

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined principal support for professional development as correlates of teacher's job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was guided by two specific purposes, two research questions and two hypotheses, tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 6,598 teachers in 267 public secondary schools in the six-education zone in Anambra State. The sample for the study consists of 819 teachers' drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Two sets of instruments titled "Principals' support for Professional Development Questionnaire (PSFDQ) (Formal and Informal Professional Development) and Teachers Job Commitment questionnaire (TJCQ)" were used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and construct validity. The data collected from PSPDQ (Formal and Informal Professional Development) and TJCQ were tested using Cronbach alpha technique. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC), test of significance of correlation was used to test hypotheses all at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is a high positive relationship between principals' support for professional development and teachers' job commitment in public secondary school in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that School Management should seek support from the communities, school Alumni, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as The Education Partnership Centre (TEP Centre) to support teachers' professional development and foster job commitment.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the imperative is improving student outcomes which are also about improving the quality of the teaching workforce and their commitment. Teachers' job commitment is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of educational institutions, influencing student outcomes and overall school performance. Teachers' Job commitment is the consciousness of the teacher to fully bring in his or her capacity skills, knowledge and even resources in the pursuit of the school set goals. In the classroom for instance, it is the willingness of teachers to work towards the academic accomplishment of students. Onukwu, (2021). opined that teachers' job commitment is the willingness and readiness of teachers to contribute to teaching and learning activities that can lead to an effective and successful course delivery, fulfilling their professional duties, and most importantly, producing positive learning outcomes for students. Shu (2022) defines teachers' job commitment as the emotional attachment to the school and the teacher's role as a profession working directly with students. Similarly, a committed teacher is member of a school system who is dedicated to fulfilling their duties professionally.

Secondary education in Nigeria is in serious need of committed teachers for the implementation of the curriculum. No Educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (National Policy Education, 2014). The teachers through their classroom activities facilitates the attainment of educational objectives. Their roles in the academic growth of students and general academic standard of the school cannot be over emphasized. The achievement of educational goals and objectives may be impossible without committed teachers who are main facilitators of teaching and learning. Taking practical steps at improving teachers' commitment by both government and principals is crucial because teachers who are highly committed are likely to stay longer on the job, perform better and get actively involved at work and school programmes and put more effort to ensure that the school achieves its set aims and objectives. The question that now bothers everyone is whether teachers in the present-day secondary schools in Anambra State are living up to their mission given the frequency of non-commitment which manifest in persistent lateness to school, inadequate coverage of scheme of work, persistence lateness to school, excessive absences and other noticeable negative behaviours. Teachers' commitment as a topical issue seems to be the reason the quality of education has reduced. From observation, it shows that some teachers have low commitment to work as a result of misalignment of subject to teachers. If this ugly trend will be left unrectified it will influence students' academic achievement and performance thereby jeopardizing the future of our society. Studies have shown that teachers' subject allocation pattern is one of the factors that influence teachers' job commitment. Principals' support for teachers' professional development is an important factor that may be linked to teacher commitment.

Principals' support for teachers' professional development is the assistance the principal of a school provides for teachers to explore new roles, develop new instructional techniques, refine their practice and broaden themselves both as educators and as individual. In addition, the value attributed to professional development by school administrators can play a motivating role for teachers to pay more attention to the subject. School administrators will follow the activities that will develop teachers and make announcements about the opportunities and teachers will be able to participate in activities such as seminars/workshop/conferences, mentoring, in service training and courses (Fatih, 2020). Seminar for instance is a learning event that helps teachers to enhance their job skills and network with other professionals in their institution. The competence of people in their professions can only be increased through professional development and it is possible to observe and eliminate the problems that arise from other people in the same occupational group through professional development (Ekinici 2015). In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, ongoing training and development are essential for teachers to stay informed about new pedagogical approaches, technologies, and curriculum developments. Level of support provided by school principals for teachers' professional development can also impact job commitment. Principals play a crucial role in creating a supportive work environment, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and facilitating opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge through professional development activities.

