

REVIEWING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY SKILLS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the need to review teachers' professional competency skills and conditions of service for global competitiveness in Rivers State. The study which adopted descriptive survey research design was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The population of the study comprised of 15, 860 UBE and SSS teachers in Rivers State. A sample of 793 teachers comprising of 469 UBE and 324 SSS teachers was drawn via stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire entitled; "Reviewing Teachers' Professional Competency Skills and Conditions of Service for Global Competitiveness Questionnaire (RTPCSCSGCQ)", developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument which was properly validated had a reliability index of 0.89 obtained through Cronbach Alpha method. Mean, percentages, standard deviation and rank order were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the study showed that teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness include among others: time management skills, classroom management skills and ICT skills. While the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness include among others: irregular promotion of teachers; inadequate provision of capacity building programme and non implementation of financial benefits after promotion. Based on the findings, conclusion was drawn and the following recommendations among others were made: professional competency skills of teachers in Rivers State should be reviewed with aim of designing and implementing a well structured capacity building programme; and government should adequately review the conditions of service of teachers in Rivers State to enhance their global competitiveness.

Keywords: Teachers, Professional Competence, Skills, Conditions of Service and Global Competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Education has been acknowledged world over as the most important instrument for sustainable development of a nation. It is through education that relevant norms, social values, skills, knowledge and attitude are developed in the citizens of any nation from generation to generation. We have the formal, informal and non-formal systems of education. The informal and non-formal systems of education do not take place in the four walls of a school. They are not thoroughly planned, well structured and systematically arranged, hence professionally trained teachers are not often engaged in these forms of education. On the other hand, formal system of education refers to the form of education in which activities are thoroughly planned, well structured, educational programmes are well arranged and executed in an organized setting. This type of education takes place in a special designated location officially known as the school. In line with this, Hornby (2010) defines formal education as that which is received in a school, college or university, with lessons, exams etc rather than knowledge gained through experience. The adoption of formal system of education as a major means of human capital development created room for the employment of professionally trained teachers who teach and impact knowledge, skills and national values at the various levels of our educational system.

Teachers are by the nature of their job the most important human resource in the development and sustenance of any system of education and in the effective achievement of the goals of any programme of education. Hence, it is clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE), that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (FRN, 2014, P.28). This implies that the job performance of teachers is very critical to the success of our educational system and its global competitiveness. FRN (2014) and Awotua-Efebo (2005) state that the quality of educational delivery and outcome at any level in Nigeria rest so much on the quality and job performance of teachers. Job performance in this context is an assessment of whether the teachers perform their job effectively and efficiently or not. The job performance of teachers just like that of other employees is determined by two major factors which are professional competence and conditions of service of the teachers. Professional competence is acquired through the professional training and experiences the teachers were exposed to during their training programme in the various teachers training institutions and other re-training programmes in their practice as teachers over time. This enhances the productive capacity and global competitiveness of the teachers and our educational system.

Teachers' conditions of service is another critical factor in their service delivery and productive capacity. Their conditions of service can spur them to put in more effort or discourage them from effective discharge of their duties. Teachers in Rivers State have been complaining over the poor conditions of service facing them and the insensitivity of the government over their plight. Many teachers complain over the non implementation of national minimum wage and non payment of gratuity and pensions to serving and retired teachers in the state. This Situation impacts negatively on their socio-economic status and it discourages them from putting in their best in their service delivery.

The professional competence of teachers involves a thorough knowledge of their subject matter; knowledge and understanding of the learners/students; the curriculum content and classroom management among others. The extent to which they have these knowledge and exercise them determines their economic value, the academic performance of the students and the extent of their global competitiveness. If teachers who have these professional competence are supported with good conditions of service, they will be happy and satisfied doing their jobs, they will be more effective and efficient, their level of productivity will increase and the academic performance of the students will be enhanced for global competitiveness. Hence, acquiring and exercising professional competency skills by teachers, as well as the global competitiveness of our educational system can be strengthened or weakened by conditions of service teachers are exposed to in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

No nation can talk about global competitiveness in any aspect of human endeavor without a sound educational system. A sound educational system to a large extent is determined by the professional competence of the teachers engaged in the system and the conditions of service they enjoy from their employers. Teachers need to be adequately motivated by their employers through good conditions of service and adoption of global best practices. This will enhance their socio-economic status, self-esteem and job satisfaction. Improving their conditions of service will impact positively on the academic performance of their students, the standard of education, and display of professional competence in their profession.

