
RURAL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS MOTIVATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THEIR RETENTION**Akwasi Yeboah and Dickson Adom***Department of General Art Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana*

ABSTRACT: *This paper presents both qualitative and quantitative studies on the motivation for teachers teaching in Senior High School located in rural areas and its effects on their willingness to continue staying in those areas in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Two public Senior High Schools in the rural areas of Afigya-Kwabre West district comprising two Headmasters and 120 teachers was selected by the use of purposive and simple random sampling techniques for the study. The study focused on primary data through interview, questionnaire and observation. It was revealed that the significant retention factors are the provision and administration of financial bonuses which include retention/professional allowance and Parents and Teachers Association motivational allowance. On the other hand, the teachers were very unsatisfied with their accommodation, means of transport and criteria for selecting award winners during speech and prize giving days. Therefore, governments and policy makers need to put in place strategies and also implement policies that will serve to improve the working conditions of teachers teaching in rural areas in order to serve as motivation for their retention.*

KEYWORDS: Motivation, Rural Area, Teacher Motivation, Retention, Administration

INTRODUCTION

The sole aim of every organization, whether private or public, is to be able to achieve its goals or to maximize profit (Riley, 2012). However, this cannot be possible without the help of very hardworking, skilled, dedicated and highly motivated workers who are willing to support the management in the attainment of those objectives. As a result, one major concern of employers is to attract and retain qualified and dedicated workforce that is willing to release its latent energy and creativity in the service of the enterprise (Cole as cited in Lamptey, Boateng & Antwi, 2013). However, this cannot be possible unless the management of every organization provide a conducive and an enabling environment for employees to perform their duties. Employers' responsibility in creating the enabling environment is to meet the needs of the employees to serve as motivation for productivity. However, in spite of the numerous investments and attempts by educational stakeholders to help in the development of education all over the world, teachers are still refusing rural postings due to concerns about the quality of accommodation, classroom facilities, school resources, access to leisure activities and health facilities (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002). Other concerns include the perception that living in rural areas involves a greater risk of disease and less access to health care (Towse, Kent, Osaki, Funja, Kirua & Noah, 2002). The problem is further exacerbated with the majority of student teachers coming from different backgrounds. Teachers in Ghana tend to come from a higher socio-economic background than average for the country as a whole (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002). Their reluctance to accept rural posting stems from a profound fear among newly trained

teachers with a modern individualistic outlook that if you spend too much time in an isolated village without access to further education, you become 'a village man' (Hedges, 2002). Those who even accept seldom stay there longer than 2-3 years (Dankwa, 2011).

Nevertheless, the absolute level of weekly or monthly earnings determines the standard of living of the recipient, and will therefore be the most important consideration for most employees (Wabu as cited in Donkoh, 2011). As such employees are very particular and would always want to see an increase in their earnings. Unfortunately, in spite of the introduction of the single spine salary structure which was intended to help upgrade the standard of living of public sector workers, the monthly earnings of teachers is nothing good to write home about as compared to that of other professionals coupled with the current economic hardship and frequent increase in prices without a corresponding increase in teacher's salary. However, prior studies which used equity theory as a measure to assess teacher retention in developed economies shows that if employees see a discrepancy between the outcome they receive from their input as compared to other employees; those employees would be motivated to do more or less work (or leave work). An employee's view of fair monetary and non-monetary compensation is obviously subjective, yet it is a critical factor in determining his or her behaviour.

There is also the proposed 20 per cent allowance for teachers in rural and deprived areas which is yet to be implemented (Adu-Gyamerah, 2011). Unfortunately, allowances that have been paid to teacher trainees in Ghana since the 1960s (Opoku-Asare, 2000) with the aim of attracting more youth into the teaching profession has recently been withdrawn with the justification by President Mahama that Ghana does not have the financial capacity to maintain the allowance (The Chronicle report, 2013). This creates suspicion as to when the 20% allowance promised for teachers will start operating to motivate teachers to stay in rural areas.