Support for professional development can manifest in various forms. It could be a formal or informal professional development (Ganzer cited in. Ayaz, 2016, p.54). According to him, the formal professional development is the type attained through attending training, course, professional meetings, workshops and mentoring, while the informal entails gaining professional development through informal experiences such as reading professional publications or books, watching related films or academic documentaries among others. The principals can support teachers in either of these forms by encouraging teachers' participation in in-service programmes such as workshops, seminars, and training sessions for teachers,

allocating resources for educational materials and resources, fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous learning within the school community, and providing or encouraging mentoring. Ehinola and Akomolafe, (2022) have found that teachers' in-service programmes and mentoring have significant impact on their job performance. Therefore, when principals prioritize and actively support teachers' professional growth, it can lead to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment among staff members. Support provided by principals for teachers' professional development in Nigerian public schools can vary significantly depending on the specific school, region, and individual principal. It is important to note that while some principals can demonstrate strong commitment to facilitating and encouraging teachers' professional growth; others may not prioritize or adequately support professional development initiatives. Without support from school principals, teachers may struggle to access workshops, seminars, and other professional development activities that are essential for improving their knowledge and skills. Lack of support for professional development may hinder teachers' ability to keep pace with evolving educational trends and best practices. This can result in decreased job satisfaction and commitment among educators, ultimately impacting the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Presently, Nigerian education, including the secondary school sub-sector, is faced with major issues one of which is the teacher element. Many of its teachers have been questioned about their commitment to their work. Non-commitment of teacher to their job manifests in persistent lateness to work, excessive absences, low productivity and high turnover rates (Mbonu, Obineme and Azuji 2023). Some criticize the government for this problem and stressed that the government did not do enough to develop, encourage and support teachers professionally, to lead them to a greater commitment. Ironkwe et al. (2023) observed that some teachers set their mind to taking the role of ordinary teachers who just come to school, sign the attendance register and just engage students in class and go away. If this attitude and mindset persist, their students' education and future will be highly compromised, and consequently, state's economy and future will be jeopardized or even ruined.

Efforts towards improving teacher's commitment have attracted great deal of research from both within and outside Nigeria. However, most of them examined the isolated individual effects of teacher or organizational characteristics on teacher commitment. For instance, Ogunyemi and Olowojolu (2018) explored the relationship between organizational climate and teachers' commitment in Nigerian secondary schools. Similarly, Ajayi (2017) examined the influence of job satisfaction on teachers' commitment in Nigerian public secondary schools. A study by Brown and Johnson (2019) investigated the impact of professional development opportunities on teacher commitment in rural school districts. However, in the context of public secondary schools in Anambra State, the relationship between principals' support for professional development and teachers' job commitment remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to existing knowledge by investigating the relationship between principals' support for professional development and teachers' job commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, teacher's job commitment has prompted educational researchers to steadily make relentless efforts at identifying mitigating factors that might account for the observed poor commitment of teachers. It is quite worrisome that teachers in Anambra State have been questioned about their work commitment. Lack of sufficient commitment hampers the students' academic work, and consequently their career development and their future. Teacher non-commitment manifests itself in excessive absences, low productivity, lateness to school,

abandonment of the profession and high turnover rates. Some teachers set their mindset to be like ordinary teachers who just come to school, sign the attendance register and just engage students in the class and go away to their private business. If this attitude and mindset persist, their students' education and future will be highly compromised which will result in poor social and economy development of the state and the nation.

Given the recent changes in teacher recruitment and employment practices in Anambra State, there is urgent need to examine the relationship between principals' support for professional development and teachers' job commitment. By addressing these issues, policymakers, school administrators, and education stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to enhance teacher commitment, improve instructional quality, and promote positive outcomes for both educators and students in public schools across Anambra State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between principals' support for professional development and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teacher and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. ascertain the relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teacher and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. What is the relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and would be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. There will be no significant relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Method

Correlational Research Design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 8187 teachers made of 1500 male and 6,687 female teachers in 267 public secondary schools in the six-education zone in Anambra State. The sample of 819 teachers was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling technique were used for the study. Two sets of instruments titled "Principals' support for Professional

Development Questionnaire (PSDQ) (Formal and Informal Professional Development) and Teachers Job Commitment questionnaire (TJCQ)” were used for data collection. The face and construct validity of the instrument was established by three experts. Two in Educational Management, one in Measurement and Evaluation all from Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam Campus. The instruments were trial tested in a simple administration on a representative sample of Government Secondary School, Enugu State. The data collected from PSDQ (Formal and Informal Professional Development) and TJCQ were done using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. They yielded a coefficient value of 0.76, for formal professional development, 0.84, for informal professional development and 0.87 for teachers’ job commitment. The researcher with the help of six research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Anambra State administered 601 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents through direct approach. Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses

Results

Research Question one

What is the relationship between principals’ support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 1: *Pearson’s Correlation Between Principals’ Support for Formal Professional Development and Teacher Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State*