In recent times, several allegations have been levelled against teachers in Rivers State. Many of them have been accused of: extorting their students; not going to work on time and regularly; engagement in other things like street trading, farming and fishing; and aiding their students in examination malpractices. All these demean their professional competence. The teachers have equally complained of poor conditions of service and negligence on the side of government over their welfare. The attitude of government appears to have weakened their moral, enthusiasm and conscientiousness

in the discharge of their duties. No doubt that these scenario has affected our educational system and its global competitiveness.

This situation is disheartening, suggesting that there is a problem. The researcher is bothered by the current situation. Hence, the motivation to investigate the need to review teachers' professional competency skills and conditions of service in Rivers State for global competitiveness.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study was aimed at investigating the aspects of teachers' professional competence and conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State. Specifically the objectives of the study were to:

1. ascertain the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.
2. determine the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State?
2. What are the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories; the man power development theory and Abraham Maslow's need theory. The man power development theory was developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990. The theory places human resources at the center of economic growth and development. The theory assumes that education and training are very necessary in the raising of a productive population. Obtaining relevant skills through professional training and development are vital ways of enhancing individual's and society's opportunities for economic growth and development. It is through education and training that skillful and productive workforce is developed. Man power development is a function of educational programmes that are relevant to individual and society's needs through the development of employable skills in the beneficiaries. This increases productivity through the adoption and utilization of modern technologies.

This theory emphasizes on the need for acquisition of appropriate skills to carry out the right type of job in achieving organizational goals. This theory supports this study because it aims at investment in education, acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge which are pre-requisites for increasing productivity, economic growth and development. Teachers occupy a core position in the

advancement of education, knowledge and skills in every nation. Therefore, teachers' competence needs to be improved in line with appropriate skills, knowledge and modern technology. This will enhance their productive capacity and contribution to economic development by improving their ability to impact relevant employable skills in their students.

The second theory is the human motivational theory postulated by Abraham Maslow in 1954 and expanded by Kpee (2015). The theory recognized that man is a complex and changing being, and that motivation must reflect man's nature. Maslow held that the source of motivation is certain needs which often influence man's behaviour consciously. He advanced the following propositions about man's behaviour:

1. Human beings are wanting beings- always wanting and wanting more depending on what they already have.
2. It is only unsatisfied, and needs not attended to, that motivate behaviour.
3. Human needs are naturally arranged in hierarchy of levels, the meeting up of lower needs spurs up the desire for meeting up of upper level needs. Hence, Maslow classified these needs into five basic need levels namely: physiological, safety, belongingness/love needs, esteem needs and need for self actualization.

According to Kpee (2015) one way to ensure that organizational goals are achieved is to strive to make employees satisfy their needs. Once an employee is satisfied because his needs are met, he will be motivated and determined to put in all efforts at his work place to ensure that organizational goals are achieved. This theory is in line with this study because one of the ways to encourage teachers to work harder and improve on their productivity is by enhancing or improving their conditions of service. This will make them to feel happy, satisfied with their job and determined to put in their best in their service delivery.

Conceptual Literature Review

Teachers' competence is a vital aspect of human resource development which is directly linked to the teachers' job performance and academic achievement of the students. It is a way of enhancing the teaching quality and continuous process of professional development of teachers. To this extent, Feryal (2010) opined that teachers' competency development entails the improvement or the additional skills teachers acquired in his career with formal professional training. Teachers' professional competence refers to the knowledge, the skills and attitude to work that he needs in order to be effective and efficient in the discharge of his responsibilities. This plays a key role in students' learning and development of the affective and psychomotive domains. The academic performance of the students and the productivity of the society rest so much on the quality, commitment and competence of the teachers.

