STAFF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES APPLIED BY SCHOOL' HEADS FOR ENHANCING TEACHERS JOB COMMITMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN VOINJAMA CITY, LOFA COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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Abstract

This study examined staff personnel administrative practices applied by school' heads for enhancing teachers job commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 65 head-teachers and 841 teachers from all the 65 government primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Liberia. The sample consisted of 65 headteachers and 300 teachers using purposive sampling technique. A validated structured questionnaire titled "Staff Personnel Administrative Practices of Head-teachers (SPAPH) was employed. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.78 respectively was established. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that both head-teachers and teachers were of the view that head-teachers applied staff professional development practices and motivational practices in. enhancing teachers' job commitment. It was also revealed that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of head-teachers and teachers in the head-teachers' application of staff professional development practices. It was recommended amongst others that head-teachers should as a matter of sustainability continue enhancing teachers by furnishing staff offices so as to make them more conducive for work. This is to create a healthy environment for teachers to stay in the school for lesson preparation, marking of pupils' exercises and other important school works, through this the educational objectives will be achieved.

***Keywords**: Administration, administrative practices, staff personnel, teachers' commitment, primary education.*

Introduction

Education is viewed as the foundation for national development and personal growth. It is a critical tool for alleviating poverty, promoting equality, and fostering social development. Liberia's education system is divided into four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education. The primary education level is particularly crucial, as it serves as the foundation upon which other levels are built. Primary education covers grades 1 to 6 and caters to children aged 6 to 12. Primary education aims to provide fundamental skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving, as well as foster social and ethical development.

The National Policy on Education in Liberia outlines several objectives for primary education. These objectives are intended to ensure that children develop essential academic skills and are prepared for the challenges of higher education and life beyond the classroom. According to the Liberian Education Sector Plan, the objective of primary education is to equip children with foundational skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These skills are crucial for personal and academic development and forms the basis for all future learning. Primary education is designed to foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in children. The curriculum encourages children to engage in activities that develop their intellectual curiosity and capacity to analyze information.

These objectives serve as a guide for primary schools across Liberia, including those in Voinjama City, Lofa Comity. However, achieving these objectives requires the active commitment of teachers and administrators, and this is where school heads or personnel administrative practices become essential (Broadwell, 2018). Teachers' commitment refers to the level of dedication and responsibility that teachers exhibit towards their profession, pupils, and educational institutions. Committed teachers are those who not only fulfill their basic teaching responsibilities but also go beyond to engage pupils, improve their teaching methods, and contribute to the overall development of the school community. According to Anachuna (2024), teacher commitment is influenced by several factors, including the school environment, administrative support, professional development opportunities, and personal job satisfaction. In

this context, teacher commitment is seen as the way teachers shows dedication to learner and teaching in a real, personal and visible way in order to achieve a goal.

Teacher commitment is essential for the success of any educational system because it impacts pupil achievement, classroom management, and the overall quality of education Anachuna (2024). In Voinjama City, where educational resources seem to be limited, the commitment of teachers becomes even more critical. Many teachers face significant challenges such as low salaries, lack of resources, and absence of professional development opportunities, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction and diminishing commitment (Broadwell, 2018). These issues have contributed to a high turnover rate among educators. However, with the right administrative practices, teachers can be -encouraged to stay dedicated to their roles. This is why Adeniyi (2018) stressed that school heads that provide emotional, professional, and logistical support to teachers can significantly enhance their commitment. Teachers feel more motivated to ' perform when they know they have the backing of a supportive administration. However, in environments where administrative practices are ineffective, teachers may become demotivated, resulting in absenteeism, low performance, and high turnover rates (Besong, 2018).

The role of school heads in enhancing the commitment of teachers through effective administrative practices is essential for the success of primary education. Teachers feel more motivated to perform when they know they have the backing of a supportive administration. Administrative practices refer to the strategies, methods, and techniques that school leaders employ to manage, support, and develop their staff. These practices encompass all actions related to the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling of school personnel to achieve educational objectives. According to Onyali, Ikegwuonu and Nnebedum (2018), administrative practices refer to the deliberate actions taken by leaders within an organization to manage resources, coordinate tasks, and achieve the institution's goals. In the educational context, these actions involve overseeing the affairs of teaching and non-teaching staff, organizing instructional programs, and maintaining a conducive learning environment. Operationally, administrative practices refer to the actions and strategies implemented by school heads in to manage teachers, allocate resources, provide guidance, and foster an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

One of the key responsibilities of school heads is the effective management of school

personnel. This includes hiring, training, and retaining qualified teachers. By ensuring that teachers are placed in roles that match their skills and interests, school heads can foster a sense of satisfaction and commitment. According to Ezeugbor, Onyali and Okoye (2018), effective personnel management creates an environment where teachers feel secure and supported, leading to increased loyalty and commitment. Staff personnel administrative practices are a specific subset of administrative practices that focus on managing and supporting the human resources within a school—specifically the teaching staff (Uko, Umosen and Caleb, 2015). These practices are geared towards ensuring that teachers are properly recruited, trained, motivated, and retained. When these practices are effectively applied, they create a supportive environment that promotes teacher dedication and commitment to their roles. Aja-Okorie (2016) reiterated that the staff personnel administrative practices lies in their ability to create a work environment where teachers feel valued and supported. This includes providing professional development opportunities, fostering positive relationships between school leaders and teachers, and implementing policies that recognize and reward teacher achievements.

