

## **AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF TEACHERS IN UNITY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**

**Paul Mukoro Egboro**

Department of Curriculum Studies

Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education, Sagbama, Bayelsa State -Nigeria

[pmegboro@yahoo.com](mailto:pmegboro@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

*The study set out to examine the availability and utilization of teachers in Unity Schools in Nigeria. The population of the study was all the teachers in the 104 Unity Schools in the six geo-political zones of North East, North Central, North West, South South, South West, and South East of the country. Specifically, 3447 teachers in 36 (35%) out of the 104 Unity Schools in three geo-political zones of South South, South West, and South East were sampled. A Self -designed checklist was used to collect data for the study. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and bar-charts. Teachers' availability and utilization was examined in terms of distribution by qualifications, teacher-student ratio using the Full Time Equivalent Teachers-Students ratio (FTETSR). The research findings revealed that teachers were over utilized in Unity Schools in Nigeria with teacher- student ratio of 1:70. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Federal Ministry of Education should always make an equitable distribution of teachers to schools on the basis of school size/population and also recruit more teachers especially in the core subjects of Mathematics and English Language.*

**Keywords:** Unity Schools, Teacher, Availability, Utilization

### **Introduction**

The Federal Government Colleges also known as Unity Schools were established in the 1960s and 1970s. The reason for the creation of the Federal Government Colleges, among others, was to guarantee national integration among Nigerian children if given the opportunity at a very tender age to live, learn and play together in ideal education environment. The solidarity and spirit d'corps exhibited by the alumni and alumnae of King's and Queen's colleges nationally were the triggers that led to the birth of the Federal Government Colleges which are today referred to as Unity Schools with a common motto; 'Pro Unitatae' (Okoro, 2015).

The first sets of Federal Government Colleges were three in number established in 1964. They were located as follows: one in the Eastern Region, at Okposi; the other in the Mid-Western Region at Warri and the third in Sokoto in the Northern Region. These colleges and many others established later were lavished with resources, properly maintained and staffed with the best teachers available at the time. They were meant to be models to be copied by the various State Governments. They produced men and women with broad-mindset from various backgrounds and culture with a common bond of unity – the school tie – that transcends tribalism and ethnicity.

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Today, the Unity Schools have become victims of rot and neglect; the Federal Government appears to have abandoned its responsibility, parent-teachers' associations hire and fire teachers for Federal Government Colleges; the nation is so often treated with unpalatable stories involving the headships of Federal Government Colleges and Chairpersons of Parent-teachers Associations of their schools (Eno- Abasi, 2015).

According to Ogwo (2005) the teacher is essentially a facilitator of learning. He plays an indispensable role in the process of teaching and learning. In other words, he is the change agent that harnesses other resources for production function.

Availability and effective utilization of teachers are regarded as prerequisite for promotion of organized, purposeful and better planned education; hence the practical and theoretical problems for all fields of education are centered on teachers. It is because of this that Akpotu (2018) opined that for any educational programme to succeed, adequate provision should be made for teachers and make them relevant within the limit of their area of specialization. Brandt (2015) had emphasized the importance of teachers in the education enterprise. He said that teachers next to students were the largest and most expensive inputs. They are required in large numbers but there is also the critical need to have the right quality. Ayodele (2007) has argued that no matter how efficient and effective an administrator is, he hardly achieves success without the support and cooperation of well-qualified and dedicated staff. Highly qualified teaching staff is education best resource and asset. Aiherobolana (2005) ascertained that the school is an essentially human organization because it has human operatives. The need for adequate staffing is clearly demonstrated by the way secondary school students continue to move from one school to another in search of schools with better qualified teachers. Akinsolu (2010) discovered that majority of the teachers hold NCE certificate in Osun State Public Secondary Schools.

