

Optimizing Teacher Recruitment and Compensation: Enhancing HR Practices in Basic Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the recruitment, selection, and compensation processes at Basic School A, identifying areas for improvement in human resource management. Using a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the headteacher and a purposive sample of teachers. Thematic analysis revealed that the recruitment process involves completing education, national service, applying through the GES portal, and documentation before posting. Teachers preferred the previous decentralized system for greater commitment and reduced transportation costs. The compensation process includes validation by the Accountant Generals' Department to eliminate absenteeism and "ghost" employees, though some teachers are only aware of monthly credits. Both teachers and the headteacher highlight staffing as needing improvement, suggesting that decentralizing recruitment to consider teachers' residences would enhance job satisfaction and performance. Recommendations include decentralizing recruitment to allow district selection, establishing transparent validation guidelines, and shifting towards decentralized staffing for better resource management and improved teacher commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Every organization or institution, upon its establishment, prioritizes customer satisfaction as a key goal. Central to achieving this objective is the quality of interactions customers have with the organization. Crucially, the human resources of an organization play a pivotal role in ensuring customer satisfaction and organizational success. According to Boxall and Purcell (2016), human resources constitute the workforce essential for organizational operations, regarded as the organization's most valuable asset. They are instrumental in manifesting organizational goals and objectives (Yangmei et al., 2007). Effective management of human resources is paramount for maximizing organizational profitability and success. Esia-Donkoh et al. (2022) argued that proper selection, training, motivation, support, and retention of human resources are critical for enhancing organizational performance. Simultaneously, while organizations focus on customer satisfaction, the effective management of human resources is essential for optimizing their contributions towards organizational profitability and growth. Human resource management, as highlighted by Commerce Forward (2018), plays a crucial role in enhancing the productivity of various organizational resources by coordinating production factors, thus occupying a central position among all production factors. Sitti et al. (2019) emphasized that human resource management serves as a strategic tool for achieving organizational goals. It ensures the attraction of top talent, reduces internal conflicts, mitigates stress among employees, offers competitive compensation, improves healthcare benefits, enhances employee development, fosters labour relations, and promotes workplace safety (Goswami, 2018).

In education, the effective management of human resources is equally vital. Schools and educational institutions rely heavily on the quality of their teaching and administrative staff to deliver high-quality education and ensure student satisfaction. Proper recruitment, continuous professional development, and supportive work environments for educators are crucial for achieving educational objectives and enhancing student outcomes. Focusing on the well-being and professional growth of teachers enables educational institutions to create a more committed and effective workforce, ultimately benefiting students and the broader community. Compensation is a key aspect of human resource management in education. Competitive and fair compensation packages are essential for attracting and retaining talented educators. Teachers and administrative staff need to feel that their efforts are valued and rewarded appropriately. According to Esia-Donkoh et al. (2022), adequate compensation not only enhances job satisfaction but also motivates educators to perform at their best. Moreover, compensation should be structured to reflect the qualifications, experience, and performance of the staff, providing incentives for continuous improvement and professional growth. Recruitment is another crucial element in the effective management of educational human resources. The recruitment process should be designed to attract highly qualified and dedicated individuals who are well-suited to the specific needs of the institution. This involves creating detailed job descriptions, utilizing various

recruitment channels, and implementing rigorous selection criteria to ensure that only the best candidates are chosen. Proper recruitment processes help to build a strong foundation for the school, ensuring that the educators and staff are capable of delivering high-quality education.

The selection process, closely linked with recruitment, involves a thorough assessment of candidates to ensure they meet the required standards and fit well with the institution's culture and objectives. This includes conducting interviews, reviewing qualifications and experience, and possibly administering practical assessments to evaluate candidates' skills. A well-structured selection process ensures that the most competent and suitable individuals are chosen, which is crucial for maintaining high educational standards. Furthermore, effective recruitment and selection processes contribute to the creation of a supportive work environment. When educators are carefully selected based on their qualifications and fit with the institution, they are more likely to be committed and aligned with the school's goals. This alignment fosters a positive and collaborative atmosphere, where teachers feel supported and valued, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention rates. The effective management of compensation, recruitment, and selection in educational institutions is essential for ensuring high-quality education and achieving student satisfaction. Competitive compensation packages attract and retain talented educators, while rigorous recruitment and selection processes ensure that only the best candidates are chosen. Together, these factors create a supportive work environment that enhances the performance and satisfaction of educators, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the institution.

