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WORK-RELATED VARIABLES AND TEACHER RETENTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IKOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between work-related variables and teacher retention in secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Four hypotheses were formulated for this study. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study consisted of 385 teachers in 21 public secondary schools in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was used for the study to select the sample size of 104 teachers. Questionnaire titled "Work-Related Variables and Teacher Retention Questionnaire (WRVTRQ)" was used for data collection and was validated by research supervisor and two experts from the Measurement and Evaluation unit who ensured that each of the items used measured what they were supposed to measure. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation analysis and the results were tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that work-related variables significantly relate to teachers' retention in secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was concluded that teachers' retention would be enhanced when the identified work-related variables are effectively provided and managed by school principals. it was recommended among others that school administrators should encourage and support teachers' professional development towards reducing quitting desire among teachers.

Keywords: Teachers, Retention, Attrition, Staff development

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Introduction

Teachers' retention is the ability to keep teachers in service, to function effectively without having any thought of living their job for other job in the society, outside the teaching job. Adejoke and Semiu (2019) viewed teacher retention as an obligation to continue to work as a teacher in the class room or remain a teacher for life, and to handle teaching with all passion, without distraction and discouragement of any kinds. Hirsh and Emerick (2016) argued that teacher retention is a process in which the teachers are encouraged to remain within the teaching profession, to promote qualitative and functional education in Nigeria. In other words, the abilities to keep a teacher in service, through the provision of welfare, incentives, special salary scale, good condition of service fascinating working/teacher friendly environment, promote the stay of a teacher on their jobs, without immediately looking for other jobs and thereby promote teachers' retention.

However, researcher's personal observation many teachers in Ikom Local Government Area want to leave the profession due to unrealistic expectations, poor remunerations, inadequate job security, lack of opportunities for professional growth, poor promotion policies, complex school bureaucracies and inadequate school facilities which accounts for working condition. This seemingly un-solvable problem has resulted in a constant need for qualified teachers to enter into the profession.

Dissatisfied teachers are likely to create many problems for their school instead of solving them. For instance, they may not want to teach in a way that is understandable to all students or they may dawdle way most time in immoral discussion or they may come to class late and leave the class earlier. Such behaviors definitely lead to poor results and low enrolment. Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) rightly observed that dissatisfied teachers may be involved in counterproductive activities such as theft, poor service, destructive rumors and sabotage of equipment. It was also observed that when teachers are not satisfied, they report physical disturbances such as tension, depression, lassitude, apprehension and sleeplessness.

Similarly, many teachers expressed their dissatisfaction through unprofessional attitudes to work in the areas of absenteeism, time management, disciplining the students, communication skills. Most of them seem not to know how to adequately carryout their instructions because of poor knowledge of the subject matter and are also ignorant of the best teaching method to use at that level. They go as far as disobeying their administrators when assigned a duty to perform, poor note writing and many other unethical behaviours. The researcher also noted that in some public secondary schools, some teachers are not punctual to school, do

not use appropriate teaching aids, nor apply appropriate teaching method for instructional delivery in the classroom, hardly give nor assess students' assignments. Some teachers were observed to have recorded what they have not taught students in their record of work, give their lesson notes to class prefects to copy for students while they are busy involved in petty trading within the school premises. Some teachers only mark attendance register once in the morning and are rarely seen disciplining students who erred. These poor service delivery tendencies of most teachers in the area have contributed to the fall in the standard of education and the poor academic performance of students in both internal and external examinations.

However, many teachers in Ikom Local Government of Cross River State have attributed their perceived desire to quit to be caused by the poor attitude of supervisors, poor principal leadership styles, poor supervision, low salary structure, inadequate provision of facilities, poor teaching materials, unconducive environment, poor retraining programme for skill acquisition and improvement and so on. However, with recent improvement by the government in terms of timely payment of salaries, coupled with other efforts being made in terms of renovation of some school buildings, one expects to see a positive change in the desire of teachers to quit. Sadly, the issues persist. This has made the researcher assess whether work-related variables have any relationship with teachers' retention.