Variables	N	Support for formal professional development	Teacher Job Commitment	Remark
Support for formal professional development	601	1	0.64	High Positive relationship
Teacher Job Commitment	601	0.64	1	

Table 1 shows that the Pearson’s correlation between principals’ support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers’ job commitment yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.64. This value indicates that there was high positive relationship between the two variables such that as principals’ support for formal professional development of teachers increases, teacher’s job commitment also increases at high rate.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between principals’ support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 2. *Pearson’s Correlation Between Principals’ Support for Informal Professional Development and Teacher Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State*

Variables	N	Support for informal professional development	Teacher Job Commitment	Remark
Support for informal professional development	601	1	0.72	High Positive relationship
Teacher Job Commitment	601	0.72	1	

Table 2 shows that from the Pearson's correlation between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment a correlation coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. This value suggests that there was a high positive relationship between the principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in Anambra state. This implies that as principals' support for informal professional development of teachers increases, the teachers' job commitment also increases at high rate.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis one

There will be no significant relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 3. *Significance of Pearson's Correlation Between Principals' Support for Formal Professional Development and Teachers' Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State*

Variables	N	Support for formal professional development	Teachers' Job Commitment	p-value	Remark
Support for formal professional development	601	1	0.64	0.000	Significant
Teachers' Job Commitment	601	0.64	1		

The result presented in Table 3 indicates that there was a significant positive relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra state, $r=0.64$, $p = 0.00$. The null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis Two

There will be no significant relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 4. *Significance of Pearson's Correlation Between Principals' Support for Informal Professional Development and Teachers' Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State*

Variables	N	Support for informal professional development	Teachers' Job Commitment	p-value	Remark
Support for informal professional development	601	1	0.72	0.000	Significant
Teachers' Job Commitment	601	0.72	1		

As shown in Table 4, there was a significant positive relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra state, $r=0.72$, $p = 0.00$, Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings are discussed under the following headings:

1. Relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State
2. Relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Relationship between Principals' Support for Formal Professional Development of Teachers and Teachers' Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The first research question investigated the relationship between principals' support for formal professional development and teachers' job commitment in Anambra State public secondary schools. Results from the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.64$) revealed a strong positive relationship. This implies that as principals increase their support for formal professional development, teachers' job commitment also rises significantly.

Principals who actively promote and provide access to professional development opportunities create a supportive school climate where continuous learning is valued. This, in turn, fosters a sense of growth, competence, and institutional belonging among teachers. Consequently, teachers perceive their work as meaningful and their professional identities as evolving, leading to higher commitment levels.

This finding is consistent with the work of Shikokoti et al. (2021), which reported a positive and significant link between principals' promotion of professional development and teacher commitment. Similarly, Ndambuki et al. (2020) found a strong relationship between staff professional development and improved academic performance in Makueni County, Kenya. Additionally, the findings align with Frederick Winslow Taylor's Scientific Management Theory (1909), which emphasizes that providing employees with the necessary training and development improves their skills and commitment to the organization.

However, the findings contrast with Gaurav et al. (2022), who found no significant difference in teacher commitment across various evaluated variables. This divergence may stem from differences in study contexts or the sample population.

Relationship between Principals' Support for Informal Professional Development of Teachers and Teachers' Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The second research question explored the relationship between principals' support for informal professional development and teachers' job commitment. The findings revealed a high positive correlation ($r = 0.72$), indicating that as principals increase their support for informal professional development, teachers' job commitment also increases significantly.

This result aligns with Bambi and Bakari (2021), who found that mentoring by principals positively influences teachers' job commitment. Similarly, Badamasi (2019) reported a significant relationship between mentoring and teacher commitment in senior secondary schools. Siti (2021) also confirmed that professional development positively impacts teachers' commitment and, in turn, enhances learning quality.

However, the findings differ from Ojeaga and Okolocha (2021), whose study on tertiary education teachers revealed no notable influence of mentoring on professional commitment. The discrepancy may arise from differences in sample populations, as Ojeaga and Okolocha focused on tertiary educators, while this study centered on secondary school teachers.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there was a significant positive relationship between principals' support for formal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra state. Also, there was a significant positive relationship between principals' support for informal professional development of teachers and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that Principals should receive training and resources to support teachers' professional development and foster a positive work environment. Also, School management should seek support from the communities, school Alumni, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as The Education Partnership Centre (TEP Centre) to support teachers' professional development and foster job commitment.

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