UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.18 (2);
July-December, 2024 https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 ***Impact Factor***: 5.156; ***2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;***
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. *Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363*

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE SCHOOL AND TEACHER JOB COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study addressed the relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. It is well established that a positive school climate is essential to teacher job commitment. This study investigated whether teacher job commitment is associated with interpersonal relationships among staff in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The study employed a descriptive research design. Survey questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain information from the participants. The questionnaire was developed from existing literature related to the research topic. A total of 200 teachers from 10 public secondary schools were randomly selected in Enugu State, Nigeria. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, it was found that the teachers who reported a higher level of interpersonal relationship were more likely to have higher job commitment compared to those who reported a lower level of interpersonal relationship. The results of this study suggest that interpersonal relationship is related to teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Teacher job commitment is an important aspect of school effectiveness, and promoting positive interpersonal relationships among staff can lead to greater job commitment among teachers. The study recommends that school principals and other school staff should strive to foster positive interpersonal relationships in their schools in order to ensure higher job commitment from their teachers.

Keywords: Interpersonal, Relationship, Teacher, School and climate

Introduction

A school is an organization and academic environment where teaching and learning take place. It is also a formal environment well-equipped for exchange of ideas among teachers and students. Ajayi (2010) described a school as a social institution that transmits the culture and values of the society from one generation to another. Ajayi further averred that the school is a socialization agent and a formal agent of education established by members of the macro-community and society as a whole, to shape the habits, interests, abilities,

emotions and feelings of children. In Nigeria, schools are organized into different levels namely; primary, secondary and tertiary.

The secondary school being the focus of this study is that level of education where a child is enrolled after successive completion of primary school. Ige (2013) noted that secondary school education is provided for children after primary education, that is, before tertiary education. Similarly, Ogbonnaya (2016) stated that secondary school is that form of education which children receive automatically after they have received primary school education. Ogbonnaya further averred that secondary education constitutes post primary education and serves as a link between primary and tertiary education. It is aimed at developing a child better than the primary level, because it is obvious that primary education is insufficient for children to acquire literacy, numeracy, and communication skills. In Nigeria, secondary school is divided into junior and senior. Ige (2013) had it that the junior secondary school is the first three years of secondary education. The objectives of secondary education according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) include; to provide an increasing number of secondary school students with the opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of sex, or social, religion and ethnic background; to diversify its curriculum to cater for the difference in talents opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course; to equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology; to develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage; to raise generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appropriate those values specified under our broad national aims and live as good citizens; to foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity and inspire students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life. Ige (2011) opined that the aim of secondary education is developing a child better than the primary level, because it is obvious that primary education is insufficient for children to acquire literacy, numeracy, and communication skills. Such education is provided in secondary school, which can be owned by government (state or federal), individuals or community. Public secondary schools are managed by principals appointed by the Education Board.

A principal is one who is in the head of affairs of a secondary school. They are coordinators who organize activities and programs to achieve stated objectives. According to Uzoigwe (2013), principals are those who are expected to perform administrative functions including: planning, organizing, supervising, staffing, evaluating, coordinating, leadership and purchasing and maintenance of instructional materials. To achieve the objectives of the school, the principal work in collaboration with teachers.