Rural Areas

According to Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011), there is no universally accepted definition of a rural area, however; there may be a common understanding. Nevertheless, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, as cited in Atchoarena and Sedel, (2003) indicates that, rural areas are generally open areas, with low settled population densities, and a high proportion of the unsettled land area used for primary production such as agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fisheries. Kasha (2012) also describes rural areas as being deprived of facilities such as potable water, electricity, good roads, school infrastructure, toilet facilities and social services like internet, telecommunication, TV transmissions and others which deny the people access to valuable information. Lack of housing, lack of health care and lack of schools for children is quoted internationally as reasons why many professionals fail to accept rural postings, although rural settings have the ability of providing family-oriented settings, lower crime rates, recreational access, fresh air, and an enhanced quality of life (Amoako, 2011).

According to the National Statistical Service of Ghana (2000), a rural area in Ghana is a locality which is either far or not too far from an urban area, has a pastoral landscape, unique demographic structures and settlement patterns, isolation, extractive economic activities and a population less than 5,000 people. In this regard, Amoako cites the two most commonly mentioned disadvantages of rural settings as professional isolation and lack of opportunity for

professional development. However, recent advancements in telecommunications and interactive networking through the Internet may decrease feelings of isolation and improve rural job satisfaction levels in the future. In spite of these, enrollment has increased more rapidly in urban areas than in rural areas, and increasingly, the majority of African children out of school are rural children. This has come about as a result of the disparities between rural areas and urban centres.

Teaching in Rural Areas

Rural populations in Africa are expected to increase by 147 million and keep rising until 2040 (United Nations Development Planning, 2009). The report further indicates that by 2050, Africa will have 0.8 billion rural inhabitants while Rurality in the developed world is reduced as a consequence of urbanization. The UNDP's 2009 Africa Rural Population Report indicates that the demand for rural education and teachers will increase with the growing rural population. However, a number of teachers are refusing rural postings due to concerns about the quality of accommodation, classroom facilities, school resources, access to leisure activities and health facilities (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002). Moreover, their reluctance to accept rural posting stems from a profound fear among newly trained teachers with a modern individualistic outlook that if you spend too much time in an isolated village without access to further education, you become, a village man (Hedges, 2002). In addition, the absence of female teachers in a school is a missed opportunity to provide meaningful professional female role models to young women and men on a daily basis (Rihani, 2009). Besides, pupils in urban areas are very lucky to be exposed to social life and can easily grasp what their teachers impart and simply pass their exams unlike pupils in deprived communities. As a result, many countries report that teachers express a strong preference for urban postings all because students' performance is measured largely by their students' achievements and not the facilities available, the teaching and learning materials or the location of the school (Ankomah, 2005).

Teacher Motivation

Teachers are always regarded as a powerful resource in any educational system; however, teacher job satisfaction is rarely considered (Garrett, 1999). Incentives, which bring about job satisfaction, are a key factor in teachers' quality and the commitment to the teaching organization (Kleckler & Loadman, 1996). In addition, teacher job satisfaction contributes not only to teachers' motivation and improvement but also to students' learning and development (Perie, Baker & Whitener, 1997). In any human resource management policy, employee incentive and recognition schemes have become very significant elements (Yeboah, 2012). One's choice to enroll and remain in the teaching profession can be highly influenced by a change in teacher motivation, as well as performance in the classroom. Glewwe, Ilias and Kremer (2003) opine that teachers in developing countries respond more positively to incentives. The authors cite a study that evaluated the effect of a randomized teacher incentive programme in Kenya in which financial bonus was offered to teachers whose students achieved higher scores on a standardized examination. The results revealed that the teachers in the study increased their effort to raise student test scores by offering more test-preparation sessions but once the application of the financial bonus ended and the teachers had no chance of earning additional money, their effort dwindled and the performance of the students also dropped. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) have argued that a major incentive for teachers to be located in rural areas is the provision of housing. Where teachers cannot live near the school, they are likely to spend a lot of

time travelling, often to the detriment of their school work. Mulkeen (2005) says that in 2005 in Uganda, 15 percent of the school facilities grant was allocated to the construction of houses for teachers. This helped by providing accommodation for many teachers and eventually motivated them to stay in rural areas.

