



TEACHERS' COMMITMENT AS CORRELATE OF TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined teachers' commitment as a correlate of teachers' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 5,147 teachers in the 462 public secondary schools in Delta State. The study had a sample of 515 teachers. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of teachers from each of the education zones in Delta State. The instruments for data collection were two sets of self-structured questionnaires. The instruments underwent a pilot test to assess their reliability. The Cronbach Alpha statistic was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Based on the reliability test results, Cluster I had a reliability score of 0.811 and Cluster II had 0.816. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The study found that affective commitment has a very strong positive correlation with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State, implying that teachers who are emotionally attached are more likely to find fulfillment, remain motivated and perform effectively. This emotional bond fosters resilience, engagement and a sense of purpose that enhances overall school performance. Conversely, the weak correlation between continuance commitment and job satisfaction suggests that teachers who remain in their jobs primarily for economic or survival reasons tend to experience low morale and disengagement. The study recommended that the Delta State Ministry of Education should promote supportive work environments by improving teacher welfare through better working conditions, recognition programs and participatory decision-making processes that strengthen affective commitment and job satisfaction. Principals should implement continuous professional development programs to help teachers acquire new skills, enhance instructional quality and build a stronger sense of belonging and emotional connection to their schools.

Keywords: Teachers, Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Schools

1.1 Introduction

Secondary school education serves as a crucial foundation for national growth and development, providing learners with the intellectual, moral and vocational competencies required for higher education and productive citizenship. It equips students with analytical and problem-solving skills essential for innovation and economic progress (Okafor, 2021). Countries that invest in secondary education experience higher productivity, improved governance and sustainable development. In Nigeria, secondary education bridges the gap between basic and tertiary levels, nurturing responsible and skilled youth capable of contributing to the nation's socio-economic advancement. However, the effectiveness of secondary education largely depends on teachers, who are the main drivers of knowledge transmission and learner development.

Teachers play a central role in determining the quality and effectiveness of public secondary schools through their instructional practices, mentorship and professional dedication (Eze, 2020). Their competence, motivation and welfare significantly influence students' academic outcomes and the overall school climate. Teachers serve as role models, curriculum implementers and facilitators of students' cognitive and emotional growth. When adequately supported and motivated, they foster creativity, innovation and discipline among learners. However, when they face poor working conditions, low morale and limited recognition, their effectiveness declines, thereby reducing institutional productivity. Hence, the success of any educational system depends significantly on teachers' job satisfaction.

Teachers' job satisfaction refers to the degree of contentment teachers experience concerning their professional responsibilities, environment and rewards. According to Adeyemi (2022), teachers' job satisfaction is the positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's teaching experiences and outcomes. Similarly, Nwankwo (2021) defined it as the level to which teachers' professional expectations align with the realities of their work environment and organizational support. These definitions emphasize that job satisfaction is both a psychological and emotional response influenced by intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition and responsibility and extrinsic factors such as salary, administrative support and working conditions in public secondary schools.

Teachers' job satisfaction is critical to the effective functioning of public secondary schools as it enhances productivity, classroom engagement and overall school performance (Ikechukwu, 2023). Satisfied teachers demonstrate greater enthusiasm, creativity and emotional stability, leading to improved student outcomes and institutional harmony. It also reduces absenteeism, turnover and burnout while fostering professional commitment and teamwork. Furthermore, when teachers are content with their work conditions, they become more receptive to innovation, educational reforms and collaborative teaching practices. Therefore, improving teachers' job satisfaction is fundamental for achieving academic excellence, sustainable educational growth and national development goals in public secondary schools.

Poor teachers' job performance has become a major challenge affecting the quality of education in Africa and Nigeria. According to UNESCO (2022), teacher absenteeism rates in sub-Saharan Africa range from 20% to 27%, significantly disrupting instructional delivery and learning

outcomes. In Nigeria, studies by Nwosu (2023) revealed that inadequate teacher motivation, delayed salaries and poor supervision contribute to low classroom engagement and poor student performance. For instance, WAEC reports from 2019 to 2023 showed a consistent decline in pass rates in key subjects, such as Mathematics and English, attributed to teacher demotivation and poor instructional quality. These challenges collectively hinder the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure quality education.

In Delta State, poor job satisfaction among teachers manifests as low morale, absenteeism and declining instructional quality. Many teachers express frustration over poor remuneration, lack of promotion, inadequate instructional materials and poor infrastructural facilities (Oghene, 2022). The situation has contributed to students' poor performance in national examinations such as WAEC and NECO. Additionally, excessive administrative workload, favoritism in promotions and limited career advancement opportunities have worsened teachers' dissatisfaction. Such conditions not only affect teachers' effectiveness but also discourage professionalism and long-term service retention in public schools, thereby posing a significant challenge to the educational development of Delta State.