Utilization according to Ngurukwem (2005) is the proportion of the available time a system is operating. In terms of educational resources, it could refer to the extent of available resources that are put to use, as the extent to which an educational institution attains her objectives is directly linked to the rate at which the available educational resources are well utilized. According to UNESCO (2015) standard and that of National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) recommended a minimum of 18 periods per week and a maximum of 22 periods per teacher per week and that the teacher-students ratio should be 1:40. Tijani (2011) in his own study of supply and utilization of teachers for students' academic performance in Kwara State Secondary Schools, discovered that the average number of periods per teacher in the State is 15 (fifteen) periods which shows that, all teachers in the state are under- utilized. Nwagwu (1998) study revealed that many States of the country secondary school teachers teach as many as 30 periods a week that is an average of 6 periods a day. In short they teach from the time they arrive to the time school closes. Also, Akinsolu, (2011) in his study on teachers' utilization in Ondo State Public Secondary Schools, he discovered a FTETSR of 1:67 which shows over-utilization of teachers in the State.

Over the years, the Federal and State Governments have adopted various approaches at one time or the other for the distribution of teachers to schools in Nigeria. These approaches include: the class size, teachers- student ratio and teachers' workload. From the aforementioned facts, the researcher was therefore prompted to investigate the extent to which teachers are provided and effectively utilized in Unity Schools in Nigeria

### **Statement of the Problem**

The situation in Unity Schools today is depressing due to inadequate teachers. Out of 27,000 workers of Federal Ministry of Education, 23110 are said to be working in the Unity Schools and out of this number only 6000 are teaching staff (Ezekwesili 2006). The question is how equally distributed are these 6000 teachers to all the Unity Schools? How well-utilized are the teachers? Answers to these questions were provided in this study. Hence the problem of the study is to find out whether the Federal Ministry of Education is meeting the demand of Unity Schools in terms of teachers' availability and when available whether they are well utilized by the schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the state of teachers' availability in Unity schools in Nigeria?
2. What is the distribution pattern of teachers by qualification in Unity Schools in Nigeria?
3. What are the average weekly periods of teachers in Unity Schools?
4. What is the Full Time Equivalent Teachers - Students' Ratio (FTETSR) in Unity Schools in Nigeria?

### **Methods and Procedure**

The study adopted an *Ex-post facto* research design and it was descriptive in nature. The population of the study was all the teachers in the 104 Unity Schools in the six geo-political zones of the country. A sample of 3447 teachers in 36 (35%) out of the 104 Unity Schools in three geo-political zones of South South, South West, and South East were selected through the Area Sampling technique. A Researcher's self-designed checklist titled: "Availability of Resources in Unity Schools in Nigeria" was used to collect data for the study. The data collected were organized, tabulated and analyzed using percentages and bar-charts.

### **Presentation of Results**

The results are presented according to Research Questions:  
Research Question 1: What is the state of teachers' availability in Unity Schools in Nigeria?

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**Table1. Analysis of Teachers in Unity Schools**

S/N	Name of School	Teaching Staff	%
1	F.G.G.C. Oyo	103	51.7
2	F.G.C, Ogbomoso	95	54.6
3	F.G.G.C, Sagamu	99	58.2
4	F.G.G.C, Odogbolu	97	46
5	F.G.G.C, Akure	90	51.1
6	F.G.G.C, Idoani	60	43
7	F.G.C, Ikole	56	52
8	F.G.G.C, Efonalaye	57	47
9	F.G.G.C, Ipetumodu	82	58
10	F.G.C, Ikirun	93	56
11	Kings' College Lagos	152	55
12	F.G.C, Ijanikin	165	61
13	F.G.G.C Benin	120	62.5
14	F.G.C Ibillo	70	66
15	F.G.C Warri	135	62
16	F.G.G.C Igbuso	90	55
17	F.G.G.C Calabar	95	44
18	F.G.C Ikom	84	51
19	F.G.G.C Ikotekpene	80	48
20	F.G.CjkotoIbitong	90	57
21	F.G.C Port Harcourt	124	56
22	F.G.G.C Abuloma	120	60
23	F.G.G.C Imiringi	50	56
24	F.G.G.C Odi	60	63
25	F.G.G.C Onitsha	118	60
26	F.G.C Mise	94	56
27	F.G.C Ohafla	80	57
28	F.G.G.C Umuahia	105	55
29	F.G.C Enugu	95	59
30	F.G.G.C Okigwe	75	65
31	F.G.G.C Owerri	110	62
32	F.G.G.C Okrofi	104	61
33	F.G.G.C Lejja	80	65
34	F.G.G.C Ogoja	83	59
35	F.S.TC Awka	120	68
36	F.S.T.C Orozo	107	65
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3447</b>	<b>53.4</b>

