

Teachers' Career Satisfaction and Students' Academic Performance in Delta Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of teachers' gender, educational and teaching experience on teacher's career satisfaction. It further looked at the contribution of the limited literature on teachers' career satisfaction in developing countries like Nigeria. It critically examined the influence of teachers' gender, educational and teaching experience on teachers' career satisfaction and students' academic performance. The instrument used for the study was tagged teachers' career satisfaction questionnaire (TCSQ). The instrument had a reliable coefficient of 0.87. The result of the analysis showed that female teachers were slightly more satisfied than male teachers: the higher the educational attainment of teachers the lower the teachers' career satisfaction; and that the most experienced teachers were least satisfied. Sources of dissatisfaction are low salary structure, low public image and lack of self esteem of teachers, due to the fact that highly qualified and experienced teachers are not being rewarded adequately. Some factors are predictable but other are less so having to do with societal values of teachers in Nigeria. It was recommended that government and other stakeholders in education should implement measures that will ensure a high level of career satisfaction for teachers in all ramifications.

Keyword: Academic performance, Career Satisfaction, Demographic Variables, Dissatisfaction, Educational Attainment, Experience, Gender, Motivation, Teacher Career and Teachers Level of Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

The term 'satisfaction' is often used to describe a condition an individual found his/her self after a particular occurrence. In the developed world, teachers' career satisfaction has been an issue of concern for many years. Hence perennial factors, such as student academic performance, helping students, positive relationship with colleagues and self growth have been associated with teachers' career satisfaction. The other factors such as perceived low status, low pay, lack of professional autonomy and deprofessionalization has been linked to teachers' dissatisfaction as stated in Zembylas and Papanastasion, (2007). However, research exploring the sources and influence of teachers' career satisfaction in developing countries is relatively limited Hean and Garrett, (2001) and Abiodun and Gbadebo (2012) saw it as a term used to describe state of inner feelings that follows interaction with people or objects. The authors further stated that it has also been directly substituted with other feeling words such as gratification, happiness, compensation, fulfillment, joy, excitement, self actualization. The Microsoft encounter dictionary (2009) stated that satisfaction has four different interpretations. One of them is the feeling of pleasure that comes when a need or a desire is fulfilled, the other is happiness one expressed when one is happy with the way something has been arranged or done, compensation for an injury or loss and the fulfillment of a need, claim and desires. There are many endeavour's in life that one could derive satisfaction from, but this paper has to do with satisfaction one gets from his career that will influence his performance.

Gosnell (2000) sees career satisfaction as the degree to which people are happy with their careers. Essien (2002) viewed it as an emotional response to a job situation and often determined by how outcome meets or exceeds expectation. Secondary school teachers are currently facing many challenges in education and in the society, which may well affect their levels of job satisfaction (Adenike 2011). This raises concern regarding the attitudes of educators towards their work and their levels of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction she sated. Kesterner as cited in Adenike (2011) posited that almost half of new staff leaves the field during the first five years of their employment. This should be of great concern to all employers because unhappy and dissatisfied employees may mean poor performance and high staff turnover. Fajan (2002) identified lack of recognition for work done well through merit or announcement in meetings, lack of material resources which make it difficult for employees to carry out duties and lack of staff development activities

which prevent personnel from being equipped with knowledge and skills that they need in order to provide quality services as factors that can bring about dissatisfactions in workplace. Gosnell (2000) also identified individual attributes or demographic variables characteristics of the career itself and an organizational characteristic as some factors that can bring about career satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

When the above mentioned problems are perceived, dissatisfaction in the workplace manifest. And since it is the desire of every nation to improve on the quality of education, it is imperative that the influence of demographic variables on teacher career satisfaction be empirically determined. It is against this background that this study had examined the influence of demographic variables on teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta state of Nigeria.

1.1 Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis were formulated to direct the study

1. Teachers' educational attainment does not significantly influence the level of teacher's career satisfaction in public secondary schools.
2. Teacher's experience does not significantly influence the level of teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary schools.
3. Teacher's gender does not significantly influence the level of teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary school.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

Demographic characteristic such as gender, location, age, experience, marital status and educational attainment have been identified to influence teacher career satisfaction.