To address these challenges, the Delta State government has introduced various measures aimed at improving teachers' welfare and satisfaction. These include prompt payment of salaries, teacher retraining programmes, provision of instructional materials and infrastructural rehabilitation (Efe, 2023). Moreover, initiatives such as the Delta State Education Development Initiative have focused on enhancing teachers' capacity and improving administrative transparency. However, issues of uneven resource distribution and limited recognition of teachers' contributions persist. For sustainable educational progress, the state must strengthen these interventions to ensure teachers' welfare and satisfaction are adequately maintained, thereby fostering improved productivity and enhanced teachers' commitment across public secondary schools.

Teachers' commitment refers to the emotional attachment, sense of responsibility and loyalty teachers demonstrate toward their profession, students and institutions. According to Adebayo (2021), teachers' commitment is the willingness of educators to invest effort, time and passion in fulfilling institutional goals and improving students' learning outcomes. Similarly, Chukwu (2022) described it as the degree to which teachers identify with the values of their schools and remain motivated to contribute to their success. Committed teachers exhibit persistence, dedication and professional ethics that enhance educational quality and organizational effectiveness. Among others, two major types of teachers' commitment include affective commitment and continuance commitment.

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment and identification that teachers have towards their profession and the organization for which they work. It involves a strong sense of belonging and loyalty based on positive experiences and alignment with organizational values, as noted by Adeniji (2021). This type of commitment reflects the teacher's personal involvement and investment in their role, where they derive satisfaction and fulfillment from their interactions with students and colleagues. This commitment is characterized by a psychological bond that teachers develop with their students, colleagues and the overall school environment, influencing

their motivation and dedication. In this study, it involves teachers' emotional involvement in their work, where they feel a deep sense of pride and fulfillment in making a positive impact on students' lives and contributing to their development.

Affective commitment can significantly influence teachers' job satisfaction in Nigerian schools by fostering a positive and supportive work environment. Orunbon et al., (2023) posited that teachers who have a strong emotional attachment to their profession and school community are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. This emotional connection provides them with a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their roles as educators, enhancing their overall well-being and motivation. Moreover, Ennida and Allouani (2023) pointed out that affective commitment enhances teachers' engagement and commitment to their students' academic and personal growth. Teachers who feel emotionally invested in their students' success are more motivated to invest extra effort in their teaching practices and to support students both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, affective commitment fosters a supportive school culture where teachers collaborate effectively with colleagues and administrators. This collaborative environment promotes professional growth, mutual respect and a sense of belonging among educators, contributing to a positive work atmosphere and increased job satisfaction.

Similar to affective commitment, continuance commitment is also expected to affect teachers' job satisfaction. According to Kartiko, et al., (2023), continuance commitment refers to the attachment that teachers have to their jobs due to the perceived costs associated with leaving, such as loss of benefits, financial security, or pension plans. This type of commitment is characterized by teachers' awareness of the practical benefits they derive from staying in their current teaching position, outweighing the costs of leaving. Besides, Okeke-Ezeanyanwu, et al., (2023) defined continuance commitment as teachers' perceptions of the sacrifices they would have to make if they were to leave their current job, such as seniority, accumulated leave, or vested pension benefits. In this study, it reflects the perception that teachers may feel limited in their alternative job opportunities or career paths, leading them to remain in their current position.

Continuance commitment appears to have a relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in schools, as it creates a sense of stability and security. Teachers who have high continuance commitment are likely to stay in their jobs due to the perceived costs associated with leaving, such as the loss of benefits or financial security. While this type of commitment may not directly enhance job satisfaction in terms of intrinsic motivation or fulfillment, it contributes to job stability and reduces turnover rates. Moreover, Muhamad, et. al., (2023) also stated that continuance commitment can impact teachers' job satisfaction by providing a sense of predictability and reliability in their career paths. Teachers may feel more secure in their roles and less anxious about their future job prospects, which can positively influence their overall job satisfaction. However, a high level of continuance commitment can also potentially limit teachers' career mobility and opportunities for professional growth if they feel trapped in their current position due to perceived costs of leaving. As a result, while continuance commitment provides a form of job security, it is essential for educational leaders to balance stability with opportunities for career advancement and professional development to enhance teachers' overall job satisfaction in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teachers' commitment is a crucial determinant of the success and sustainability of any educational system, as it influences the quality of instruction, students' academic achievement and overall school performance. In recent years, however, there has been growing concern over the declining level of teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Delta State. Many teachers display a lack of enthusiasm, poor attendance, reduced dedication to instructional duties and minimal involvement in co-curricular activities. This decline is often attributed to poor job satisfaction arising from inadequate remuneration, limited career advancement opportunities, unfavourable working conditions and lack of recognition for professional contributions. The situation has led to reduced teaching effectiveness, student underachievement and an overall decline in educational quality within the state.