Teachers are often not motivated by the negative context of their job such as lack of recognition for work well done which cause non-commitment to school work. Lack of regular payment of teachers' salaries and allowances, result in teachers abandoning classrooms for other greener pastures (Ige & Matthew, 2021). When employees' promotion takes place, they work efficiently and productivity will increase. If promotion does not take place after an employee has worked tirelessly, it dampens his/her spirit, lowers his/her morale and makes him/her feel frustrated. Similarly, teachers long for recognition, praise, conducive working environment, opportunities for professional development and feedback about their achievements and this is likely to motivate them professionally. It was based on these that this researcher seeks to examine the relationship between work-related variables and teachers' retention in secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

In Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State and other parts of Nigeria today, teaching is reluctantly chosen as a profession, and in fact, the society looks at teachers as those that are unfortunate in life. This may be because government has little concern for the welfare of teachers. The

compensation system seems not to be properly managed and is not adequate to motivate teachers to remain on the job. Teachers' promotion, salary payment and other entitlements are unduly delayed.

Regrettably, most qualified teachers in Ikom Local Government Area are willing to leave the teaching profession for non-teaching employment. This situation had not only led to shortage of teachers in many public primary schools but also to an overwhelmingly influx and mass exodus of teachers to other sectors where terms of service are usually more attractive. While authorities at the helm of affairs of the State Ministry of Education in most cases have only been replacing teachers who leave the service through natural attrition (retirement and death), the reality on the ground is that there is an acute shortage of teachers and a dire growing need for more teachers to cope with higher demand of secondary education.

Having teachers who are not committed to the job could lead to but not limited to poor student academic achievement, indiscipline, cultism, examination malpractice, high incidence of student dropout, insufficient use instructional materials, inability of the area to fill its admission quota, thuggery, and other social vices that are inimical to community development.

Many teachers want to leave the profession due to unrealistic expectations, poor remunerations, inadequate job security, lack of opportunities for professional growth, poor promotion policies, complex school bureaucracies and inadequate school facilities which accounts for working condition. This seemingly un-solvable problem of attrition has resulted in a constant need for qualified teachers to enter into the profession.

However, despite government efforts to encourage teachers in the teaching profession, as evident in retraining and development workshops for teachers and principals, improved teachers' salary structure, announcement of new minimum wage, payment of teachers' salaries in a timely manner, the problem of teacher retention still persists. At this juncture, it is pertinent to raise the question "to what extent does work-related variables relate to teachers' retention in secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State?

Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between staff development opportunities and teacher retention.
2. There is no significant relationship between provision of teaching facilities and teacher retention.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Staff development opportunities and teacher retention

Ekabu (2019) aimed at establishing whether there was any relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. The results of product moment correlation showed a negative linear relationship between the independent variable, staff development opportunities and the dependent variable, turnover intention. The study concluded that teachers' motivation in secondary schools in Meru County is low with many teachers having low morale and low levels of commitment to their jobs due to failure of most schools and their employer, Teachers Service Commission to offer them opportunities for learning and development resulting to high turnover intention. The study recommends that the Teachers Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, and the various Boards of Management consider issues of staff development as a way of motivating and reducing turnover intention hence retention in teaching service.

Ehinola and Akomolafe (2022) examined in-service programmes and mentoring as determinants of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ondo Senatorial District, Nigeria. Findings revealed that that teachers perceived in-service training as a tool that moderately improve teachers' capacity; there was a significant relationship between in-service programmes and teachers' job performance; and a significant relationship existed between mentoring strategy and teachers' job performance. Based on the finding, it was concluded that both in-service and mentoring strategies contribute positively to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. It was recommended, among others, that Government should encourage teachers to access capacity training within and outside the school by giving monetary assistance and due recognition to participants.

Chukwuemeka, Iremeka, Aneke, Ozioko, Muhammad and Nweke (2021) assessed the impact of staff training and development on teachers' job performance and retention among secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that implementation of personnel policy of training and development enhance teachers' job performance on the job and also significantly contributed to teacher retention among secondary schools in South East, Nigeria. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that government across levels should provide necessary environment for regular and periodic training and retraining of teachers for job productivity and retention among others.

Mezieobi, Chukwuma-Nwankwo, Ajaegbo, Agulanna, Okobia, Osuji, Ali, Nwosu and Mezieobi (2023) examined teachers' retraining opportunities and job

effectiveness in public secondary school in Imo State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between teachers retraining opportunities such as PostGraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), workshops, and mentoring and teachers job effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Council, Imo State, Nigeria, West Africa. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the State Ministry of Education should come up with a policy that would require all teachers in government secondary schools who do not have their first degree in Education to enrol for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education. This would enhance their effectiveness in teaching to a high extent.