Studies (Wu & Wu, 2001, Ade Adetayo 2008) Wu & Wu (2010) show that female teachers have higher overall job satisfaction than male teachers.

Equally found to influence career satisfaction of teachers is educational attainment. Abiodun and Gbadebo (2012), found a significant negative relationship between educational attainment of teachers and job satisfaction. In a study that determined teachers' characteristics that influence teacher's level of job satisfaction, it was found that teacher's satisfaction with both the profession and working place is reduced when teacher's educational attainment is high. This is contrary to expectation from the fact that more knowledge of the job and teaching competence are relevant to job satisfaction. The explanation given by the above authors for this report was that teachers' with qualification higher than a bachelor's degree face a mismatch between their professional expectation and work realities and this negative effect appears to counter balance the potential positive effect of facilitated teaching and increases self-confidence the teachers may have as a result of the higher educational attainment.

In a similar study that determined the relationship of teacher's background characteristics to teachers' satisfaction, Sargent and Hannum (2003) equally found that teachers with higher level of education were significantly less satisfied with the teaching profession and were significantly more likely to state that they wish to change their career. These reports are consistent with the interpretation that more qualified teachers are less satisfied. Therefore, a higher education impacts negatively on teachers' job satisfaction. On this issue, Michaelowa (2002) concluded, that if the intention of school administrators is to improve both teachers' career satisfaction and student's achievement, teachers educational level should not be raised beyond the Baccalaureate degree. This suggests that teachers with high educational attainment should be discouraged at the primary and secondary level of education. The author further stated that while teachers with high educational attainment might be discouraged at these levels, extremely low level of educational attainment might equally be discouraged because of the difficulty these set of teachers might face to competently carry out their job. Contrary to these studies, Avery (1998) found that educational attainment has no significant influence on teachers' career satisfaction.

Either teacher's experience or length of service was also found to influence teachers' career satisfaction. On the influence of experience on teachers' career satisfaction, Bishay's (1996) study showed that increased length of service positively correlated with higher reported career satisfaction or decreased dissatisfaction with income. The above study, Gosnell (2000) found length of service to be significantly negatively related to job satisfaction among federal employees in the United States of America. The above study indicated that the most experienced teachers are the least satisfied with the teaching career.

However, the studies of Dabo (1998) and Michaelowa (2002) showed no relationship between job satisfaction and

length of service of teachers. These two studies suggest that the length of years teachers put on the job does not have any significant influence on the teachers' level of career satisfaction.

The literature reviewed showed no consensus on the influence of demographic characteristics such as gender, length of service and educational attainment on teacher's career satisfaction. However, high educational attainment was found to impact negatively on teachers' job satisfaction. This study is aimed at determining the influence of demographic variables on the career satisfaction of teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

2. Research Design

The study was a descriptive survey. This design allowed a systematic collection of data to determine the influence of demographic characteristics on career satisfaction of teachers in public secondary schools in the study area without manipulating the independent variables.

2.1 Sample and sampling procedure

The target population was all the teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State in Nigeria as at 2004/2005 school year. A total of eleven thousand, four hundred and eighty seven (11,487) teachers were the target population. A sample of one thousand one hundred and fifty (1,150) teachers was drawn from the target population by stratified random sampling techniques. The study areas were stratified into three senatorial districts. Samples were drawn from each stratum to ensure representation of subjects in the study. However, nine hundred and seventy-nine (979) teachers made up of four hundred and sixty (460) males and five hundred and nineteen (519) females actually participated in the study.

2.2 Instrumentation

The instrument utilized for the study was a questionnaire tagged Teachers' Career Satisfaction Questionnaire (TCSQ). The instrument was made of two parts. The first part sorts the information on the demographic attributes of the respondents such as gender, teaching experience and educational attainments. The second part of the questionnaire determines the level of career satisfaction of respondents. The factor of teachers satisfaction considered in the questionnaire included teachers status, salary and remuneration, administration and supervision, promotional opportunities, career development, working conditions and materials, and participation in decision making. The instrument was face validated after which a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 was obtained, indicating the reliability of the instrument.