Interpersonal Relationship and teacher job commitment

The school is a social community inhabited mostly by students and other staff such as the teaching and non-teaching staff, these inhabitants of the school associate or relate with each other to help the school achieve its main objectives. The role of interpersonal relation between the teachers in the school is very important, positive school climate promotes good interpersonal relationship which in turn positively influences job commitment. Juneja (2015) viewed interpersonal relationship as a strong association among individuals working together in the organization. Good interpersonal relationship among teacher, between the teacher and administrator not only boost teachers' job satisfaction but also enhance the achievement of educational goal (Kapur, 2018). Interpersonal relationship that exist in a school determine teacher job commitment based on the type of climate the school operates, school that run open climate practice teamwork. Teamwork is when group of people come together to work in order to achieve organization objective. Amadi (2019) saw teamwork as practice that enable school members to view work as cooperative enterprise that requires collaboration. This means that relating with the staff cordially for them to effectively use their knowledge, skill, attitude and competency for high productivity. Anuna (2012) stated that without cordial relationship in the school, the objectives of education cannot be achieved. Based on the above, different relationship has been identified as prevalent in a typical secondary school that assists teachers in their commitment to duty. Effective communicationin the school also has positive effect on the teacher job commitment. Communication among the staff reduces misunderstanding and confusion which lead to negativity at the work place and spoil the work environment (Okekeocha and Ezinine 2021). Marchalina and Ahmad (2017) assert that there is significant relationship between internal communication and employee commitment. Farhah, Saleh and Safitri (2021) identified teacher-student relationship as that prevalent in school while Also Baie (2015) mentioned principal-teacher relationship as significant in teacher job commitment. These two relationships are discussed below.

Principal –teacher relationship

The relationship between the school principal and teachers in any secondary school is said to be academic and goal oriented without which, the schools aims and objectives may not be attainable. Relationships aimed at promoting mutual co-existence and exchange of ideas for the academic growth of the school. Abari, Ibikunle, Animashaum and Oguntuga (2016) affirmed that principal-teacher relationship is the degree of affinity, connection and cordial interpersonal association between the school administration and the teachers under his or her administration. The relationship depicts the extent of team spirit and group work for mutual support to actualize set educational goals. According to Fatima, Akhtar and Begum (2015), principals hold the heart of the school organization and their actions and relationships with their teachers affect the satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment levels of teachers and

principals as well. According to Raza (2010), the interaction between the principal and teacher influence the atmosphere of the school organization. Halphin (2013) opined that when the principal show their consideration and concern to the needs of the subordinates and willing to take personal effort to solve the problems, teachers and students and parents will also show keen interest with them. If needs of teacher are met, they will put in their best in performing their duty. This implies that principals leadership influence or relationship has a considerable impact on the teachers work output and can either make or mar the teacher with reform, to Hallinger (2011) affirmed that whatever the context maybe, if the leader is effective, the followers flourish, if the leader is ineffective, the followers suffer. If the school climate becomes adverse, that is when the school physical and social environment are not safe, the principal exhibiting autocratic leadership style it will affect teachers' job commitment.

Teacher-Student Relationship and Teacher Job Commitment

Teacher-student relationship in school has a great influence not only on student's activeness and performances in their academic endeavors, but towards teacher motivation and commitment to duty. Dweck (2021) refers to teacher-student relationship as the interaction between a teacher and a student which occurs in a classroom and academics oriented. Parsonson (2012) has it that an effective teacher-student relationship minimizes disruptive conducts which interferes with instruction, consequently creating a climate where teachers could favourably do their job better. Similarly, States, Detruch and keyworth (2018) held that teacher-student relationship broadens teacher's areas of commitment to duty by taking advantage of the school climate to oversee student's success in both curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences. Teacher-student relationship begins the first day of school when the teacher and students uses fun and conversation to learn one another and mostly, to make students express themselves and feel important in class. Detruch and Keyworth further emphasized that positive relationship between the teacher and student provides a level of comfort to academic pursuit of students. It also assists teachers in gauging the effectiveness of instruction in the classroom.