*Source: Computed from Fieldwork, 2019*

Table 1: shows the state of teachers’ availability in the sampled Unity Schools. It reveals that there were 3447 (53.4%) teaching staff. The result indicates an Average in the state of teachers’ availability in Unity Schools in Nigeria.

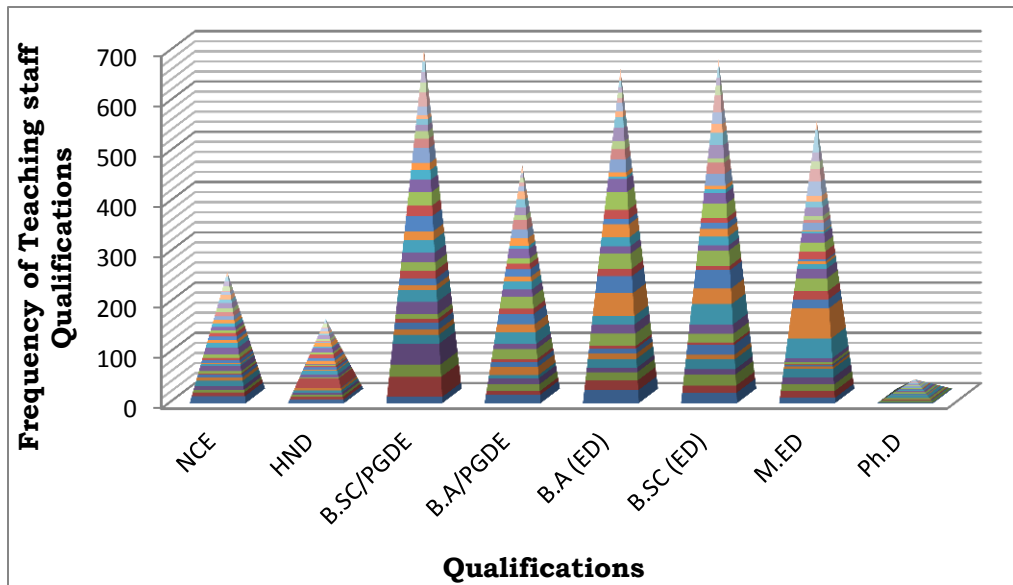
Research Question 2: What is the distribution pattern of teachers by qualification in Unity Schools in Nigeria?

**Table 2: Distribution of Teachers by Qualifications**

ITEMS	NCE	HND	B.SC/PGDE	B.A/PGDE	B.A(ED)	B.SC(ED)	M.ED	PH.D	TOTAL
N	258	138	690	462	645	669	555	30	3447
%	8	4	20	13	19	19	16	1	100

Source: Computed from Fieldwork, 2019

Table 2: shows the distribution of teachers by qualifications in Unity Schools in Nigeria. Out of 3447 teachers, 258 are with NCE representing 8%. 138 has HND representing 4%, 690 B.Sc /PGDE representing 20%, 462 has B.A/PGDE representing 13%, 645 (19%) has B.A (Ed), 669 (19%) has B.Sc. (Ed), while 555 (16%) and 36 (1%) has M.Ed. and Ph.D. respectively. The result reveals that majority of teachers in Unity Schools have teaching qualifications as only 4% has HND.