Teachers' competence according to Dunkin in Ojiako (2014) is the extent to which the teacher possesses the requisite knowledge and skills. It is the competence of the teacher that determines the quality of education. A competent teacher is a well performed teacher. Bearing in mind that knowledge is dynamic and learning processes change over time, teachers who are the determinants of quality education and skills development should improve on already acquired competence, teaching skills and knowledge in other to remain globally competitive.

In this light, Peter (2019) posited that teachers' competence can be improved through various programs such as workshops, conferences, orientation programmes, mentoring, peer group activities, computer operations, staff meetings etc. Teachers' competence development enhances their ability to organize and manage students in a manner that will allow them meet educational goals. Isiozor (2014) asserted that teachers' competence could be achieved by building the capacity of teachers through the production of adequate and appropriate curriculum materials, by improving teachers' communication

skills to enhance educational activities, by improving teachers' ability to formulate instructional goals and learning objectives, by enhancing teachers' performance as an evaluator of students' academic achievement.

Teachers' conditions of service is very important for any educational system to achieve its goals and objectives. Motivation could be seen as those things that energise and encourage the teacher to work very hard. Motivation according to Oyedeji (1998) is one of the ways employers make workers to put their best efforts in an efficient and effective manner in order to achieve organizational objectives. Bennel (2004) noted that motivation refers to the psychological process that influences individuals' behaviour with respect to the attainment of workable goals and tasks. Motivation is the inner drive that makes workers to work more without regret. On the other hand, Sadruddin (2012) sees de-motivation as specific external forces that reduce or diminish motivational basis of a behavioural intentions of an ongoing action. This means that teachers could either be motivated or de-motivated on the job. Teachers are motivated when they enjoy good conditions of service and the reverse is the case when their conditions of service are poor and unattractive.

Teachers in Rivers State have raised alarm over their conditions of service. Teachers feel unrecognized and unappreciated by ugly treatment they receive from the government. According to Afolabi (2013) it is worthy of note that due to the poor conditions of service and inadequate motivation of teachers, their performance on the job and global competitiveness have fallen. It appears that many teachers in Rivers State have abandoned the teaching profession for more lucrative jobs elsewhere due to poor conditions of service. Teachers are not well motivated and this has led to brain-drain and high attrition rate in the teaching profession. It is unfortunate that teachers who are at the center of individual and national developments are treated as underdogs (Selemani – Meke, 2013).

The poor allowances and unfavourable conditions of service have contributed to lack of motivation of teachers and poor standard of education in Nigeria. Teachers' conditions of service such as posting of teachers, training, discipline of teachers, duties and obligations expected of teachers, teachers workload are very vital in teaching and learning processes. Teachers conditions of service according to Aina (1992) are marred by arrears of unpaid salaries; arrears of unpaid benefits and allowances; high inflation rates which rob them of their purchasing power and many teachers find themselves in life-choking frustration. They are relegated to the background and are only attended to when all other civil servants have been attended to. According to Alarm and Farid (2011) evidences abound that many teachers did not get their pensions and gratuities years after their retirement. Teachers promotion, salary and its prompt payment are very influential factors in the service delivery of teachers and in the success of any educational system.

Training and retraining of teachers is a very important aspect of their conditions of service. Knowledge and technology are dynamic, hence teachers need to be trained and retrained over time. Well trained teachers are likely to be more motivated than poorly trained teachers (Bennell and Ntagaramba, 2008). The provision of regular, high quality in-service training is very important in ensuring the attainment of consistently high teaching standards. Currently according to Afolabi (2013) availability of in-service training is poor and teachers are not adequately encouraged to participate in in-service training programs. Also affecting teachers' conditions of service are increasing class size, increasing hours of work, more subjects and constant changing of curricula. They have been cited as major demotivating factors in many countries (Bennell and Mukyanuzi, 2005).

The teachers' conditions of service in Rivers State is very deplorable. According to Ibunge (2022) teachers in Rivers State do not enjoy regular promotions. The last time teachers were promoted in Rivers State was in 2010. They do not enjoy salary increments. Some teachers in Rivers State have been earning the same salary for the past ten years. The new minimum wage by federal government has not been implemented for teachers in Rivers State. It is also dishearting to note that the last time

teachers were employed in Rivers State was in 2013. Many teachers have left the profession since then, those who died, those who retired and those migrated to other professions since then have not been replaced (Ibunge, 2022).

