service delivery in Imo State. Specifically, the objectives sought to:
1. identify the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State;
2. examine the talent management approaches rural and urban principals can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State;
3. highlight the benefits of talent management in secondary schools for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
1. What are the talent management skills needed by male and female principals for quality service delivery in Imo State?
2. What are the talent management approaches urban and rural principals can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State?
3. In what ways can teachers benefit from talent management in secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated:
Ho_1 There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State.
Ho_2 There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural principals on the talent management approaches they can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the 244 principals in the 244 Imo State public senior secondary schools. Out of this population, a sample of 150 principals which represents 61.5% of the population was drawn, using a simple random sampling technique from the 27 local government areas. This is made of110 male and 40 female principals; 50 from rural areas and 100 from urban areas respectively. The instrument that was used to elicit information from the respondents was a questionnaire tagged: "Promoting Talent Management among Secondary School Principals (PTMSSP)" and it was of two sections. Section A elicited information on personal data of the principals while Section B elicited information on various talent management skills and benefits. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education and the reliability was tested using the test re-test method, calculated with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, which yielded an index of 0.79. This correlation coefficient was high enough indicating that the instrument was reliable and consistent for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean scores and standard deviation while z-test was used in testing the null hypotheses of no significant difference.

Results

Research Question One: What are the talent management skills needed by male and female principals for quality service delivery in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Principals on the Talent Management Skills Needed by Principals for Quality Service Delivery in Imo State

S/N	Talent Management Skills Include:	Male Principals			Female Principals		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Conceptual Skills	3.62	0.61	Agreed	3.38	1.06	Agreed
2.	Human Skills	3.46	0.63	Agreed	3.72	1.01	Agreed
3.	Technical Skills	2.62	0.71	Agreed	2.86	1.14	Agreed
4.	Communication Skills	2.83	0.69	Agreed	2.72	1.17	Agreed
5.	Decision-making Skills	3.08	0.66	Agreed	3.20	1.09	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	**3.12**	**0.66**		**3.18**	**1.09**	

Table 1 shows the mean score ratings and standard deviation of male and female principals on the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State. Their mean scores showed that they all agreed on the items with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.12 for male and 3.18 for female principals, which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5, showed that the principals accepted the items in the table. Therefore, conceptual skills, human skills, technical skills, communication skills and decision-making skills are the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo state.

Research Question Two: What are the talent management approaches urban and rural principals can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean Score Ratings of Rural and Urban Principals on the Talent Management Approaches They Can Adopt for Quality Service Delivery in Imo State

S/N	Talent Management Approaches Include:	Urban Principals			Rural Principals		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Onboarding – making new teachers feel welcomed, acclimatised and valued in the school system	3.64	0.64	Agreed	3.73	0.90	Agreed
2.	Rotation of teachers' assignments	2.67	0.74	Agreed	2.60	1.06	Agreed
3.	On-the-job training through coaching	3.87	0.62	Agreed	3.92	0.87	Agreed
4.	Mentoring new and inexperienced teachers	3.41	0.66	Agreed	3.88	0.87	Agreed
5.	Assessing/appraising of teachers' performance	3.06	0.70	Agreed	3.04	0.99	Agreed
6.	Giving teachers the opportunities to prove their worth in the classrooms	2.86	0.72	Agreed	2.77	1.03	Agreed
7	Recognition of outstanding teachers with awards	2.74	0.73	Agreed	2.82	1.03	Agreed
8	Recognition of outstanding teachers with awards	3.07	0.70	Agreed	3.02	0.99	Agreed
9	Diversity /Inclusion – carrying every teacher along	2.82	0.72	Agreed	2.68	1.05	Agreed
10	Assigning teachers to teach subjects that are related to their discipline	3.92	0.61	Agreed	3.88	0.87	Agreed
11	Delegation of duties	2.94	0.71	Agreed	3.24	0.97	Agreed
12	Career development	2.65	0.74	Agreed	2.62	1.05	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	**3.13**	**0.69**		**3.18**	**0.97**	

Table 2 shows the mean score ratings and standard deviation of urban and rural principals on the talent management approaches they can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State. Both urban and rural principals agreed to all the items in the table with mean scores which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

Therefore, it can be deduced that the talent management approaches urban and rural principals can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State include:onboarding – making new teachers feel welcomed, acclimatised and valued in the school system, rotation of teachers' assignments, on-the-job training through coaching, mentoring new and inexperienced teachers, assessing/appraising of teachers' performance, giving teachers the opportunities to prove their worth in the classrooms, recognition of outstanding teachers with awards, diversity /Inclusion – carrying every teacher along, assigning teachers to teach subjects that are related to their discipline, delegation of duties and career development.