**Figure 1: Bar- Chart showing the Distribution of Teachers by Qualifications.**

Research Question 3: What are the average weekly periods of teachers in Unity Schools in Nigeria?

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To answer this question, data on the various subjects offered in Unity schools were collected through the checklist. Data on the number of periods assigned weekly to the various subject teachers in the schools were also collected. Average weekly periods is the number of periods taught by a teacher per week in a school. It is computed by dividing the total number of periods in a school by the number of subjects offered in the school (Adeyemi, 2004).

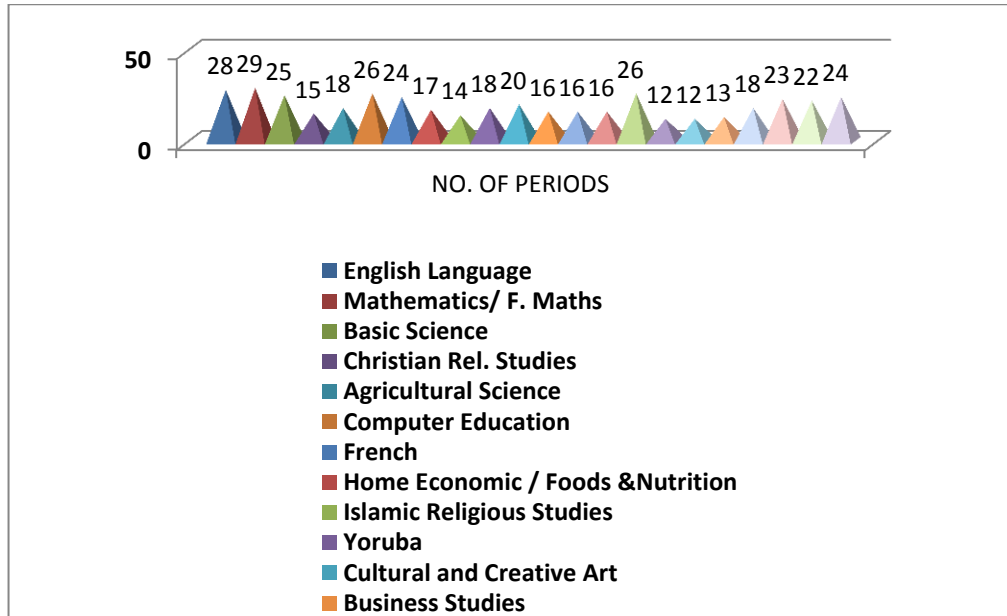
**Table 3: Average Weekly Periods of Teachers in Unity Schools**

S/N	SUBJECTS	NO. OF PERIODS	WEEKLY
1.	English Language	28	Weekly
2.	Mathematics/ F. Maths	29	Weekly
3.	Basic Science	25	Weekly
4.	Christian Rel. Studies	15	Weekly
5.	Agricultural Science	18	Weekly
6.	Computer Education	26	Weekly
7.	French	24	Weekly
8.	Home Economic / Foods & Nutrition	17	Weekly
9..	Islamic Religious Studies	14	Weekly
10.	Yoruba	18	Weekly
11	Cultural and Creative Art	20	Weekly
12.	Business Studies	16	Weekly
13.	Chemistry	16	Weekly
14.	Physics	16	Weekly
15.	Biology	26	Weekly
16	Financial Accounting	12	Weekly
17	Commerce	12	Weekly
18.	Government	13	Weekly
19	Geography	18	Weekly
20	Technical Drawing/Basic Technology	23	Weekly
21	Economics	22	Weekly
22	Civics/Social Studies.	24	Weekly
	<b>Total</b>	<b>432</b>	
<b>Average Periods Weekly = 20</b>			

*Source: Computed from Fieldwork, 2019*

Findings from Table 3 reveals that periods allocation ranges from 29 to 12 with English Language and Mathematics having the highest number of periods of 28 and 29 respectively while teachers teaching other subjects have lesser periods to teach with

Financial Accounting and Commerce having the lowest with 12 periods each. The Table revealed that some teachers were under- utilized while others were over-utilized. The average weekly period of teachers in Unity Schools in Nigeria is 20 periods per week.



