

EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct an empirical investigation on job satisfaction amongst Nigerian schoolteachers. Specifically, this study sought to determine the level of satisfaction amongst teachers and identify factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction. The sample of 117 currently practicing teachers enrolled in a part-time educational program completed a questionnaire that assessed their teaching job satisfaction, monthly salary, and five other factors that were predicted to be related to teacher job satisfaction. Overall, a majority of the teachers were satisfied with the teaching profession. Monthly salary was not significantly related with teacher job satisfaction. However, the five additional factors were related to job satisfaction. Teacher/principal relationship, provision of instructional materials, attitude toward the teaching profession, and belief in social contribution of teaching all had significant positive relationships with teacher job satisfaction. Choosing teaching as a last resort career had a weak negative correlation.

Introduction

The teacher is a key facilitator of knowledge and plays a vital role in nation building. It is therefore crucial to find out how comfortable the teacher is in his/her place of work, termed teacher satisfaction. Furthermore, it is also important to identify factors responsible for teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Many studies have reported teachers' dissatisfaction with teaching (e.g., Van den Berg, 2002; Scott, Stone & Dinham, 2001). Some of the reasons proffered for low teacher job satisfaction include lack of professional autonomy, poor salaries, and unavailability of teaching resources. The effects of teacher job dissatisfaction on teaching/learning process include lack of enthusiasm for the job, teacher absenteeism, teacher stress and poor student performance. Other effects of teacher job dissatisfaction include leaving the profession suddenly in search of greener pastures (Huberman, 1993), and inefficiency on the part of teachers (Tshannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Research into teacher job satisfaction is thus significant in order to retain teachers in the educational profession and to encourage increased teacher productivity. Moreover, it is important to find out the factors that account for teacher job satisfaction. When these factors are known, then it will be possible for school administrators and other educational stakeholders to adjust the school environment accordingly to foster satisfaction amongst teachers.

Concept of Teacher Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the fulfillment a teacher derives from day-to-day activities in his/her job. A teacher who has high job satisfaction is perceived to have a high level of commitment to his/her work (Judge, Thoresen, & Patton, 2001). Teacher job satisfaction relates to a teacher's perception of what he/she expects to get from teaching and what he/she is actually getting from teaching (Lawler, 1973). Teacher job satisfaction is thus a function of the extent to which a teacher's aspirations, desires and needs are met or satisfied on the job. For Norton and Kelly (1997), factors responsible for job dissatisfaction among teachers were administrative problems, evaluation of students' performances, handling of discipline problems, teacher's heavy workload, poor salaries, lack of respect for teaching profession and promotion bottlenecks.

However, a teacher who is happy or satisfied with his/her job generally has a sense of obligation to uplift the society that he/she lives in; whereas, one who is dissatisfied may exert a negative influence on the students' learning. Job dissatisfaction has ripple effects on students' academic growth. According to Umme (1999), a significant relationship was

found between teacher's attitude towards teaching and job satisfaction. When teachers have job satisfaction, they tend to teach well.

However, the widely held belief in Nigeria is that there is generally low teacher satisfaction (see Businge, 2011) and low morale amongst Nigerian schoolteachers (see Daily Trust, 2010; Kayode, 2012). Furthermore, most Nigerians believe that teacher satisfaction is directly related to teachers' salary and rewards. In other words, the belief is that the only factor that contributes to teacher job satisfaction is the quality of teachers' take-home pay. For example, when making suggestions on how to improve the educational system, the president of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) said, "Government...must develop a...remuneration and reward system that will promote job satisfaction" (Komolafe, 2010).

Consequently, the current study seeks to investigate Nigerian teachers' job satisfaction. Specifically, the study aimed at finding out whether Nigerian teachers are satisfied with their jobs. A second aim of the study was to determine whether teacher satisfaction was more dependent on adequate and prompt payment of salaries, which is the common perception in Nigeria, or as a result of other factors related to the educational context such as the teacher-principal relationship and teachers' attitude toward the teaching profession.

Purpose of the Study

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to conduct an empirical investigation about job satisfaction amongst Nigerian schoolteachers. First, we wanted to determine the level of satisfaction amongst teachers. Second, we wanted to identify factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction.

Research Question

1. What is the level of job satisfaction amongst teachers in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between salary and teacher job satisfaction.
2. There is no significant relationship between principal/teacher relationship and teacher job satisfaction.
3. There is no significant relationship between provision of instructional materials and teacher job satisfaction.

4. There is no significant relationship between teaching as a last resort career and teacher job satisfaction.
5. There is no significant relationship between attitude toward the teaching profession and teacher job satisfaction.
6. There is no significant relationship between belief in the social contribution of teaching and teacher job satisfaction.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive design. Descriptive designs are used to develop careful descriptions of educational phenomenon (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This research study was designed to carefully describe teacher job satisfaction and the factors that influence teacher job satisfaction in Nigerian schools.