2.3 Data collection

Data collections were done by on the spot assessment of the administration of the instrument to the respondents. This was to enable proper and adequate results to be obtained from the research conducted. Furthermore, it encouraged high return of the questionnaires that were administered.

2.4 Data analysis

Data collected were graded on a four point Likert scale. The responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The value of one corresponded to strongly disagree while the value of four corresponded to strongly agree. The analysis centered on testing the three hypotheses. Simple mean and one way Anova were used to determine the influence of teachers' educational attainment, experience and gender on teachers' career satisfaction. The three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance or 95% certainty of prediction.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Hypothesis 1

Teachers' educational attainment does not significantly influence the level of teachers' career satisfaction in public

secondary school. To test this hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance was done and the results are shown in table 1.

Table 1 shows that teachers with less than Bachelors degree have mean career satisfaction score of 52.94. Teachers with Bachelors degree have mean career satisfaction of 51.71, while teachers with qualification higher than Bachelors degree have mean career satisfaction of 50.80. The table therefore indicates that teachers' with higher educational attainment have lower mean career satisfaction. In other words, the higher the educational attainment of teachers in the study, the lower the mean career satisfaction. However, the result of the one-way Anova shows that the F-calculated (1.23) is lower than the F critical (3.00) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the observed difference in the mean career satisfaction of teachers as a result of the educational attainment of teachers in the study is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The conclusion was drawn that teacher's educational attainment does not significantly influence the level of career satisfaction of teachers in public secondary schools.

Table 1 one way analysis of variance of teachers' career satisfaction by educational attainment

Summary						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	% of respondents	
Bachelor	223	11804.78	52.94	133.03	22.8	
Bachelor	689	35630.15	51.71	148.84	70.4	
Bachelor	67	3403.46	50.80	66.87	6.8	
ANOVA						
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between groups	344.15	2	172.07	1.23	0.29	3.00
Within groups	136346.29	976	139.70			
Total	136690.44	978				

P < 0.05

3.2 Hypothesis 2

Teachers' experience does not significantly influence the level of teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary schools. The result of the one-way Anova used to test this hypothesis is shown in table 2.

Table 2 shows that the experienced teachers have a mean career satisfaction score of 52.90, the more experienced teachers have a mean career satisfaction of 52.86, the most experienced teachers have a mean career satisfaction of 50.57. The table therefore indicates that the most experienced teachers are the least satisfied with their teaching career. The on-way Anova shows that F-calculated (4.49) is higher than the F-critical (3.00) the table also indicates that the observed difference in the mean career satisfaction of teachers by years of teaching experience is statically very significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was discarded. It was concluded that yeas of experience significantly influence teachers' career satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: teachers' gender does not significantly in-fluencies the level of teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary schools. The result of the z-test of difference of means is shown in table 3.

Table 3 shows that the mean career satisfaction of female teachers is 52.12 while male teachers have mean career satisfactions core of 51.71 scores indicated that female teachers are more satisfied in the teaching career than the male teachers. However, the result of the z-test shows calculated (0.01) is lower than the z-critical (1.96). The result of the z-test shows that the difference in the observed mean career.

Table 2 one-way analysis of variance of teachers' career satisfaction by experience

Summary						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	% of respondents	
Experienced	169	8938.69	52.90	138.99	17.3	
More experienced	410	21671.46	52.86	135.52	41.9	
Most experienced	400	20228.24	50.57	142.02	40.8	
ANOVA						
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between groups	124.97	2	623.98	4.49	0.01	3.00
Within groups	135442.48	976	138.77			
Total	136690.44	978				

P < 0.05

Table 3 z-test of teachers' career satisfaction by gender

	Female	Male
Mean	52.12	51.71
Known variance	131.94	148.78
Observation	518	461
Hypothesized mean difference	0.4	
Z	0.01	
P(z<=z) two-tail	0.99	
Z critical two-tail	1.96	

P < 0.0.05

Satisfaction of male and female teachers is statistically not significant therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. It was concluded that teacher does not significantly influence the level of teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary schools.