**Figure 2: Bar chart showing Weekly Periods Allocations according to Subjects in Unity Schools**

**Research Question 4: What is the Full Time Equivalent Teacher- Students Ratio in Unity Schools (FTETSR)?**

To obtain a more realistic indication of the rate of utilization of teachers, an analytical calculation of Roach (1995) as used by Akinsolu (2011) was adopted using the Full-Time Equivalent Students Teacher ratio (FTESTR) to determine the teacher student's ratio in Unity Schools. The Full-Time Teacher Equivalent (FTE) was first computed by summing up the total number of periods taught in the schools which was divided by the normal teaching periods of one teacher (i.e. National maximum teacher workload recommended). This method provides an in-depth information on the over and under-utilization of teachers within the system. This is shown in Table 4a:

**Table.4a: Full-Time Teacher Equivalent (FTE) in Unity schools in Nigeria.**

Total Periods in Unity Schools	National maximum Teacher Workload	Calculated Full-Time Teacher Equivalent (FTE)
432	22	19.6

*Source: Computed from Fieldwork, 2019*

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The Full-Time Equivalent Student- Teacher Ratio (FTESTR) was calculated by dividing the number of students in each school by the Full-Time Teacher Equivalent (FTE). And the FTESTR value for each school was added together and the result was divided by the total number of schools. (Akinsolu (2011) This is shown in Table 4b.

**Table 4b: Analysis of Full Time Equivalent Teacher-Student Ratio in Unity schools in Nigeria.**

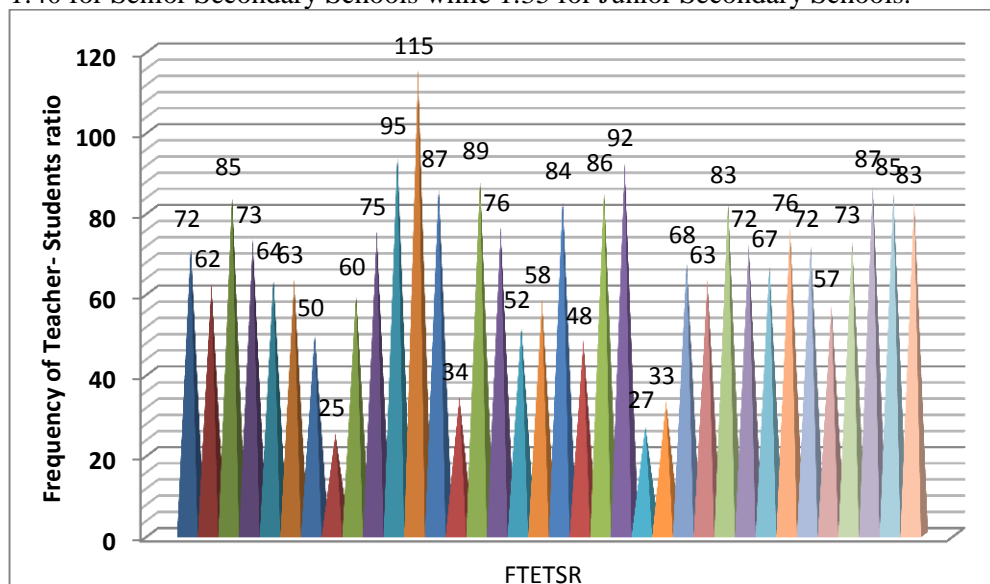
TOTAL NO. OF SCHOOLS SAMPLED	TOTAL NO. OF TEACHERS	TOTAL NO, OF STUDENTS	FTESTR TOTAL
36	3447	33248	2510

*Source: Computed from Fieldwork, 2019*

$$\frac{2510}{36} = 70$$

Table 4b: shows the utilization rate of teachers in Unity Schools using the Full Time Equivalent Teachers-Students Ratio (FTETSR). The FTETSR for each school was computed and the whole value was added together and the result divided by the total number of schools. This gives a value of 1:70.