It is inappropriate for Nigerians to rely on unhappy teachers in the development of the education sector for global competitiveness. Teachers in Nigeria are poorly motivated and recognized (Imueh, 2022). They are not well paid, they are owed arrears of salaries and allowances; there are no special incentives such as subsidized accommodations and transportations schemes for them. All these factors encumbered teachers' effectiveness in delivering the educational goals in Rivers state.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of the 15,860 teachers in primary and secondary schools in Rivers State. Source: State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Senior Secondary Schools Management Board (SSSMB) (2021 Report). A breakdown of this indicates that 9, 380 teach in the primary and junior secondary schools (UBE). While, 6, 480 teach in senior secondary schools (SSS). A sample of 793 teachers (469 from UBE and 324 from SSS) representing 5% of the population was drawn through stratified rando sampling technique. A questionnaire entitled, "Reviewing Teachers' Professional Competency skills and Conditions of Service for Global Competitiveness Questionnaire (RTPCSCSGCQ)" that was developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument which contained 20 items was adequately validated and a reliability index of 0.89 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha method. A total of 793 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the researcher and 780 copies were retrieved. Mean, percentages standard deviation and rank order were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the teachers’ professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean scores, percentages, standard deviation and rank order analysis of the responses of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers’ professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

S/N	Teachers’ Professional Competency Skills that Needs to be Reviewed for Global Competitiveness.	UBE Teachers N = 460						SSS Teachers N = 320						Mean Set	Rank Order	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}_1	STD	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}_2	STD			
1.	Skills in the utilization of modern technology in teaching	182 (40%)	194 (42%)	59 (13%)	25 (5%)	3.16	0.72	120 (38%)	164 (50%)	21 (7%)	15 (5%)	3.21	0.68	3.19	4 th	Agree
2.	Knowledge of subject matter	180 (39%)	200 (44%)	42 (9%)	38 (8%)	3.13	0.74	115 (36%)	150 (47%)	27 (8%)	28 (9%)	3.10	0.72	3.12	7 th	Agree
3.	Time management skills	176 (38%)	189 (41%)	72 (16%)	23 (5%)	3.13	0.74	124 (39%)	160 (50%)	20 (6%)	16 (5%)	3.22	0.67	3.18	6 th	Agree
4.	Classroom management skills	185 (40%)	196 (43%)	40 (9%)	39 (8%)	3.15	0.73	130 (41%)	154 (48%)	16 (5%)	20 (6%)	3.23	0.65	3.19	4 th	Agree
5.	Teaching/Communication skills	200 (43%)	174 (38%)	58 (13%)	28 (6%)	3.19	0.69	136 (42%)	162 (51%)	12 (4%)	10 (8%)	3.32	0.59	3.26	1 st	Agree
6.	Lesson note/lesson plan preparation skills	172 (37%)	188 (41%)	60 (13%)	40 (9%)	3.07	0.76	118 (37%)	158 (49%)	18 (6%)	26 (8%)	3.15	0.71	3.11	8 th	Agree
7.	Students’ assessment/evaluation skills	194 (42%)	182 (40%)	56 (12%)	28 (6%)	3.18	0.71	120 (38%)	174 (54%)	16 (5%)	10 (3%)	3.26	0.62	3.22	2 nd	Agree
8.	Reading skills	60 (13%)	106 (23%)	92 (20%)	202 (44%)	2.05	0.80	38 (12%)	62 (19%)	89 (28%)	131 (41%)	2.02	0.75	2.04	10 th	Disagree
9.	Note taking skills	68 (15%)	59 (13%)	88 (19%)	245 (53%)	1.89	0.82	52 (16%)	74 (23%)	90 (28%)	104 (33%)	2.23	0.73	2.06	9 th	Disagree
10.	ICT skills	211 (46%)	178 (39%)	33 (7%)	38 (8%)	3.22	0.68	154 (48%)	99 (31%)	36 (11%)	31 (10%)	3.18	0.70	3.20	3 rd	Agree
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation Criterion mean = 2.50					2.92	0.74					2.99	0.68			

Table 1 shows that all the items had weighted mean set scores that were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 except items 8 and 9. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 in the rank order of 1st to 8th were accepted as teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness. Items number 8 and 9 which ranked 9th and 10th positions with weighted mean set scores that were less than the criterion mean were not accepted. The aggregate mean scores of 2.87 and 3.01 for UBE and SSS teachers respectively showed that both respondents unanimously agreed on the teachers' professional competencies that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness.