Basic School A, like many educational institutions, faces challenges in these areas that may affect its ability to attract, retain, and motivate qualified teachers. Despite efforts to maintain a robust educational environment, there are indications that the current human resource management practices at Basic School A may not fully support these objectives. The recruitment and selection processes may not be adequately aligned with the specific needs of the school, potentially leading to mismatches in teacher placements. Additionally, the compensation methods employed may not sufficiently recognize and reward the contributions of the teachers, leading to decreased job satisfaction and performance. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing the overall quality of education and ensuring the sustainability of the school's human resources.

Purpose of the Study

This paper examines the recruitment, selection, and compensation processes at Basic School A, identifying areas for improvement in these human resource management practices.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To investigate and describe the recruitment and selection processes for teachers at Basic School A.
2. To explore and describe the compensation methods employed for teachers at Basic School A.
3. To propose strategies for enhancing at least one aspect of human resource management practices at Basic School A.

Research Questions

1. How are teachers recruited and selected into Basic School A?
2. How are teachers compensated at Basic School A?

Which strategies can be developed to enhance at least one aspect of human resource management practices at Basic School A?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical underpinning of this study was the Human Capital Theory. Human Capital Theory posits that investments in human resources, such as education, training, and experience, enhance individual and organizational productivity (Becker, 1964). This theory is particularly relevant in the context of education because it emphasizes the importance of recruiting and developing teachers with the right skills and qualifications. For Basic School A, understanding how investments in teacher training, professional development, and effective recruitment practices contribute to school performance and student outcomes aligns well with the principles of Human Capital Theory. Applying this framework allows researchers to explore how the school's HRM practices, such as recruitment criteria, training opportunities, and performance incentives, contribute to the accumulation and utilization of human capital. By focusing on enhancing teacher capabilities and aligning them with organizational goals, Basic School A can potentially improve overall educational quality and institutional effectiveness. Therefore, Human Capital Theory provides a robust theoretical lens through which to examine how HRM practices can strategically manage and leverage human resources to achieve better educational outcomes at Basic School A.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore and understand the human resource management practices at Basic School A, focusing on recruitment, compensation, and staffing. The qualitative method was chosen to allow for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences regarding these HRM practices within the specific context of Basic School A. The study involved key stakeholders including the headteacher and a purposive sample of teachers from Basic School A. The headteacher provided insights into administrative processes, policies, and decision-making related to HRM, while teachers offered frontline perspectives on their experiences with recruitment, compensation, and staffing. Semi-structured interviews were the

primary method of data collection. Separate interview guides were developed for the headteacher and teachers, focusing on themes such as the recruitment process, validation of compensation, and perceptions of staffing practices. Interviews were conducted face-to-face to allow for probing and clarification of responses, ensuring a rich and nuanced understanding of participants' views. Data obtained from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved systematically coding interview transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns related to recruitment, compensation validation, and staffing preferences. Themes were developed iteratively, allowing for refinement and validation through constant comparison of data across participants and categories. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. The study adhered to ethical guidelines regarding participant anonymity and the secure handling of data.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study explores the recruitment, selection, and compensation processes for teachers through qualitative analysis, focusing on the perspectives of both the headteacher and the teachers.

Theme 1: Recruitment and Selection of Teachers

The headteacher outlined the current recruitment and selection process as follows:

“After a teacher has completed college of education or university in any education, that teacher go for mandatory national service, then after applies on the GES portal, later hard copies of certificates are submitted to regional education office. The newly recruit waits for some time then appointment letters are issued. The teacher goes to the education office for necessary documentation. There after the teacher is release to the school.”

The headteacher prefers the former decentralized system where teachers could choose their district of work after college, which fostered greater commitment and reduced transportation costs. They stated:

“I would have preferred the decentralization process they were formally using. Where teachers right from college choose the district to work in and after completion, they are released to that district for posting. This made the teachers show commitment to the way they do their work. Most of the teachers were able to choose schools close to them, thereby reducing the cost of transportation.”

When asked why headteachers are not directly involved in the recruitment process, the headteacher speculated that financial constraints on the government might be a reason, as budgeting for specific teachers can be complex. The headteacher remarked:

“I have no idea, but I assume it might be because of financial constraints on the part of government. They have to budget for that particular teacher recruited and selected for the school.”

Most teachers confirmed their understanding of the recruitment process, aligning with the headteacher’s description. One teacher explained:

“After completion of college, you do national service then apply on the GES portal, later hard copies of certificates were submitted to regional education office. New recruits waited for some time then appointment letters are given.”

However, a few teachers, recruited long ago, were less familiar with the current procedures. One such teacher said:

“No, because it’s been a long time I got recruited and selected into Ghana Education Service and was reposted into Osu Salem 1 Basic subsequent but do not know what happens now before a teacher is recruited and selected into Osu Salem 1 Basic.”