It is the function of the head-teachers to adopt various administrative practices to ensure that teachers perform their duties creditably. Staff personnel administrative practices are geared towards attracting, retaining and developing a team of highly dedicated, committed and motivated workforce that is willing to contribute meaningfully to improve instructional delivery. In the same vein, Ezeugbor et al., (2018) and Anachunam (2024) stated that staff personnel administrative practices include: orientation, decision making, delegation of duties, supervision, staff professional development and motivation. Similarly, the staff personnel administrative practices adapted in this study were staff professional development practices and staff motivation practices. These two were of great interest in view of their relevance in positioning teachers for greater growth in ICT knowledge enhancement at this 21st century inter-generational technology with regards to teaching and learning. This can be achieved through organizational bodies of education such as TRCN, UNICEF, UNESSCO among others.

It is imperative to note that teaching is a public service that requires exceptional expertise, knowledge and specialized skill sustained through vigorous and continuous professional development (Ezeugbor, 2015). Educational organizations sees professional development as a basic instrument that provides head-teachers and teachers with the tools to

meet professional challenges, ensuring that they are up-to-date with information; materials, adequate financial outlay and commitment. Staff development practices range from structured activities such as workshops, seminars, training, observation and assessment and discussion and others (Desimone, 2019). Alhassan (2014) argued that in-service training teachers has been one of the major practices of school heads to develop their teachers. In furtherance, Alhassan enthused that in-service training can be delivered in areas such as lesson planning, teaching strategies and also open opportunities for further studies.

Therefore, the head-teachers are expected to assist teachers to undertake professional development programmes, keep them abreast with innovative strategies in teaching, and in the performance of other instructional duties to bring about positive improvement in pupils' academic performance. Invariably, as teachers are obliged to engage in various professional development programmes, their motivation tendencies are intrinsically enhanced towards effective job performance.

Motivation involves the use of internal and external factors to stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to job and role or to make effort to attain a goal (Gbollie and Keamu, 2017). Head-teachers' motivational practices include: the use of good communication pattern, regular meeting with teachers, praise and appreciation of excellent performance of teachers, as well as ensuring teachers' welfare (Aja-Okorie and Usular, 2016). Head-teachers' motivational practices also include; recommending staff for promotion, maintaining good interpersonal relationship with them, creating atmosphere for teamwork, rendering counseling services to staff, among others. Notwithstanding, Nwobi (2013) observed that the probable declining of quality in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County in Kenya in general could be attributed to head-teachers' inability to regularly engage teachers in professional development training.

School heads play a crucial role in applying administrative practices that support and enhance teacher commitment, but there has been limited research on how these practices which are, operationalized in rural Liberian settings, particularly in Voinjama City. Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between administrative practices and teacher commitment. While previous studies, such as those by Bennell and Akyeampong (2021) and Ingersoll (2020), have investigated the relationship between administrative practices and teacher commitment in

different contexts, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research specific to Liberia, particularly Voinjama City, Lofa County. The educational challenges in Voinjama City, such as limited infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and low salaries, require a tailored approach to staff personnel administrative practices. Current literature has not adequately explored how these practices are applied in rural Liberian primary schools and how they specifically influence teacher commitment in such settings based on this, the research investigates the staff personnel administrative practices applied by school' heads for enhancing teachers job commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Statement of the Problem

Primary education in Voinjama City could be facing several challenges that are negatively impacting teachers' commitment to their roles. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching resources, poor remuneration, and a lack of opportunities for professional growth. Additionally, school heads in this region may lack the necessary training or strategies to implement effective staff personnel administrative practices that foster teacher engagement and long-term commitment. This is compounded by the rural nature of Voinjama, where schools often operate with limited oversight, making it difficult to monitor and improve administrative practices that are vital to teacher motivation. While studies have established a relationship between administrative support and teacher commitment in various global contexts, the application of these findings to the specific context of Voinjama City remains largely unexplored. This study is very imperative on staff personnel administrative practices applied by school' heads for enhancing teachers job commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

This study specifically sought to establish the:

1. professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.
2. motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Research Questions