Therefore, the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness include the following: skills in the utilization of modern technology in teaching; knowledge of subject matter; time management skills. Classroom management skills, teaching/communication skills; lesson note/lesson planning skills; students' assessment/evaluation skills; and ICT skills.

Research Question Two: What are the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Table 2: Mean scores, percentages, standard deviation and rank order analysis of the responses of UBE and SSS teachers on the

S/N	Teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed in Rivers State.	UBE Teachers N = 460						SSS Teachers N = 320						Mean Set	Rank Order	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}_1	STD	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}_2	STD			
1.	Irregular payment of salaries	56 (12%)	74 (16%)	98 (21%)	232 (51%)	1.90	0.68	40 (13%)	58 (18%)	91 (28%)	131 (41%)	2.02	0.73	1.96	10 th	Disagree
2.	Irregular promotion of teachers in Rivers State.	162 (35%)	224 (49%)	36 (8%)	38 (8%)	3.11	0.62	122 (38%)	154 (48%)	18 (6%)	26 (8%)	3.16	0.64	3.14	5 th	Agree
3.	None implementation of financial benefits after promotion.	190 (41%)	208 (45%)	34 (8%)	28 (6%)	3.22	0.59	110 (34%)	160 (50%)	20 (6%)	30 (10%)	3.09	0.66	3.16	3 rd	Agree
4.	None implementation of the national minimum way.	248 (54%)	182 (40%)	16 (3%)	14 (3%)	3.44	0.56	118 (37%)	148 (46%)	16 (5%)	38 (12%)	3.08	0.68	3.26	1 st	Agree
5.	Inadequate provision of capacity building programmes.	148 (32%)	174 (38%)	82 (18%)	56 (12%)	2.90	0.66	96 (30%)	134 (42%)	32 (10%)	58 (18%)	2.84	0.71	2.87	9 th	Agree
6.	Dilapidated school buildings/ poor working environment.	184 (40%)	158 (34%)	46 (10%)	72 (16%)	2.99	0.64	114 (36%)	139 (43%)	28 (9%)	39 (12%)	3.03	0.69	3.01	7 th	Agree
7.	Lack of subsidized accommodation/transportation scheme	172 (37%)	160 (35%)	58 (13%)	70 (15%)	2.94	0.65	98 (31%)	124 (39%)	36 (11%)	62 (19%)	2.81	0.72	2.88	8 th	Agree
8.	None recruitment of teachers since 2013.	186 (41%)	174 (38%)	66 (14%)	34 (7%)	3.11	0.62	126 (39%)	142 (44%)	24 (8%)	28 (9%)	3.14	0.65	3.13	4 th	Agree
9.	Irregular payment of allowances.	188 (41%)	180 (39%)	62 (13%)	30 (7%)	3.14	0.60	120 (37%)	134 (42%)	34 (11%)	32 (10%)	3.07	0.69	3.11	6 th	Agree
10.	None payment of gratuities/pensions	204 (44%)	212 (46%)	14 (3%)	30 (7%)	3.28	0.58	156 (49%)	102 (32%)	38 (12%)	24 (7%)	3.22	0.63	3.25	2 nd	Agree
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation					3.00	0.62					2.95	0.68			

teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Data on table 2 show that all the items had weighted mean set scores that were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 except item number 1. Items 2 to 10 in the rank order of 1st to 9th were accepted as teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed in Rivers State for global competitiveness of the teachers and our educational system. Item number 1 with mean set score that is less than the criterion mean was rejected or disagreed on by the respondents.