4. Discussion

Career satisfaction is statically not significant. This report is also supported by the study of Sargent and Hannum (2003) who found that salary is negatively related to teachers' satisfaction and that gender does not have significant relationship with teacher's satisfaction even though female teachers appeared to be more satisfied with the teaching career. The slightly higher satisfaction reported for female teachers in this study may be more related to financial commitment than gender difference. Culturally men are responsible for providing the financial needs of their immediate and extended families, an obligation which they are often unable to meet from the low salary paid to teachers. Therefore, female teachers may appear to be more satisfied than male teachers because the socio-cultural expectation from the female teacher is less. This finding is contrary, Bishay (1996) who reported that female teachers are more dissatisfied in the teaching career.

The study also reported that teacher's years of experience is significantly negatively related to teacher's career satisfaction. This is similar to the report of Gosnell (2000), which stated that years of experience is significantly negatively related to the job satisfaction of federal employees in the United States of America. This report is contrary to Bishay's (1996) study which concluded that increased length of service correlated with higher reported satisfaction with pay. It is also contrary to the report dissatisfaction with pay. About seventy two percent (72%) of the most experienced teachers in the study indicated dissatisfaction with teacher's salary and allowances. The longer one works, the higher the financial responsibilities and expectations of friends and family members. The rate of increase in teachers' salaries and allowances is low compared to the inflationary trend, on the one hand and salaries and allowances of workers in the private sector on the other. Therefore, the teacher finds it increasingly more difficult to cope with his financial obligations and societal expectations hence he becomes frustrated and therefore dissatisfied with the career. This is supported by Arubayi's (1981) statement that the Nigerian society, which is built on materialists and capitalistic ideas, must rely on economic rewards as a means of getting job satisfaction. There is possibility that the expressed lower satisfaction of teachers with more years of service may also be related to other factors of the teachers' service conditions not investigated in this study.

Finally, it was also reported that the most highly qualified teachers are the least satisfied, which is in agreement with the studies Abiodun and Gbadebo (2012), Gosnell (2000), Michaelowa (2002), Sergeant and Hannum (2003) who found that teachers' educational attainment is negatively correlated with teachers' career satisfaction. This report may find explanation in the statement of Michaelowa (2002) that teachers' academic attainment beyond bachelors degree tend to lead to a mismatch between teachers expectations and professional realities. It is expected that as teachers improve their knowledge through higher educational attainment; their efforts would be recognized by their employers through promotion and/or appointment to post of responsibility like principalship. But this is not so. In practice, all teachers are made to wait their turn for the usual mass promotion, while the post of principal is reserved for the political well connected. This reduces career satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

The study sets out to analytically examine the influence of teachers' gender, educational attainment and length of service on teachers' career satisfaction among teachers in public secondary schools. *The study further highlighted the*

complexities involved in understanding teachers' career satisfaction that has clear implications for policy and practice worldwide. This is seen as a gap needed for serious consideration of how it may be meaningfully applied to improve teachers' working lives. The study found that female teachers are slightly more satisfied than male teachers; the most educated teachers are the least satisfied because of the gap between teachers' expectations and work realities, and that the most experienced teachers are the least satisfied. The study amply demonstrates that there is an urgent need for policy makers to recognize the educational quality that is largely related to teachers' career satisfaction. Unfortunately, teachers' satisfaction is often critically ignored in education policy making. However improving teachers' working lives cannot be an optional extra, but a central component of effective policy making. Teachers' are not technicians but are considered as rounded professionals with complex and varied needs. Therefore teachers' are assumed that the happier they, the better the teachers which is good productivity.

The implication of these findings is that it is imperative for government and all stakeholders in education to ensure a high level of career satisfaction for the highly qualified and experienced teachers. One of the ways to ensure a high level of career satisfaction for these teachers is by enhanced salary. This is needed to satisfy the materialistic need of the teachers and also improve the public image and self esteem of teachers. Better working conditions are also advocated. These measures are necessary in order to ensure that highly qualified and very experienced teachers are retained in the schools. It is also important to note that implementation of these measures will minimize teachers' turn over and burnout.

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