Teacher Retention

People will always join and leave organizations either voluntarily or against their wishes. As such, what may motivate one to act in a particular way may not do same for another. No wonder there is a rather large and growing body of research dedicated to exploring factors that predict teacher retention. Collectively, the findings on teacher retention demonstrate the power of wage, opportunity costs, non-wage attributes, and teacher characteristics in predicting teacher retention no wonder individuals will become or remain teachers if teaching represents the one of the most attractive activity to pursue among all activities available to them.

Today, most institutions, especially the private sector educational institutions are becoming aware that they must become increasingly creative and innovative when it comes to retaining and satisfying their teachers however, this is not the same in public schools. Most private sector schools are offering several incentives packages to keep their members and to also perform higher compared to government institutions. These include free transportation, mortgage facilities, and free medical care as well as free teachers' child education (Acheampong and Ofei, 2003) no wonder their students normally perform better academically.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed method research design was employed in the study. The primary data were obtained through interviews (one-on-one), questionnaire administration and observation from a purposive sample of two public Senior High Schools located in rural areas in one district in Ashanti Region, Ghana. Purposive sampling was also adopted to obtain a fair representation of student respondents who have had enough experience and contact with their teachers, one Deputy District Director in charge of Planning and Statistics, the two Headmasters and teachers of the selected schools. 60% (120 teachers) from the two public Senior High Schools were deemed as the accessible population to solicit relevant data. For reasons of anonymity and in line with much qualitative inquiry, the sampled schools are only identified in this article as Schools A and B.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were used because they could have some influence on a person's behavior and their role in increasing teacher retention in rural areas. The demographic characteristics considered for the study were sex, age and marital status.

Gender of respondents

Out of the 120 teacher respondents, only 19 (representing 15.8%) were females with 101 (or 84.2%) being males. Males clearly dominate the teacher population in the study schools. This shows a clear gender imbalance in favour of male teachers. The dominance of male teachers in the rural Senior High Schools, is a missed opportunity to provide meaningful professional female

role models for female students on a daily basis (Rihani, 2006). Again, the presence of female teachers in a school can help make the school environment a safer place for girls. However, this might have arisen because, posting unmarried women to isolated rural areas may be seen to limit marriage prospects, as such women are normally not posted to rural areas as a matter of policy in Ghana and other African countries (Hedges, 2002). In addition, Gaynor (1998) opines that in the case of married women, a rural posting may mean separation from her family, as the husband will not be willing to move for cultural or economic reasons.

Age of respondents

Age influences every aspect of human life. It helps to determine output in terms of employment, fertility rates, retirement and benefit. The determination of the teacher's age was useful to ascertain the nature of active working force and their relative economic contributions.

Table 3.1 Ages of Respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
20 -29	15	12.5
30 – 39	64	53.3
40 – 49	32	26.7
50 – 59	9	7.5
TOTAL	120	100

Table 3.1 indicates that 15 (12.5%) respondents were within the age range of 20-29 years, 64 (53.3%) were within 30-39 years, 32 (26.7) were within 40-49 whilst 9 (7.5%) of them belonged to the age category of 50-59 years. Translating this into cumulative percentage terms, it is inferred that the majority of the teachers (92.5%) were within the age range of 20-49 years. This clearly exhibit a good and healthy blend of most experienced and long serving personnel and a majority of young personnel who would take over the minority sample of teachers who will soon go on retirement. Moreover, because rural settings have the ability of providing family-oriented settings, lower crime rates, recreational access (Amoako, 2011), the marital variable was important for the study in identifying teachers' willingness to stay in the rural area.