The aggregate mean scores of 3.00 and 2.95 for UBE teachers and SSS teachers respectively indicate that the respondents shared a common opinion on the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed in Rivers State for global competitiveness. Therefore the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness include the following: irregular promotion of teachers in Rivers State; non implementation of financial benefits after promotion; non implementation of the new national minimum way; inadequate provision of capacity building programmes; dilapidated school buildings/ poor working environment; lack of subsidized accommodation/transportation scheme; none recruitment of teachers since 2013; irregular payment of allowances and delayed payment of gratuities/ pensions to retired teachers in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test analysis of difference between the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for Global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Category	N	\bar{X}	STD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of sign.	Decision
UBE Teachers	460	2.92	0.74					
SSS Teachers	320	2.99	0.68	778	1.364	± 1.960	0.05	Null hypotheses retained

Results in table 3 show that the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers stood at 2.92 and 2.99 respectively. A closer look at these mean scores show that they are very close and did not vary so much from each other. Furthermore, at 778 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-score of 1.364 was by far less than the z-table or critical value of ± 1.960 . Hence, the researcher retained the null hypothesis. This implies that, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of UBE teachers and SSS teachers on the teachers' professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Table 4: z- test analysis of difference between the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers on the teachers’ conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Category	N	\bar{X}	STD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of sign.	Decision
UBE Teachers	460	3.00	0.62					Null
SSS Teachers	320	2.95	0.68	778	1.047	± 1.960	0.05	Hypotheses Retained

Results in table 4 indicate that the mean scores of UBE and SSS teachers stood at 3.00 and 2.95 respectively. These mean scores appear closely related. Furthermore, at 778 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-score of 1.047 was by far less than the z-table or critical value of ± 1.960 . The researcher therefore failed to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, it was established that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of UBE teachers and SSS teachers on the teachers’ conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that teachers’ professional competency skills that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness include the following: skills on the utilization of modern technology in teaching; knowledge of subject matter; time management skills; classroom management skills, teaching/communication skills; lesson note/ lesson planning skills; students’ assessment/ evaluation skills; and ICT skills. These skills are very important professional competency skills required by every teacher for effective and efficient performance in his/her job. In this 21st century, teachers need to be aware of how to utilize various modern technological gadgets in their lesson delivery. They need to be computer literate and possess ICT skills that can enable them to obtain information from the internet; send and receive messages via email, organize visual classes or zoom meetings with the students, project lesson in the classroom through the use of projectors etc. This will help them to be globally competitive in terms of possession of modern skills and competences required of a modern teacher.

Teachers’ knowledge of his/her subject matter is also very important, knowledge is dynamic hence teachers need to attend conferences, seminars and workshops to review and update their knowledge of their subject matter. According to Ojiako (2014) this will help the teachers to be well informed and teach the students the right thing rather than misinforming them. Time management and classroom management skills are vital in the display of professionalism in teaching. A teacher should be able to manage his time effectively and cover all aspects of his lesson within the stipulated time without rigmaroling on one thing at the expense of others. The classroom should be well organized and very conducive for every child to learn and for the teacher to teach. The sitting arrangements should be very adequate and instructional materials well aligned for improved instructional delivery. Most young teachers these days lack these time and classroom management skills and this impacts negatively on their teaching competency. Teaching is a form of communication to the students. Teaching/communication skills of teachers should be adequate to guarantee effective teaching/communication in the classroom Things like fluency in the language of instruction, gesticulation, voice modulation, eye contact etc are very important in effective teaching/learning in the classroom. Good hand writing, correct spelling and appropriate use of punctuation marks are necessary components of effective communication skills. Most teachers in Rivers State lack these skills. Some of them also lack the skills of preparing a good lesson note/lesson plan. It is important to note that not all the teachers in Rivers State are professionally trained. We have many auxiliary and non-professional teachers in the state.

Teaching job is one of the disciplines that is seen as all comers affair by our political leaders. They see employment of people into the teaching profession as a means of settling their mistresses, political thugs, relatives and friends who may or may not possess the requisite qualification. This affects the on-the-job performance of such teachers. Such teachers lack the professional competency skills, hence they will need retraining and capacity building programmes to develop these skills in them and help them to become globally competitive. Supporting this view Peter (2019) suggested programmes such as workshops, conferences, orientation programmes, mentoring, etc as ways of enhancing teachers' competency skills.