Research Question Three: In what ways can teachers benefit from talent management in secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 3: Mean Scores of Urban and Rural Principals onthe Benefits of Talent Management in Secondary Schools in Imo State

S/N	Benefits of Talent Management include:	Urban Principals			Rural Principals		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Talent management helps to unleash teachers' creative potentials	2.82	0.72	Agreed	2.66	1.05	Agreed
2.	It motivates teachers and encourages high performance	2.71	0.73	Agreed	2.88	1.02	Agreed
3.	Iteducates and develops teachers with regard to their work, social values, andbehavior	3.05	0.70	Agreed	3.12	0.98	Agreed
4.	It helps to identify and appoint teachers to appropriate positions where their potentials areneeded	3.73	0.63	Agreed	3.47	0.93	Agreed
5.	It promotes good working relationship among teachers and principals	2.94	0.71	Agreed	2.86	1.02	Agreed
6.	It encourages teachers to be cooperative, proactive, respectful and willing to constantly learn	3.02	0.70	Agreed	3.04	0.99	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	**3.01**	**0.70**		**3.01**	**0.99**	

Table 3 shows the mean scores of urban and ruralprincipals on the benefits of talent management in secondary schools in Imo State. Their mean responses showed that they all agreed on the items in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.01 and 3.01 from urban and rural principals respectively, show that principals agreed that the application of talent management in their schools can be beneficial in so many ways, which include: helping to unleash teachers' creative potentials, motivating teachers and encouraging high performance, educating and developing teachers with regard to their work, social values, andbehaviour, helping to identify and appoint teachers to appropriate positions where their potentials are needed, promoting good working relationship among teachers and principals and encouraging teachers to be cooperative, proactive, respectful and willing to constantly learn.

Hypotheses

Ho_1 There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Table 4: z-test of Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Principals on the Talent Management Skills Needed by Principals for Quality Service Delivery in Imo State:

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Male Principals	110	3.12	0.66	148	0.323	1.96	Accepted
Female Principals	40	3.18	1.09				

P< 0.05

Table 4 shows z-test of difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State. The results show that the z-calculated value of -0.323 is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 148 degree of freedom and 0.05 alpha significant level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Ho$_2$ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural principals on the talent management approaches they can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Table 5: z-test of Difference between the Mean Ratings ofUrban and Rural Principals on the Talent Management Approaches They Can Adopt for Quality Service Delivery in Imo State:

Location	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Urban Principals	100	3.13	0.69	148	0.323	1.96	Accepted
Rural Principals	50	3.18	0.97				

P< 0.05

Table 5 shows z-test of difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural principals on the talent management approaches they can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State. The results show that the z-calculated value of -0.323 is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 148 degree of freedom and 0.05 alpha significant level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural principals on the talent management approaches they can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that conceptual skills, human skills, technical skills, communication skills and decision-making skills are the talent management skills needed by principals for quality service delivery in Imo State. These are in consonance with the findings of Kahn in Peretomode (1991) and Ibukun (2004) who maintain that the principals must possess the administrative skills and utilise them effectively if the educational goals must be attained. Baum and Kokkranikal (2005) agree with these findings as they assert that success can no longer be measured alone by

the amount of money a company has; rather, the talent it possesses in the form of its employees' skills and competencies, leading to organisational capability, have become the key to success in today's highly competitive knowledge society. Hence, talent management aims to identify, obtain, keep and develop those talented people in an organisation..

Another findings of this study revealed that the talent management approaches urban and rural principals can adopt for quality service delivery in Imo State include: on boarding – making new teachers feel welcomed, acclimatised and valued in the school system, rotation of teachers' assignments, on-the-job training through coaching, mentoring new and inexperienced teachers, assessing/appraising of teachers' performance, giving teachers the opportunities to prove their worth in the classrooms, recognition of outstanding teachers with awards, recognition of outstanding teachers with awards, diversity /Inclusion – carrying every teacher along, assigning teachers to teach subjects that are related to their discipline, delegation of duties and career development. These are in line with the works of Collings and Mellahi (2009), Armstrong (2012), Berger and Berger (2003) and Horvathova (2011). These scholars opine thatthe continued success of any organisation is dependent on the approaches the managers adopt to harness the employees' talents in order to make them committed towards the attainment of the organisation's goals. Clunies (2007) corroborates with the above assertion by maintaining that the best talent management initiatives are those that are aligned with human resource functions such as: performance appraisals, management development, other training and development functions, compensation, career development, recognition programme, diversity/inclusion, onboarding, recruiting and engagement.

The findings of this study also revealed that principals are in congruence that the application of talent management in their schools can be beneficial in so many ways, which include: helping to unleash teachers' creative potentials, motivating teachers and encourages high performance, educating and develops teachers with regard to their work, social values, and behaviour, helping to identify and appoint teachers to appropriate positions where their potentials are needed, promoting good working relationship among teachers and principals and encouraging teachers to be cooperative, proactive, respectful and willing to constantly learn. Horton (2002) agrees with these findings as he asserts that the talent management process helps to leverage the strengths of individuals and to unleash their creative potentials. Cheese (2008),Lockewood (2006), Horvathova (2011) and Armstrong (2012) are also in consonance with the findings of this study as they opine that systematic application of talent management in schools will promote good leadership, freedom and autonomy, highly incentive work, opportunities for professional advancement, high productivity and talent retention. Thus, the benefits of talent management in schools are unquantifiable.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be reasonably concluded that the application of talent management as an innovative tool in schools, will go a long way to overhauling the educational system and actualising its objectives and goals.

Recommendations

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

1.   Principals should possess the talent management skillsand apply them judiciously in order to enhance quality service delivery in schools.

2.   Principals should adopt the talent management approaches in their schools so as to boost students' achievement through improved teaching.

3.   The benefits of talent management are numerous and immeasurable; therefore, it will result in quality output.

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