Despite government efforts through training, promotions and welfare programmes, many teachers in Delta State remain dissatisfied and less committed to their professional responsibilities. The disparity between teachers' job expectations and the realities of their work environment has created frustration, low morale and high turnover intentions among teachers. Low job satisfaction contributes to absenteeism, apathy and a general decline in teachers' performance, which in turn affects students' learning outcomes. This growing trend raises concerns about the extent to which teachers' job satisfaction influences their level of commitment in the teaching profession. There is, therefore, a pressing need to investigate the relationship between teachers' commitment and job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What is the correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Affective commitment does not significantly relate to teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State
2. Continuance commitment does not significantly relate to teachers' job satisfaction in secondary public schools in Delta State.

2. METHODS

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all 5,147 teachers in the 462 public secondary schools in Delta State. The study had a sample of 515 teachers. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10% of teachers from each education zone in Delta State. The instruments for data collection were two questionnaires structured by the researcher. The questionnaire is in two sections A and B. Section

A is demographic variables of respondents, like “Name of School”. Section B is titled "Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (TCQ)" and is divided into Clusters I and II. Cluster I sought information on affective commitment and cluster II sought information on continuance commitment. Each cluster has 10 items and is structured on a four-point scale rating: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted using a sample of 20 teachers from public secondary schools in Edo State. The teachers' responses were analyzed to measure the internal consistency of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha statistic was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Based on the reliability test results, Cluster I had a reliability score of 0.811, and Cluster II had 0.816. At the end of the administration and collection of the questionnaire, 469 (91.07%) of the copies were administered and returned, resulting in 464 copies, which gave a 90.10% return rate. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

3. RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State

Variables	Number of Respondents	Affective Commitment	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	Remarks
Affective Commitment	464	1	0.846	Very Strong
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	464	0.846	1	Correlation

Table 1 showed the results of the Pearson correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result revealed that the r-value is 0.846. This showed that there is a very strong positive correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Research Question Two: What is the correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State

Variables	Number of Respondents	Continuance Commitment	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	Remarks
Continuance Commitment	464	1	0.443	Weak
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	464	0.443	1	Correlation

Table 2 showed the results of the Pearson correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result revealed that the r-value is 0.443. This showed that there is a weak correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Hypothesis Five

H0: Affective commitment does not significantly relate to teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State

Table 3: Summary of test of hypothesis five on Pearson correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State

Variables	Number of Respondents	Affective Commitment	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	P-value	Remarks
Affective Commitment	464	1	0.846	0.00	Very Strong
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	464	0.846	1		Correlation

Table 3 showed the summary of test of hypothesis five on Pearson correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result revealed that the r-value is 0.846. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This signified that there is a significant and very strong positive correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Hypothesis Two

H0: Continuance commitment does not significantly relate to teachers' job satisfaction in secondary public schools in Delta State

Table 4: Summary of test of hypothesis six on Pearson correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State

Variables	Number of Respondents	Continuance Commitment	Teachers' Job Satisfaction	P-value	Remarks
Continuance Commitment	464	1	0.443	0.41	Weak
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	464	0.443	1		Correlation

Table 4 showed the summary of test of hypothesis six on Pearson correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result revealed that the r-value is 0.443. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that there is a weak correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State.

4. Discussion of the Findings

There is a very strong positive correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The finding that there is a very strong positive correlation between affective commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State suggests that teachers who are emotionally attached to and identify closely with their schools tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. Affective commitment refers to the emotional bond and genuine sense of belonging an employee feels toward their institution. In this case, teachers who feel a strong emotional connection to their schools are more likely to derive satisfaction from their roles, feel fulfilled by their contributions and remain motivated in their professional responsibilities. The strength of this correlation implies that emotional attachment is a major determinant of how teachers perceive their work experiences in Delta State.

Supporting this finding, research has consistently highlighted affective commitment as a powerful predictor of job satisfaction in the education sector. Akif (2021) findings attested that when teachers develop emotional bonds with their institutions, they are more likely to invest their personal values and energy into their work, thereby finding joy and meaning in what they do. Gautam (2020) affirmed that affective commitment enhances teachers' resilience and engagement, allowing them to navigate challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate resources and systemic issues with a greater sense of purpose. Teachers with high affective commitment often perceive their work as intrinsically rewarding, which fosters enthusiasm and reduces turnover intentions.