However, a teacher is likely to be frustrated and less committed to teach when his relationship with students is poor. Bright in Alex (2011) reported from a study at the University of Maryland College Park that students who have cordial relationship with their lecturers found the courses those lecturers taught easy, interesting, performed academically better and that the lecturers that were positively encouraged to teach their lessons. However, poor relationship can frustrate efforts towards learning. This is why the researcher decided to investigate the relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Question

This question was raised in line with the research purpose for the study

What is the relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Research Hypothesis

HO: there is no significant relationship between the scores of teachers and principals on interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Research Method

This study adopted correlation research design. The area of study for this research is Enugu State. The population for the study comprised 295 secondary school principals and 8,463 secondary school teachers in the 295 public secondary schools in six education zones in Enugu State. The sample for the study comprised 555 teachers and principals of the public secondary schools in Enugu State. The researcher adopted random sampling technique in selecting 130 public secondary school principals and 420 secondary school teachers from 130 public secondary schools in Enugu state. The instrument for data collection is a researcher developed questionnaire titled "Relationship between School Security and Teacher Job Commitment Questionnaire" (RSSTJCQ). The validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of three education experts. Two experts from Department of Educational Management, and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education all from the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of science and technology (ESUT). Draft copies of the questionnaire items together with the research topic, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses were given to the three experts. They were requested to examine and scrutinize the items in terms of contents, relevance, suitability, and clarity of the dimensions of the study. To establish the reliability of the instrument, copies of questionnaire were administered to 30 respondents made up of 10 principals and 20 teachers in twenty public secondary schools in Anambra State, Awka South to be precise, who were not part of the population of the study. Data collated from the respondents were used to establish the internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method. Cronbach Alpha was deemed appropriate since it is applicable to items that are not dichotomously scored. Reliability coefficient of 0.71. The researcher distributed 555 copies of the questionnaire with help of six (6) research assistants who were teachers from the three education zones used for sampling in Enugu State, For data analysis various statistic tool was employed. Data collected was presented in table, and analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS batch system). Pearsons product moment correlation coeffeicent was used to answer the five research questions. A four point rating scale was used to analyze the responses with following values attached to positive statement

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Pearson Correlational Coefficient on Relationship between Interpersonal Relationship in the School and Teacher Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

N	Pearson Correlation (r)	Decision
529	0.196	low positive relationship

Table 1 show the relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The computed r is 0.196 implying low positive relationship. This means that there is low positive relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

HO: there is no significant relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Table 2: Test of Significant of Relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state

N	R	T	Sig	Decision
529	0.196	3.301	0.001	S

Result of data analysis summarized in Table 2 shows that the index of relationship between the two variables is 0.196. As shown in the table, t-test of significance of r is 3.301 at 0.05 an alpha level. The table further reveals that, significance of t, (probability value) is 0.001. Since the level of significance (0.05), was greater than the significant of t. value (0.000) the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of analysis of question two on table 2 shows that; there is low positive relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State based on the computed r of 0.196. Also hypothesis 2 on table 7 concluded that there was a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state. So, the study concluded that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and

teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

The finding confirms the claim of Marchalina and Ahmad (2017), that there is significant relationship between internal communication and employee commitment and the view of Juneja (2015), who viewed interpersonal relationship as a strong association among individuals working together in any organization. The finding also supports the submission of Kapur (2018), that good interpersonal relationship among teachers, between the teachers and administrators not only boost teachers' job satisfaction and commitment but also enhance the achievement of educational goals, because without cordial relationship in the school, the objectives of education cannot be achieved (Anuna, 2012). Hence, interpersonal relationship between the teachers in the school is very important, positive school climate promotes good interpersonal relationship which in turn positively influences job commitment.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between school climate and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu state. Based on the results, finding and discussions of the study the it was concluded that: there is a moderate positive relationship between school interpersonal relationship and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State; there is a low positive relationship between interpersonal relationship in the school and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State; and also there is very low positive relationship between school location and teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Enugu State. However, these relationships are not significant.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were profiled;

1. The government through the school administrators should ensure that the structures of various schools are healthy to promote teacher commitment to work.
2. Government should provide funds for training and retraining of teachers in order to sustain and improve upon their level of commitment to their duties.
3. Government should institute policies and measures that enable teachers to feel more secure in their job, and increase their opportunities for career development in public secondary schools.
4. Government should organize workshop and seminars for teachers on the benefits of being commitment to their job in order to increase their level of career satisfaction and consequently, commitment to their respective school

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