Table 3.2 Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	51	42.5
Married	68	56.7
Divorced	1	0.8
Total	120	100

From table 3.2, the study identified that (51) 42.5% of the respondents were single, (68) 56.7% married, (1) 0.8% were divorced. The trend is indicative of the fact that about 56.7% of them have an extra duty of taking care of their families which provides the opportunity for developing their quality of love for children, honesty, compassion and fairness. These qualities according to Strong et al (2011) are very vital in the determination of teacher quality.

Available motivational incentives and teachers' level of satisfaction

The motivational incentives considered for the study were the additional available service benefits in the rural areas which teachers were enjoying apart from their salary. These benefits could attract and make these teachers stay in spite of the attractions of urban areas which attract others to leave. However, the term “Satisfied” been used in this contest means the feeling of equity after comparing how an incentive is administered in their school with others and “Unsatisfied” means the feeling of inequity or unfairness.

Table 3.3 Incentives and levels of satisfaction

<i>Incentives</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Percentage of teacher population</i>	<i>Unsatisfied</i>	<i>Percentage of teacher population</i>
Free accommodation	36	30	97	80.8
Transportation by school	54	45	84	70
Free meals	63	52.5	36	30
PTA motivational allowance	84	70	57	47.5
Criteria for awards during speech and prize giving days	38	31.7	82	68.3
Car maintenance allowance	23	19.2	66	55
Retention/professional allowance	105	87.5	15	12.5

Out of the seven incentive packages identified in table 3.3, it is evident that teachers were more satisfied with the provision and administration of the financial bonuses which include retention/professional allowance (87.5%) and Parents and Teachers Association motivational allowance (84%). This revelation confirms Glewwe, Ilias and Kremer (2003) assertion that teachers in developing countries respond more positively to monetary incentives. This also presupposes that if the 20 per cent allowance for teachers in rural and deprived areas which is yet to be implemented (Adu-Gyamerah, 2011) becomes a reality, majority of teachers will be attracted to rural areas and those who are already there will not be willing to leave. On the other hand, the teachers were very unsatisfied with their accommodation, means of transport and criteria for awards during speech and prize giving days since they had to find their own accommodation and also foot the bill, had to struggle with native over public transport coupled with the long distance and favoritism, respectively.

Willingness to remain in school

To identify the teacher's willingness to remain at post when they compare their working environment and conditions of service with their colleagues in urban Senior High Schools, 47 (constituting 39.2%) of the 120 teacher respondents said they would continue to work in the rural area. On the other hand, 73 respondents (representing 60.8%) were not willing to continue working in the rural area. From this response, it is clear that the majority of teachers sampled for the study was not satisfied with their current location because of the differences in motivation they perceive exist between their circumstances and their colleagues in the urban schools. This finding confirms Adams (1962) Equity Theory, which states that “if workers perceive a level of inequity or unfairness when they compare their work situations to that of others such as peers

and co-workers, they have the motivation to change the situation, in order to generate at least in their mind a much better or more accurate sense of fairness”.

CONCLUSION

The study has focused primarily on rural Senior High School teacher’s motivation and its effect on their retention in the rural area. Although the study was done on a small scale, the evidence provided indicates that majority of the teachers in both schools were males whilst females formed the minority proving that female teachers are less willing to accept a rural posting. In addition, out of the seven incentive packages been enjoyed by the rural SHS teachers as revealed by the study, it is evident that teachers were more satisfied with the provision and administration of the financial bonuses which include retention/professional allowance and Parents and Teachers Association motivational allowance. On the other hand, the teachers were very unsatisfied with their accommodation, means of transport and criteria for selecting award winners during speech and prize giving days.

Therefore, governments and policy makers need to put in place strategies and also implement policies (such as the 20 per cent allowance for teachers in rural and deprived areas) that will serve to improve the working conditions of teachers teaching in rural areas. This will ultimately help motivate them. If such measures are implemented for them to meet their expectations, they can be retained and developed to constitute competitive assets for the Ghana Education Service (GES). Therefore, there is the need for a spirit and philosophy of realism and optimism for all stakeholders interested in rural education development to provide rural Senior High School teachers with good quality motivational policies based on informed dialogue with the teachers.

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