

Analytic Examination of Teachers' Career Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT This study critically examined the influence of teachers' gender, educational attainment and teaching experience on teachers' career satisfaction. Data was collected from nine hundred and seventy nine teachers in public secondary schools. The instrument used for the study was tagged teachers' career satisfaction questionnaire (TCSQ). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The results of the analyses 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. It was recommended that government and all stakeholders in education should implement measures that will ensure a high level of career satisfaction for the highly qualified and experienced teachers in order to minimize teachers' turnover and burnout.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 30 years, job satisfaction has become an increasingly important area of interest among scholars and managers alike. Gosnell (2000: 1) defined Career satisfaction as "the degree to which people are happy with their careers". It is an emotional affective personal response, which is as a result of the estimation of the degree to which some facts of career reality is congruent or incongruent with values (Adeniyi 2000).

Research on workplace attitudes has identified three primary determinants of career satisfaction to be individual attributes or demographic variables, characteristics of the career itself and organizational characteristics (Gosnell 2000). The extent to which these factors are satisfied will determine the extent to which workers' career satisfaction is enhanced. However, relevant literature reveals a lack of consensus regarding which of these three characteristics represent the principal source of career satisfaction. There is also relevant evidence in literature to show that teachers career satisfaction does exert a positive and significant influence on student learning (Michaelowa 2002). Since it is the desire of every nation to improve the quality of education, it is imperative that the influence of demographic variables on teacher career satisfaction be empirically determined.

This study therefore, is designed to analytically examine the influence of demographic variables on teachers' career satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The study sets out to seek answer to one major question: Do demographic variables significantly influence teachers' career satisfaction?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses were formulated to direct the study:

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

Review of Related Literature

Demographic characteristics such as gender, location, age, experience, marital status and educational attainment have been identified to influence teachers' career satisfaction. However, neither the extent of their influence nor the direction of the relationship is clear.

Studies (Ma and MacMillian 1999; Michaelowa 2002; Spear et al. 2000) have shown that female teachers have higher overall job satisfaction than male teachers. Inconsistent with these studies are Bishay's (1996) and Mwamwenda's (1997) which concluded that female teachers were less satisfied than male teachers. However, some other studies (Gosnell 2000; Sargent and Hannum 2003) found no relationship between gender and teachers' career satisfaction.

Equally found to influence career satisfaction of teachers is educational attainment. Dabo (1998), Gosnell (2000), Michaelowa (2002) and Sargent and Hannum (2003) found a significant negative relationship between educational attainment of teachers and job satisfaction. In a study that determined teachers' characteristics that influence teachers' level of job satisfaction, Michaelowa (2002) found that teachers' satisfaction with both the profession and working place is reduced when teachers' 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 author for this report was that teachers' with qualifications 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 increased self-confidence the teachers may have as a result of the higher educational attainment.

In a similar study that determined the relationship of teachers' background characteristics to teachers' satisfaction, Sargent and Hannum (2003) equally found that teachers with higher levels 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 students' 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 levels 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 teachers' 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 suggests that the most experienced teachers are most satisfied with the teaching career and the accompanying remuneration. Contrary to 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 indicates 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 teachers' 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.

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.

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 technique. The study area was stratified into three senatorial districts. Samples were drawn from each stratum to ensure even 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.

Instrumentation: The instrument utilised 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 sorts to determine the level of career satisfaction of respondents. The factors 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.

Data Collection: Data collection were by on the spot administration of instrument to respondents.

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 centred 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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

Hypothesis 1

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

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 one-way Anova shows that F-calculate (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 statistically very significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was discarded. It was concluded that years of experience significantly influences teachers' career satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3

Teachers' gender does not significantly influence 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 satisfaction score of 51.71. These mean scores indicate that female teachers are more satisfied in the teaching career than the male teachers. However, the results of the z-test show that the Z-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 3: Z-test of teachers' career satisfaction by gender

	Female	Male
Mean	52.12	51.71
Known Variance	131.94	148.78
Observations	518	461
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.4	
z	0.01	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.99	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

$p < 0.05$

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

DISCUSSION

This study reported that female teachers were more satisfied than male teachers. This is consistent with the studies of Ma and Macmillan (1999), Michaelowa (2002) and Spear et al. (2000) in finding that female teachers are more satisfied than male teachers but differs from these studies in that this difference in career satisfaction is statistically 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 a significant relationship with teachers' 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

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	1247.97	2	623.98	4.49	0.01	3.00
Within Groups	135442.48	976	138.77			
Total	136690.44	978				

$p < .05$

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 teachers' years of experience is significantly negatively related to teachers' 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 of Olarenwaju (1995) which stated that employee's job satisfaction increases with years of service on the job. The teachers in this study generally reported dissatisfaction with pay. About seventy two percent (72%) of the most experienced teachers in the study indicated dissatisfaction with teachers' 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 materialistic and capitalistic ideas, must rely on economic rewards as a means of getting job satisfaction.

There is a 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, in agreement with the studies of Dabo (1998), Gosnell (2000), Michaelowa (2002), Sargent 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 recognised 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 politically well connected. This reduces career satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The study set 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 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 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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