The study revealed that teachers' conditions of service that need to be reviewed for global competitiveness in Rivers State include: irregular promotion; non implementation of financial benefits after promotion; non implementation of the new national minimum wage; inadequate provision of capacity building programmes; poor working environment, none recruitment of teachers; lack of subsidized accommodation/transportation scheme; irregular payment of allowances; and delayed payment of gratuities/pensions. These conditions are very poor and very discouraging for better teachers' productivity and global competitiveness. One of the major things that encourages someone to remain in his/her profession apart from his/her professional training is the conditions of service for his/her job. It either encourages them to put in their best efforts or it discourages them from doing so. For teachers in Rivers State to become globally competitive they need exposure to conditions of service comparable to what is obtainable in other parts of the world. This will enable them to adopt international best practices in their service delivery.

Teachers in River State are exposed to very poor and very discouraging conditions of service. They don't enjoy regular promotions and when they are promoted, the financial benefit will not be effected. The last time teachers were promoted in Rivers State was in 2010. That is 13 years ago. Implying that teachers in Rivers State have been receiving the same salary since 2010 irrespective of the hyper inflation rate in the state and all over Nigeria. This is very bad and it has weakened the morale of many teachers as many of them had to engage in other activities like street trading, farming, and other odd jobs in other to survive with their families. This situation has been worsened by the refusal of the state government to implement the new national minimum wage for civil servants in the state. These conditions weaken their financial capacity and ability to take care of their families, hence they express dissatisfaction with their job.

This same situation is equally extended to retired teachers. Their gratuities and pensions are delayed for years and most retired teachers did not get theirs before they died. Other allowances are not regularly paid. These findings are supported by Alarm and Fand (2011), Aina (1992) and Afolabi (2013) who affirmed that teachers' conditions of service are marred by arrears of unpaid salaries, allowances an benefits. It has been observed that the last time teachers were recruited in the state was in 2013 by Governor Rotimi Amaechi's administration. Since then till date, many of the teachers have retired, some have died and many have left the profession for other greener pastures. This has left so much work load to the few teachers remaining in the service. With increasing enrolment every year as a result of the UBE programme, the student/teacher ratio has gone so high. The work load is over bearing on the teachers in the state (Ibunge, 2022). In some schools two to three classes are merged for one teacher without any motivation or incentive. These conditions should be reviewed if teachers in Rivers State are to become globally competitive.

The welfare of teachers in Rivers State is serious down graded. There is no subsidized accommodation or transport scheme for them. Cost of living in Rivers State is very high. There is high cost of accommodation, high cost of transportation and high cost of food stuffs. The salaries of teachers in Rivers State can not carry them throughout the month as most of them are indebted to their landlords

and their banks. A hungry man, they say is an angry man. Teachers in Rivers State are hungry and angry and they lack global competitiveness.

There is equally inadequate provision of capacity building programmes. Government through her agencies seldomly organize capacity building programmes for teachers in the state. This does not encourage retraining of teachers. The provision of high quality in-service training is very important in upgrading and updating the professional competency of teachers and in motivating them to work hard. According to Afolabi (2013) current availability of in-service training is poor. Teachers are not quite motivated to participate in such programmes. These conditions of teachers' service in Rivers State is annoying, provocative and dehumanizing. There is an urgent need for these conditions of service to be reviewed for global competitiveness of teachers in the state.

CONCLUSION

The conditions of service teachers in Rivers State are exposed to are very inadequate. Their poor salaries and allowances are not regularly reviewed to motivate them to work hard. Adequate incentives are not given to them and teachers are not regularly recruited to replace those who have left the profession. These factors affect their morale, professional competency skills and global competitiveness. Hence, teachers in Rivers State are deficient in professional competency skills marred by unconducive working environment and poor conditions of service. Therefore, to become globally competitive, there is an urgent need to enhance teachers' professional competency skills and conditions of service in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made thus:-

1. Professional competency skills of teachers in Rivers State should be reviewed with the aim of designing and implementing well structured capacity building programme to enhance the professional competency skills for global competitiveness.
2. The government should adequately review the conditions of service of teachers in Rivers State to enhance their global competitiveness.
3. Rivers State government should urgently employ more teachers to reduce the overbearing workload of teachers in the State.

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