1. What are the professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.
2. What are the motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 65 head-teachers and 841 teachers from all the 65 government primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Liberia. The sample consisted of 65 head-teachers and 300 teachers. The entire population of 65 head-teachers was used as the sample size, hence, no sampling technique. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 300 teachers. This made a total of 365 respondents that participated in the study. A validated structured questionnaire titled "Staff Personnel Administrative Practices of Head-teachers (SPAPH) was employed. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; part 'A' sought for the information on the job designation of the respondents (principal or teacher). Part 'B' is made up of 20 items on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD). Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.78 respectively for the two sections of part (B' of the instrument, making a total reliability coefficient of 0.81. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Any item with mean of 2.50 and above

depicts agreement while an item with a mean rating below 2.50 was considered as disagree. The hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Respondents' ratings on staff professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia

S/N	Item statement	Head-teachers (n= 65)			Teachers n= 300)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1	Encourages teachers to participate in staff discussion forum	3.74	0.91	Agree	3.58	0.79	Agree
2	Identifies areas that requires teachers to develop creative skills leading to positive change in teaching	3.88	0.85	Agree	3.45	0.97	Agree
3	Involves teachers in collaborative teaching for the purpose of sharing knowledge	2.99	0.73	Agree	3.30	1.01	Agree
4	Identifies the specific areas requiring re-training for teachers	2.41	0.70	Disagree	2.30	0.81	Disagree
5	Organizes workshops to enlighten teachers about innovation on teaching methodologies	3.58	1.01	Agree	.3.33	1.03	Agree
6	Encourages in-service training for advancement of knowledge in teachers' areas of specialization	3.53	0.91	Agree	3.46	0.88	Agree
7	Organizes symposium for teachers to enhance their managerial skills in planning and organizing school activities with minimal supervision	3.67	0.76	Agree	3.55	1.01	Agree
8	Sponsors teachers for ICT proficiency to up-date their knowledge based on the current trend in technology advancement in teaching and learning	2.11	0.83	Disagree	2.23	0.88	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.24**		**Agree**	**3.15**		**Agree**

Table 1 reveals that all the items with the exception of items with serial numbers 4 and 8 have mean scores above the bench mean of 2.50 in both the head-teachers and teachers column. This shows that they are the professional development practices applied by school-heads for

enhancing teachers' commitment. The mean of means of 3.24 and 3.15 in head-teachers and teachers' column respectively indicates that both respondents agree that head-teachers adopt staff professional development practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. The standard deviation reveals that the responses of head-teachers' and teachers' rating for each item is close, suggesting that their responses are homogeneous.

Table 2: Respondents' ratings on staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia

S/N	Item statement	Head-teachers (n= 65)			Teachers n= 300)		
		X	**SD**	**Decision**	**X**	**SD**	**Decision**
9	Involves teachers in decision-making as a way of increasing their sense of belonging in school	3.70	0.92	Agree	3.60	1.00	Agree
10	Gives incentives to teachers as a means of encouraging them to work harder	3.56	0,88	Agree	3.47	0.98'	Agree
11	Establishes good interpersonal relationship with teachers thereby promoting work friendly environment	3.85	1.01	Agree	3.00	1.00	Agree
12	Endeavours to meet teachers' welfare needs as a source of building their trust in the school	3.68	0.88	Agree	3.48	0.93	Agree
13	Provides sporting activities for teachers to encourage themselves in exercises for fitness	3.28	1.02	Agree	3.04	0.86	Agree
14	Provides teachers with well-furnished offices as a way of creating conducive environment for work	2.38	0.79	Disagree	2.21	0.82	Disagree
15	Organizes medical check-up to improve teachers' well-being	2.24	0,88	Disagree	2.35	0.89	Disagree
16	Gives praise and commendations to teachers as deserved to boost their ego	3.79	0.96	Agree	3.66	0.87	Agree
		2.90		**Agree**	**3.10**		**Agree**

As revealed in table 2, all the items except items numbers 14 and 15, have mean scores above the bench mean of 2.50 in both the head-teachers and teachers column. This indicates that they are the motivational practices applied by head-teachers for enhancing teachers' commitment. The

means of 2.90 and 3.10 in the head-teachers and teachers column respectively depicts that head-teachers applied motivational practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. The standard deviation scores for all the items in the cluster are within the same range, showing that the respondents are homogeneous in their responses.