Teachers generally agreed that headteacher involvement in recruitment could lead to bias, preferring the centralized system to maintain fairness. One teacher noted:

“He will be biased when given such role and he may select his favorite to the school.”

However, they also supported decentralizing the recruitment process to consider teachers’ residences, which would alleviate transportation challenges and improve job satisfaction. A teacher suggested:

“The current recruitment and selection process done by the headquarters, do not consider the newly recruited teacher’s current residence. Some are posted to places far away from their residence and sometimes to regions they have not selected during their recruitment. If the process is decentralized, it would help solve that problem.”

Theme 2: Compensation of Teachers

The headteacher described the compensation process as follows:

The headteacher completes validation documents at the Accountant Generals’ Department (AGD), endorsed by various officials. Teachers’ identities are registered on the AGD portal. Monthly validation of teachers’ attendance and work is required to ensure they receive their compensation.

The headteacher believes that their involvement in this process helps eliminate absenteeism and “ghost” employees, ensuring only deserving teachers are compensated. They explained:

"The headteacher would have to go to Accountant Generals' Department (AGD) to complete validation documents. These documents are endorsed by the assistant headteacher, school improvement support officer (SISO), and the director of the municipal. The headteacher's telephone number and staff identity is registered on the portal of 'AGD'. On the 18th to 20th of every month, 'AGD' sends a message to that headteacher to validate teachers. He intends takes the staff identity number of teachers and goes to the portal to confirm why they need to be compensated. The 'SISO' also confirms the names of the teachers sent by the headteacher, then at the end of the month the teacher is paid the compensation."

Regarding why headteachers are directly involved in the compensation process, they said:

"The validation process was to check teacher absenteeism and the headteacher is the best person to know if a particular teacher does not deserve the compensation or otherwise."

The headteacher supports the current system for its effectiveness in checking absenteeism:

"I think the current way of compensating teachers is the best because it's able to check teachers' absenteeism as well as ghost names."

Teachers detailed the compensation process, emphasizing their submission of staff numbers for monthly validation. Most teachers understood this process, while a few only knew that their accounts were credited monthly without knowledge of the steps involved. One teacher explained:

"The teacher gives the account details to the headteacher that is name, staff id. The teacher's name is added to the validators list of the staff."

Another teacher, less familiar with the details, stated:

"As for me I don't know the process involved, the most important thing is that when I go to the bank my compensation is there for me to take."

Teachers supported the headteacher's involvement in the validation process, recognizing it as a necessary measure to confirm work done and prevent absenteeism. A teacher commented:

"To confirm the number of teachers who have worked or taught in the school at every month. The validation process was to check teacher absenteeism and the headteacher is the best person to give that confirmation."

However, there were concerns about potential misuse of this system for personal grievances, with some teachers recalling instances where validation was withheld due to conflicts with the headteacher. One teacher recounted:

“I prefer the old system of compensating teachers to this validation system. This is because two months ago my headteacher had a disagreement with me over an issue and during validation, he refused to get me validated. This resulted in me not being paid for three months.”

Theme 3: Improving HR Management Functions

The headteacher highlighted staffing as the primary area needing improvement. They noted that the current system places a financial burden on teachers, especially regarding transportation. Decentralizing staffing would allow for consideration of teachers’ distances from work, improving their performance and commitment. They stated:

“I prefer staffing. This is because the current staffing is really putting financial burden on teachers when it comes to their distance to work.”

Most teachers echoed the headteacher’s sentiments, advocating for improvements in the staffing process. They emphasized that the current centralized recruitment does not consider teachers’ residences, leading to logistical challenges and dissatisfaction. One teacher said:

“This current system of employing human resources into Osu Salem 1 Basic does not take into consideration the distance of the human resource. Teachers are posted anyhow and he or she has to struggle to get accommodation and transportation takes all the compensation.”

Teachers agreed that decentralizing staffing would enhance teacher commitment and allow local education directorates to better manage human resources. This change would provide a more tailored approach to recruitment and selection, benefiting both teachers and the school. A teacher noted:

“If the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Education Directorate are given the power to do staffing, they are able to look at the distance and other factors before recruiting and selecting a particular teacher to them. It makes that teacher to give allegiance to that education directorate.”

The study reveals a preference for a decentralized recruitment system among both the headteacher and teachers to improve teacher commitment and reduce logistical challenges. The current compensation validation process is largely supported for its effectiveness in monitoring attendance, despite concerns about potential misuse. Overall, decentralizing HR functions could lead to more efficient and satisfactory management of human resources in Basic School A.