Ogunbayo and Mhlanga (2022) investigated the effects of training on teachers' job performance in teaching technical/engineering-based subjects in public secondary schools. The study's findings revealed that teachers' training in teaching technical/engineering-based subjects in secondary schools improves job performance and students' academic performance. The study's findings also showed that the training for technical/engineering-based subjects teachers ensure increased recognition, promotion, higher pay, and a sense of personal satisfaction. The study concluded that government and educational stakeholders should organise and expose technical/engineering base subject teachers to different on-the-job training that will allow them to grow professionally.

Provision of teaching materials and teachers' retention

Ige and Mathew (2021) investigated the challenges of the teaching profession in Nigeria, as perceived by the teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Central Senatorial District of Ondo State. The study found the delay in the payment of salaries and allowances, heavy workload, over-population, inadequate infrastructural facilities in schools, lack of uniform salary scale, lack of opportunity for career/skill development, poor academic performance, just to mention a few as the challenges of teaching in Nigeria. No significant difference was also found in the perception of male and female teachers, the less and highly experienced teachers, on the challenges of the teaching profession in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that government should provide more funds for the education sector and fully professionalize teaching to improve its status.

Ndukwu and Edo (2020) investigated influence of motivation on teachers' job performance in secondary schools, Rivers State, Nigeria. Findings indicated that motivation influences teachers' job performance in respect of building positive attitudes and beliefs towards teaching and learning. Based on the findings, it is therefore concluded that job success of

teachers highly depended on the quality, competency and skillfulness generated through motivation. It was recommended that in-service training should be intermittently organized for the teachers to enhance their capacity in teaching and learning. More so, promotion should be given when due for advancement and endowment of creative responsibilities.

Ekabu, Kalai and Nyagah (2018) examined the relationship between working conditions and teacher turnover intentions in public secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya. The result of product moment correlation analysis indicated that the independent variable, working conditions have a negative and an inverse relationship with the independent variable, turnover intention. These results were agreed with the results of chi-square analysis for both the independent variable which showed a significant relationship between working conditions and turnover intentions of secondary school teachers in Meru County. The results therefore established that teachers' motivation in secondary schools in Meru County is low due to poor working conditions and the education system appears to be staffed with teachers with poor morale and low levels of commitment to their jobs leading to high turnover intentions. The study recommends the various boards of management and other education stakeholders at the national and county government levels consider issues of teachers working conditions as an essential element in the motivating and reducing turnover intentions hence retention in teaching service.

Aladetan (2023) examined work environment and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that school location was moderately conducive for teachers' work; the level of interpersonal relationship among teachers was high and the provision of physical facilities was moderate. The findings also revealed that there was significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance ($r = 0.310$, $p = 0.001$); and there was significant relationship between provision of physical facilities and teachers' job performance ($r = 0.578$, $p = 0.000$). The study therefore concluded that work environment enhanced job performance of the teachers. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that physical facilities such as conducive office space, potable water and constant electricity should be provided to aid teachers' job performance.

Research Method

The research design adopted for this study was correlational design. The design was chosen because the research intended to determine the relationship between work-related variables and teacher retention at the time of investigation in secondary schools.

The population of this study consists of all teachers in public secondary schools in

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Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State. According to the Planning, Research and Statistics Department of the Cross River State Secondary Education Board (CRSSEB, 2024), there are a total of 385 teachers in public secondary schools in the area.

The researchers used the simple random sampling technique for this study. The entire process of sampling is done a single step with each subject selected independently of the other members of the population. The main purpose of using the simple random sampling technique is to compose a sample that will yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population.

The technique employed by the researcher is the "hat and draw" method. In this method, the researcher wrote "yes" or "no" on slips of papers, rolled into small balls, mixed the balls in a container and asked teachers in the schools to pick. Those who picked "yes" were used for the study. Eight (8) teachers who had served not less than three years from each of the 13 sampled secondary schools were sampled for the study. The sample size for this study consists of one hundred and four (104) teachers drawn from 13 public secondary schools.

A questionnaire titled "Work-Related Variables and Teachers' Retention Questionnaire (WRVTRQ) was designed and used for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections – sections A and B. Section A consists of twenty-four items based on the sub-variables of the independent variable in the study. The 4-point response scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree, (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used in the questionnaire.