Participants

Students enrolled in the 200 level (Contact 2) part-time education program (who are currently practicing teachers) participated in this study. A total of 164 questionnaires were returned. Twenty-three of these questionnaires had missing information on ten items or more, so they were removed from analysis. An item on the questionnaire asked participants whether they were currently teaching to ensure that the sample only included practicing teachers. Twenty participants indicated that they were not currently teaching, and an additional four participants did not indicate either yes or no. Thus, these 24 participants were also removed. Thus, the final sample was constituted of 117 currently practicing teachers.

Of the 117 teachers, a majority were female (58%; 42% male). Their average age was 35.87 years. The teachers had an average of 9.12 years of teaching experience. A majority taught at government schools (65%) while the remaining 35% taught at private schools. Ten percent of the participants taught at nursery schools, 55% taught at primary schools, and 36% taught at secondary schools.

Instrument

A questionnaire was used in this study. After the first section that measured personal information, 29 items measured the key variables using a

6-point Likert Scale, with 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Disagree Somewhat, 4=Agree Somewhat, 5=Agree, and 6=Strongly Agree.

Job satisfaction was measured by four items, such as, "Teaching gives me a sense of satisfaction." Principal/teacher relationship was measured by two items, such as, "I have a good relationship with my principal or headmaster/headmistress." Provision of instructional materials was measured by four items, such as "The school provides adequate instructional materials like chalk, dusters, biros, exercise books, etc. for teachers." Teaching as a last resort career was measured by three items, such as, "I chose teaching as a last-resort career." Attitude toward the teaching profession was also measured by three items, such as "I think teaching is a noble profession." Finally, belief in the social contribution of teaching was measured by three items, such as, "Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution."

The final item asked participants to indicate their monthly salary from teaching in ₦4,999 increments (e.g., from ₦5,000 to ₦9,999; ₦10,000 to ₦14,999, etc.).

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaires were personally distributed by the researchers. To administer the instrument, the researcher visited the participants' classroom. As the participants were seated in their classroom, copies of the questionnaires were distributed to them. After completion, the questionnaires were collected back immediately. The responses of the participants were collated and analysed for results.

Results

The research question asked, what is the level of job satisfaction amongst teachers in Nigeria? To analyse this question, a mean score was calculated on the four job satisfaction items for each participant. The mean job satisfaction score across all 117 participants was 4.50 (standard deviation = 1.19). Since job satisfaction was on a scale from 1 to 6, a mean of 4.50 means that teachers generally fall on the midpoint between "agree somewhat" to "agree" on the items representing teaching job satisfaction. The percentage of participants whose teaching job satisfaction score fell within each of the responses is presented in Table 1.

From Table 1, it is clear that a majority of the participants have positive teacher job satisfaction: 79% of the teachers fell above the scale midpoint of 3.50, meaning that they agreed to most of the teacher job satisfaction items.

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant relationship between salary and teacher job satisfaction. To test this hypothesis, correlation and t-test statistical analyses were done. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Frequency of Teacher Job Satisfaction.

	Range of Scores	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1.00 to 1.50	3%
Disagree	1.51 to 2.50	8%
Disagree Somewhat	2.51 to 3.50	10%
Agree Somewhat	3.51 to 4.50	22%
Agree	4.51 to 5.50	40%
Strongly Agree	5.51 to 6.00	17%

Table 2. Correlation Between Salary and Teacher job Satisfaction

	r	t	df	p	Decision
Salary and Teacher Job Satisfaction	0.130	1.33	103	0.186	Not Significant

Table 2 indicates that the calculated p-value is greater than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant relationship between salary and teacher job satisfaction. The prediction is that other factors (apart from salary) are responsible for teacher job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant relationship between Principal/Teacher relationship and Teacher job satisfaction. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation between Principal/Teacher Relationship and Teacher Job Satisfaction

	r	t	df	p	Decision
Principal/Teacher Relationship and Teacher Job Satisfaction	0.430	5.11	115	<.0001	Significant

Since the calculated p-value of $<.0001$ is less than 0.05, the correlation is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant relationship between principal/teacher relationship and teacher job satisfaction. The more positive the principal teacher relationship, the higher the teacher job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 stated that there is no significant relationship between the provision of instructional materials and teacher job satisfaction. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation of Provision of Instructional Materials and Teacher job Satisfaction

	r	t	df	p	Decision
Provision of Instructional Materials and Teacher Job Satisfaction	0.291	3.26	115	.0007	Significant

Table 4 indicates that the calculated p-value of .0007 is less than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies a significant relationship between provision of instructional materials and teacher job satisfaction. The more satisfied the teachers are with the provision of instructional materials in the school, the higher job satisfaction they have. With low correlation of 0.29, provision of instructional materials seems to be a weak predictor of teacher job satisfaction.

The fourth research hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between teaching as a last resort career and teacher job satisfaction. The results of both the correlation and the t-test to determine the significance of the correlation are presented in Table 5.