This emotional attachment not only improves individual job satisfaction but also contributes to a positive school climate and increased student achievement.

However, while affective commitment generally correlates positively with job satisfaction, there are critical concerns that should be acknowledged. In environments with limited institutional support or poor working conditions, Subbiyantoro et al., (2022) stated that highly committed teachers may experience emotional dissonance or burnout when their ideals do not align with reality. Teachers with strong emotional ties to their schools may overextend themselves, sacrificing personal well-being for the sake of their perceived loyalty or responsibility. Furthermore, Schimank (2022) found that excessive affective commitment can sometimes inhibit mobility, as teachers might resist seeking better opportunities due to emotional loyalty, even in the face of stagnation or professional dissatisfaction. This paradox suggests that while affective commitment is crucial, it must be balanced with institutional efforts to create enabling environments that foster satisfaction and professional growth.

There is a weak correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. The finding that there is a weak correlation between continuance commitment and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State indicates that teachers who remain in their positions primarily because of perceived costs of leaving—such as lack of alternative employment, pension benefits, or economic insecurity—do not necessarily experience high levels of job satisfaction. Continuance commitment is a form of organizational attachment based not on emotional connection or identification with the institution, but on the perceived necessity of staying due to financial, social, or personal constraints. The weakness of the correlation suggests that even when teachers feel obligated to remain, this does not strongly influence how satisfied they feel in their roles.

This finding is supported by previous studies, which suggest that continuance commitment is often driven by extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation and thus has a limited impact on job satisfaction. Othman et al., (2019) found that employees who stay because they "have to" rather than because they "want to" tend to exhibit lower enthusiasm and engagement. For teachers, remaining in a job out of fear of unemployment or a desire to secure retirement benefits may lead to emotional disengagement and a sense of powerlessness, which in turn limits job satisfaction. Agbionu et al., (2018) found that teachers under continuance commitment may fulfill their duties out of necessity rather than passion, leading to mere compliance rather than active contribution. This is particularly relevant in Delta State, where public school teachers may face limited employment alternatives due to economic constraints or geographic limitations.

Nevertheless, some scholars argue that continuance commitment can have stabilizing effects in organizational settings. Yusuf (2020) found that it may reduce turnover, ensure experienced personnel remain within the school system and provide continuity in teaching. While this does not equate to increased satisfaction, it may nonetheless contribute to institutional stability. Additionally, in some cases, continuance commitment can act as a transitional form of attachment; over time, necessity-based commitment may evolve into more emotionally driven forms such as affective or normative commitment. However, this shift often depends on changes in the school

environment, such as improved leadership, recognition, or professional development opportunities.

The weak correlation found in Delta State highlights a broader concern: when teachers remain in their jobs primarily for financial or survival reasons rather than professional fulfillment, they may lack motivation, creativity and initiative—traits necessary for effective teaching and learning. Schools with a high prevalence of teachers who are committed to continuing their careers may suffer from low morale and reduced overall performance. Therefore, while continuance commitment might prevent workforce instability, it is insufficient in promoting satisfaction or excellence in education delivery.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings reveal that affective commitment has a very strong positive correlation with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State, implying that emotionally attached teachers are more likely to find fulfillment, remain motivated and perform effectively. This emotional bond fosters resilience, engagement and a sense of purpose that enhances overall school performance. Conversely, the weak correlation between continuance commitment and job satisfaction suggests that teachers who remain in their jobs primarily for economic or survival reasons tend to experience low morale and disengagement. Hence, fostering emotional attachment through supportive policies, recognition and professional development is crucial for promoting teacher satisfaction and improving the quality of education in Delta State.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. The Delta State Ministry of Education should promote supportive work environments by improving teacher welfare through better working conditions, recognition programmes and participatory decision-making processes that strengthen affective commitment and job satisfaction.
2. Principals should implement continuous professional development programmes to help teachers acquire new skills, enhance instructional quality and build a stronger sense of belonging and emotional connection to their schools.
3. School management boards and policymakers should review and enforce transparent reward and promotion systems, ensuring fairness and the inclusion of performance-based incentives that promote motivation, dedication and emotional engagement among teachers.
4. The state government should create enabling environments that alleviate economic pressures and ensure teachers remain in their positions out of professional fulfillment, intrinsic motivation and passion rather than financial necessity.

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