Section B of the instrument has six items designed to measure the dependent variable (Teachers' retention). The 4-point response scale was also used for the design. The scale contains response options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree, (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The research instrument was subjected to face validity by the research supervisor and two experts in Test and Measurement who ensured that items used measured what they purport to measure. More so, five items that did not measure the sub-variables were removed and replaced with items that measured the sub-variables after which corrections were made before embarking on the trial test of the instrument. Cronbach alpha reliability was used to establish the reliability of the instrument with coefficients ranging from .78 -.83.

Principals of the sampled schools were first approached for permission to use their teachers and students for the study after sampling. The researcher appealed to the teachers of the sampled schools to respond to the questionnaires objectively. After explaining the content to the respondents, the questionnaires were administered by the researcher and three research assistants.

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Completed copies of the questionnaires were immediately collected at the end of the exercise.

Descriptive statistics (mean and summation) was used to summarize data generated from the questionnaires. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis (r) was used to test hypotheses.

Presentation of Results

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between staff development opportunities and teacher retention. Pearson's product moment correlation analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. Summary of the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson's product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between staff development opportunities and teacher retention, N = 104.

Variables	$\overline{X}$	SD	r
Staff development opportunities	18.79	1.62	
Teacher retention	20.19	1.92	.863*

*Significant at .05

The result presented in Table 2 indicated that the calculated r-value of .863 was greater than the critical r-value of .195 at .05 level of significance and 102 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis upheld. This means that there is a significant relationship between staff development opportunities and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between provision of teaching facilities and teacher retention. Pearson's product moment correlation analysis was used to test the null hypothesis. Summary of the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson's product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between provision of teaching facilities and teacher retention, N = 104.

Variables	$\overline{X}$	SD	r
Provision of teaching facilities	19.75	1.46	
Teacher retention	20.19	1.92	.837*

*Significant at .05

The result presented in Table 3 indicated that the calculated r-value of .837 was greater than the critical r-value of .195 at .05 level of significance and 102 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis upheld. This means that there is a significant relationship between provision of teaching materials and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area.

Discussion of findings

This hypothesis in a null form stated that there is no significant relationship between staff development opportunities and teacher retention. The result of the analysis of this hypothesis was significantly positive. This necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The result of this hypothesis is in agreement with the findings of Ekabu (2019) who averred that Teachers Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, and the various Boards of Management should consider issues of staff development as a way of motivating and reducing turnover intention hence retention in teaching service. Likewise, Ehinola and Akomolafe (2022) opined that Government should encourage teachers to access capacity training within and outside the school by giving monetary assistance and due recognition to participants. Chukwuemeka, Iremeka, Aneke, Ozioko, Muhammad and Nweke (2021) asserted that government across levels should provide necessary environment for regular and periodic training and retraining of teachers for job productivity and retention among others. Mezieobi, Chukwuma-Nwankwo, Ajaegbo, Agulanna, Okobia, Osuji, Ali, Nwosu and Mezieobi (2023) were of the view that the State Ministry of Education should come up with a policy that would require all teachers in government secondary schools who do not have their first degree in Education to enroll for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education.

This hypothesis in a null form stated that provision of teaching facilities and teacher retention. The result of the analysis of this hypothesis was significantly positive. This necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The findings of this hypothesis corroborate the findings of Faremi (2017) who opined that teacher retention strategies should include prompt payment of salary, workers' welfare packages, good working conditions, teacher mentoring programme, teacher preparation and the provision of basic amenities for effective academic calendar in the secondary schools to ensure job security in private secondary schools. Similarly, Ige and Mathew (2021) asserted that delay in the payment of salaries and allowances, heavy workload, over-population, inadequate infrastructural facilities in schools, lack of uniform salary scale, lack of opportunity for career/skill development, poor academic performance,

just to mention a few as the challenges of teaching in Nigeria.

Likewise, Ekabu, Kalai and Nyagah (2018) averred that various Boards of Management and other education stakeholders at the national and county government levels consider issues of teachers working conditions as an essential element in the motivating and reducing turnover intentions hence retention in teaching service.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that teachers' retention would be enhanced when the identified work-related variables are effectively provided and managed by school principals. This is premised on the fact that the result of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between work-related variables and teachers' retention.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. School administrators should encourage and support teachers' professional development towards reducing quitting desire among teachers.
2. Adequate funding should be made available for the procurement of modern teaching facilities so as to ensure quality instructional delivery and retention of teachers.

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