The finding shows that a single teacher in the Unity Schools in Nigeria has 70 students to cater for. This implies over utilization on the part of teachers in the sampled schools as the ratio is higher than the recommended National students-teacher’s ratio of 1:40 for Senior Secondary Schools while 1:35 for Junior Secondary Schools.



**Figure 3: Bar-chart showing Teacher-Students ratio in Unity Schools**



### **Discussion of Results**

The study reveals that there is 3447 teaching staff in the sampled Unity Schools representing 53.4%, indicating average status in terms of teachers' availability. This finding corresponds with Akpotu (2018) who opined that for any educational programme to succeed, adequate provision should be made for teachers and make them relevant within the limit of their area of specialization. Also similar, was the assertion of Brandt (2015) that the importance of teachers in the education enterprise cannot be over stressed. He said that teachers next to students were the largest and most expensive inputs. They are required in large numbers but there is also the critical need to have the right quality.

The distribution of teachers by qualifications in Unity Schools has shown that over 94% of teachers in Unity Schools have teaching qualifications. This is in accordance with ESA report of 2005 that requires that majority of Nigerian secondary school teachers should hold Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Education This finding is in agreement with Ayodele (2007) and Aiherbolana (2005) assertion that highly qualified teaching staff is education best resources and assets. The need for adequate staffing is clearly demonstrated by the way secondary school students continue to move from one school to another in search of schools with better qualified teachers. The result is also at variance with the result of Akinsolu (2010) who reported that majority of the teachers hold the NCE certificate in Osun State Public Secondary Schools. The high number of teachers who had B.Ed. qualification was probably due to the fact that teaching have been accorded the status of professionalism and no teacher is expected to teach in Nigerian schools without teaching qualification. Result of this study is however not surprising as these are Federal Government owned institutions where quality and quantity should not be compromised as the Unity Schools were set up as a model for other secondary schools owned by the State and Private individuals

The average weekly periods of teachers in Unity Schools in Nigeria is 20 periods. This shows that teachers are optimally utilized in relation to period's allocation. This result is at variance with the view of Tijani (2011) who reported the average number of periods per teacher in Kwara State as 15 periods which shows that all teachers in the state are under- utilized. However, Nwagwu (1998) study is contrary to Tijani (2011) findings which many States of the country secondary school teachers teach as many as 30 periods a week that is an average of 6 periods a day. In short, they teach from the time they arrive to the time school closes.

The study revealed an average of the Full Time Equivalent Teachers-Student Ratio of 1:70. The finding depicts that a single teacher in Unity Schools of southern Nigeria have 70 students to cater for while teaching. This implies over utilization on the part of teachers in the schools as at the time of the study. This result ran contrary to UNESCO standard and that of National Policy on Education specifying a maximum of 40 students per teacher (FRN, 2014 and UNESCO, 2015).

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### **Conclusion**

The following conclusion has been drawn on the basis of the findings of the study. The Unity Schools in Nigeria are under staffed, have qualified teaching staffs who are over-utilized.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Ministry of Education should always make an equitable distribution of teachers to schools based on school size (i.e students' population).
2. Federal Government should recruit and supply more teachers especially in the core subjects like Sciences, Mathematics and English Language.
3. Education data bank should be established in Unity schools to re address the data related problems such as availability, accuracy, obsolescence, incompleteness and access. This will make realistic educational plans to emerge

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