As can be seen from Table 4, the p-value is less than 0.05 so the correlation is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant relationship between teaching as a last resort career and teacher job satisfaction. The negative correlation indicates that the more the participants chose teaching as a last resort career, the

Table 5. Correlation Between Teaching as a Last Resort Career and Job Satisfaction.

	r	t	df	p	Decision
Teaching as a Last Resort Career and Job Satisfaction	-0.185	-2.02	115	.046	Significant

less job satisfaction they had with teaching. However, the correlation of -0.185 falls into the range of a small relationship (see Cohen, 1988). Therefore, while choosing teaching as a last resort career is a factor that predicts teaching job satisfaction, it is only a weak predictor.

The fifth hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between attitude toward the teaching profession and teacher job satisfaction. The results are found in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlation Between Attitude Toward the Teaching Profession and Job Satisfaction.

	r	t	df	p	Decision
Attitude Toward the Teaching Profession and Job Satisfaction	0.493	6.05	114	<.0001	Significant

As can be seen from Table 6, the correlation is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant relationship between attitude toward the teaching profession and teacher job satisfaction. The positive correlation indicates that the more positive the attitude toward the teaching profession, the stronger the teaching job satisfaction. The correlation of 0.493 is a moderate relationship. Thus, the more that teachers believe that teaching is a valuable career, the more satisfied they are with teaching.

The final research hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between belief in the social contribution of teaching and teacher job satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlation Between Belief in Social Contribution of Teaching and Job Satisfaction.

	r	t	df	p	Decision
Belief in Social Contribution of Teaching and Job Satisfaction	0.643	8.96	114	<.0001	Significant

As can be seen from Table 7, the correlation between belief in the social contribution of teaching and teacher job satisfaction is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant relationship between belief in the social contribution of teaching and teacher job satisfaction. The positive correlation indicates that the more teachers believe in the social contribution of teaching, the stronger their job satisfaction. The correlation of 0.643 is a strong relationship. In other words, the more that teachers believes that they make a worthwhile social contribution, the more satisfied they are as teachers. Furthermore, this correlation is the strongest of all of the research hypotheses tested by this study, indicating that a belief in the social contribution of teaching is the strongest factor found by this study to predict teacher job satisfaction.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to conduct an empirical investigation about satisfaction amongst Nigerian school teachers. First, we analysed teacher job satisfaction and found that an overwhelming majority of teachers sampled had positive teacher job satisfaction. This contradicts popular belief that Nigerian teachers have low job satisfaction (e.g., Adelabu, 2005; Ayeni, 2005; Kazeem, 1999).

Second, we were interested in factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction. Contrary to popular belief, teacher job satisfaction was not related to their monthly salary. This is in agreement with other empirical work that shows that teacher job satisfaction is unrelated to salary. In Egypt, where teacher salaries are also quite low, Abd-El-Fattah (2010) conducted a study to determine how pay increases influence teacher job satisfaction. In 2007, Egypt implemented a pay increase scheme within the country that occurred in two stages. Abd-El-Fattah collected data on teacher job satisfaction before the first stage of pay increase, one month after the first stage of pay increase, one month after the second stage of pay increase, and five months after the second stage of pay increase. The results

demonstrated that pay increase did not have a significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction.

Even though salary did not predict teacher job satisfaction, this study found five factors that were related to teacher job satisfaction. The first two of these factors were relationship with the principal and adequate provision of instructional materials. Both of these factors are related to school administration, so we can conclude that the school administration plays a key role in teacher job satisfaction. This finding agrees with Ejimofor (2007), who found that principals' transformational leadership skills impact teachers' job satisfaction within Nigeria. Ejimofor reported that transformational leadership skills include respect for teachers' ideas and decisions as well as building positive relationships with teachers.

The next factor found that choosing teaching as a last resort career leads to lower teacher job satisfaction. However, this factor had the weakest relationship of all of the factors that were identified in this study.

The last two factors that were related to teachers' job satisfaction were internal motivations regarding teaching: attitude toward the teaching profession and belief in social contribution of teaching. This study found that those teachers who identify with the values of the teaching profession have the highest job satisfaction. Therefore, internal motivations for teaching play a key role in determining whether teachers are satisfied with their profession.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are advanced:

- Federal, state and local governments should provide adequate instructional materials for teachers' use in order to enhance teacher job satisfaction, as well as students' learning.
- Principals should make an effort to ensure that their relationships with teachers are cordial to promote teacher job satisfaction.
- Pre-service teachers should be trained to value teaching as a noble profession. Recognizing the values of teaching in contributing to transformation of lives and society will help to promote positive attitude towards teaching and enhance teacher job satisfaction.
- In-service training can also include a motivational component to ensure that teachers understand the value of the teaching profession

to society. This could increase the job satisfaction amongst those currently in the teaching profession.

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