DISCUSSION

Recruitment Process and Decentralization

The recruitment process described at Basic School A aligns with common practices observed in many educational systems globally, where teachers complete their education, undergo national service, and apply through centralized portals managed by education authorities (MoE, 2017). This

centralized approach aims to streamline recruitment across multiple districts but may overlook regional nuances such as teacher preferences and local needs (OECD, 2019). Literature suggests that decentralized recruitment systems, where teachers have some autonomy in selecting their postings, can foster greater job satisfaction and commitment by aligning job assignments with personal and professional interests (UNESCO, 2020). Decentralization, according to García and Weiss (2021) has been shown to reduce turnover rates and improve teacher retention, as teachers are more likely to remain in positions that align with their preferences.

Compensation Process and Validation

The compensation process involving validation by the headteacher at Basic School A reflects efforts to ensure accountability and prevent fraudulent claims, such as absenteeism and ghost workers, which are common challenges in public sector employment globally (World Bank, 2018). Validation processes, as described, are crucial for maintaining the integrity of payroll systems and ensuring that public funds are used effectively (Barr & Serra, 2018). However, concerns about potential misuse highlight the importance of clear guidelines and oversight mechanisms to safeguard against arbitrary decisions or personal biases in validation procedures (OECD, 2020). Effective validation systems not only verify attendance but also contribute to a culture of transparency and fairness within educational institutions.

Staffing and Decentralization

The emphasis on decentralizing staffing practices at Basic School A to consider teachers' geographical locations resonates with research advocating for localized management of human resources in education (Dixon & McLendon, 2021). Centralized staffing systems often face criticism for their inability to tailor placements to individual teacher needs, resulting in dissatisfaction and logistical challenges, particularly concerning commuting distances (UNESCO, 2021; UNESCO, 2019). MoE (2021) asserted that decentralized staffing models empower local education authorities to align recruitment strategies with community needs, potentially improving teacher morale and job performance. Such systems have been associated with improved teacher satisfaction and retention rates by addressing practical concerns such as transportation costs and work-life balance (OECD, 2022). The findings from Basic School A underscore the potential benefits of decentralizing aspects of human resource management in education, such as recruitment, compensation, and staffing. By aligning practices with teacher preferences and local contexts, educational institutions can enhance efficiency, job satisfaction, and overall performance. However, effective implementation requires careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing evaluation to mitigate potential challenges and maximize the positive impacts on educational outcomes.

Findings

1. The recruitment process for teachers at Basic School A involves completing education and mandatory national service, applying through the GES portal, and submitting certificates to the regional education office. Appointment letters are then issued, followed by necessary documentation before the teachers are posted to the school. The headteacher expressed a preference for the previous decentralized system, which allowed teachers to choose their district post-education, fostering greater commitment and reducing transportation costs. Most teachers confirmed their understanding of this process, though some, recruited long ago, were less familiar. Teachers generally support a centralized system to avoid bias but advocate for decentralizing the recruitment process to consider teachers' residences, thus reducing transportation challenges and improving job satisfaction.
2. The headteacher explained that the compensation process involves completing validation documents at the Accountant Generals' Department, registering teachers' identities on the AGD portal for monthly validation of attendance and work. This process aims to eliminate absenteeism and "ghost" employees, ensuring only deserving teachers are compensated. Most teachers understand this process, submitting staff numbers for validation, though some are only aware that their accounts are credited monthly. Teachers generally support the headteacher's role in validation, recognizing it as a measure to confirm work done and prevent absenteeism, though there are concerns about potential misuse for personal grievances.

The headteacher highlights staffing as the area needing improvement, noting the financial burden on teachers due to transportation costs. Decentralizing staffing would consider teachers' distances from work, improving performance and commitment. Teachers agree, emphasizing that the current centralized recruitment does not consider teachers' residences, leading to logistical challenges and dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recruitment and selection process at Basic School A follows a standardized procedure, but both the headteacher and teachers prefer a decentralized approach to improve efficiency and reduce logistical challenges, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction. The compensation process involves headteacher validation to prevent absenteeism and "ghost" employees, though concerns about potential misuse highlight the need for greater transparency and fairness. Improving the staffing process by considering teachers' residences would reduce logistical challenges and increase job satisfaction, with a decentralized approach likely to enhance teacher commitment and performance. It is recommended that:

1. School Administration and Education Authorities implement a decentralized recruitment system at Basic School A to allow teachers to

select districts based on their preferences, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and reducing transportation costs.

2. School Administration and Education Authorities should establish clear and transparent validation guidelines for the compensation process to ensure fairness and prevent misuse, alongside implementing a robust grievance mechanism for teachers to address any issues promptly.

Education Authorities and Policy Makers should shift towards a decentralized staffing model that considers teachers' geographical locations and preferences, supported by local recruitment committees and enhanced support systems for newly recruited teachers to facilitate smoother transitions and improve overall performance.

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