Table 3: t-Test significance on the difference in the mean ratings of he ad-teachers and teachers on the staff professional development practices applied by school:heads for enhancing teachers' commitment

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	sig	α	Decision
Head-teachers	65	3.34	0.87					
				363	11.02	0.74	0.05	Not significant
Teachers	300	3.21	0.93					

The t-test analysis presented in table 3 indicates that at 363 degree of freedom and t-cal value of 11.02; the p-value is greater than 0.05 (df = 355; p > 0.05). This means that the null hypothesis is upheld. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff professional development practices applied by school- heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Table 4: t-Test significance on the difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	sig	α	Decision
Head-teachers	65	2.97	1.06					
				363	8.89	9.06	0.5	Not significant
Teachers	300	3.06	0.93					

The t-test analysis presented in table 4 indicates that at 363 degree of freedom and t-cal value of 8.98; the p-value is greater than 0.05 (df = 355; p > 0.05). This means that the null hypothesis is upheld. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and

teachers on the staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Discussion of Findings

The result in table 1 reveals that both head-teachers and teachers were of the view that head-teachers applied staff professional development practices in enhancing teachers' commitment This finding is in concordance with the views of FRL (2014) in her education sector plan and Ezeugbor (2015) when they attested that staff professional development impacts on the teachers' professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required to help the school achieve its objectives. The findings is in line with that of Ayeni (2011) who posits that the head-teachers organize in house seminars and workshops for teachers and encouraged teachers to attend conferences to improve their capacities for effective job performance. This may account for the reason why primary school teachers in Liberia have been observed to be highly committed to their duties as evident in the excellent performance of the pupils' common entrance and primary six examination in the recent times. However, both head-teachers and teachers disagreed that the head-teachers identify specific areas requiring retraining for teachers and sponsorship for teachers ICT proficiency. This finding was a surprise giving the fact that the current technological advancement in all the facets of the education system would have made the head-teachers to see teachers' ICT proficiency and identification of each teacher's areas of training needs an imperative for an overall progress of the system.

The test of null hypothesis was not significance indicating that there was no variation in the perceptions of head-teachers and teachers in the head-teachers' application of staff professional development practices. The findings of the study equally revealed that both head-teachers and teachers agreed that staff motivational practices were applied by head-teachers for enhancing teachers' commitment. This agreement was made explicit in some areas like; recommending teachers for promotion, giving out incentives, involving teachers in decision making and praising and commending deserving teachers. This finding is in line with the findings of Abbas and Fauzia (2013); Aja-Okorie and Usulor (2016) when they espoused that attention to teachers' welfare needs, positive reinforcement and their involvement in decision making process promote their job involvement and performance.

The finding in research question two revealed that head-teachers applied motivational practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. On the other hand, the head-teachers and teachers disagreed that teachers are provided with well-furnished offices and organized medical checkup in the school. Obviously, the reason for this scenario may not be far-fetched in view of the fact that the financial capacity of the head-teachers are quite limited for such engagement. The finding that teachers are not provided with well-furnished office was not unexpected giving the observation in most primary schools where teachers are jam-packed in supposedly classrooms converted into staff rooms with desks and chairs equivalent of what pupils use in their classrooms. This finding was in line with that of Ingersoll (2020) that when head-teachers employ positive motivational strategies, it not only reduces turnover but also encourages greater teacher involvement and commitment to their roles. Owolabi (2012) highlighted that while head-teachers may implement motivational practices, the impact of these efforts can be limited by external factors such as poor remuneration, lack of government support, and inadequate facilities. The study argued that these broader systemic issues diminish the effectiveness of motivational practices, as teachers remain disengaged due to dissatisfaction with their working conditions.

The finding with regards to the null hypothesis indicates that there was no variation in the opinions of head-teachers and teachers on the staff motivational applied motivational practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. The reason for no significance difference could be deduced from the back drop of the fact that both groups of respondents are noted as carrier teachers. The principal is just the administrative head who could not have attained that position without years of teaching experience. This is affirmed when Okpe (2016) recognized that head-teachers are teachers elevated as administrative heads of primary schools who still possess the innate teaching characteristics.

Conclusion

This study investigated the staff personnel administrative practices applied by head-teachers in enhancing teachers' job performance. It established that head-teachers adopt staff professional development and motivational practices. These were found to be important components of head-teachers' responsibilities for effective teaching and learning to take place.

Head-teachers failure to adopt the professional development practices of identifying specific areas of re-training needs for teachers as well as sponsoring teachers for ICT proficiency training on one hand and motivational practices of furnishing teachers offices as well as-organizing medical check-up for teachers, seemingly could have a negative impact on teachers' optimum performance in the school. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the responses of head-teachers and teachers and thus, the null hypotheses were not rejected.

Recommendations

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

1. Head-teachers should explore as a matter of urgency the need to expose their teachers to ICT proficiency training so that they will not be left out of the moving train of the inter-generational development in ICT developments
2. Head-teachers should as a matter of priority explore possible ways of making furnishing staff offices so as to make them more conducive for work. This is to create a healthy environment for teachers to stay in the school for lesson preparation, marking of pupils' exercises and other important school works.

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