**WORKING CONDITIONS AS A CORRELATE OF TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN DELTA STATE NIGERIA**

**ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between working conditions and teachers’ job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State. Despite the crucial role educators play in the school system, there is a notable gap between their working conditions and overall job satisfaction. The study was guided by two research questions that explored the nature of teachers’ working conditions and the relationship between workplace interpersonal relationships and job satisfaction. A mixed-methods research design was employed for data collection. The population was made up of teachers from 462 public secondary schools across the state. A sample of 200 teachers was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representativeness. The data collected using the questionnaires were analysed using SPSS, mean, frequency, and standard deviation. while correlation analysis assessed relationships between variables. Additionally, regression analysis was conducted to identify key factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction. Findings indicated that teachers in Delta State experience unfavourable working conditions, as evidenced by a group mean score of 2.24, which falls below the benchmark of 2.50. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant relationship between workplace interpersonal relationships and job satisfaction among teachers in the state. The study concluded that improving the work environment is essential for enhancing teachers' performance and job satisfaction in Delta State.

**Key words**: Working condition, Correlate, teachers, job satisfaction, Delta State

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Education serves as the foundation for societal growth and development. It provides individuals with the essential knowledge and skills needed for both personal and communal progress. Central to the education system are teachers, who serve as the bedrock of knowledge dissemination. Their role is pivotal in shaping the future of a nation. However, the effective functioning of teachers in any educational system is intrinsically linked to their job satisfaction, which, in turn, is significantly influenced by their working conditions.

The job of a teacher is multifaceted, encompassing the responsibility of imparting knowledge, nurturing young minds, and preparing students for an ever-evolving world. In public secondary schools in Nigeria, teachers confront a unique set of challenges. These challenges, including but not limited to large class sizes, low compensation, limited professional development opportunities, and administrative obstacles, have profound implications for the satisfaction they derive from their job. This study seeks to investigate and analyse the complex interplay between the conditions of work and job satisfaction in the Nigerian context.

The challenges within Nigeria's education system are multifaceted, reflecting both systemic and contextual issues. Over the years, the Nigerian government has introduced various educational policies and initiatives for improving education quality. Despite these efforts, public secondary schools in Nigeria continue to face challenges that affect both teachers and students (Money & Ekwevugbe, 2008)

One pressing challenge in Nigerian public secondary schools is class size. Many classrooms are overcrowded, with a single teacher responsible for educating a large number of students (Ekwevugbe, 2024). Blatchford et al. (2011) argue that large class sizes can lead to reduced individualized attention, increased workload, and classroom management challenges. Overcrowded classrooms can affect the teacher's ability to deliver quality education and maintain discipline effectively.

Compensation is also a critical aspect of teachers' working conditions. In Nigeria, concerns about teachers' salaries have been longstanding. While teaching is regarded as a noble profession, low salaries often force teachers to grapple with financial challenges. As revealed by the study by Omololu (2013), it revealed that teachers' salaries in Nigeria are often criticized as inadequate and insufficient to cover basic needs. Inadequate compensation can result in dissatisfaction and financial stress among teachers (Bakotić, 2016).

Administrative support plays a pivotal role in shaping working conditions of teachers. Effective leadership, clear communication, and support in addressing classroom challenges are essential for creating conducive work environments. Lack of administrative support can result in frustration and dissatisfaction among teachers. Administrative challenges are prevalent in Nigerian public secondary schools, with issues such as delayed promotions, bureaucratic procedures, and ineffective school governance structures affecting the overall job satisfaction of educators (Olaitan, 2016).

Professional development is vital for the growth of teachers job satisfaction. Access to training, workshops, and career advancement opportunities can enhance teachers' skills and motivation. However, in Nigeria, the availability of such opportunities has been limited, as reported by Adeyemi (2015). The limited access to professional development can lead to stagnation and dissatisfaction among teachers.

Interpersonal relationships within the school environment, including interactions with colleagues, students, and parents, significantly influence job satisfaction (Hakanen et al., 2006). Positive relationships create a supportive atmosphere, while negative interactions can lead to stress and dissatisfaction.

In Nigeria, educators often face challenges in maintaining positive relationships due to issues such as indiscipline among students, strained teacher-student relationships, and limited parental involvement (Onwuama, 2019). These situations can impact teachers' job satisfaction and contribute to stress and fatigue.

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Job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept encompassing various dimensions. In the context of teaching, teacher job satisfaction involves intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic pertains to the nature of the work itself, while extrinsic relates to external factors like workers salary, working conditions, administrative support amongst others.

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in education, as it influences teacher retention, classroom performance, and student outcomes. Satisfied teachers may be more motivated, engaged, and committed to their profession. On the contrary, dissatisfied teachers may become disengaged, leading to lower educational quality. Studies suggest that teacher job satisfaction is positively correlated with factors such as autonomy, meaningful work, positive relationships with students and colleagues, and opportunities for professional growth (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Conversely, dissatisfaction with working conditions, lack of support, and low compensation can lead to reduced job satisfaction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Nigerian public secondary schools face numerous challenges, as highlighted by various researchers. Overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teaching materials, and low teacher salaries are common issues (Omololu, 2013). Delayed promotions, administrative inefficiencies, and a lack of professional development opportunities have also been reported (Adeyemi, 2015; Ekwevugbe, 2014; Jessa and Obata, 2024).

The conditions and environment in which individuals work play a crucial role in determining their level of job satisfaction. Employees are particularly concerned about their work environment, not only for their personal comfort but also for improving their efficiency and productivity. Ekwevugbe and Atare (2022) and Enjoh (2018) emphasized that for academic success to be effectively achieved in schools essential physical infrastructure must be provided, including well-equipped classrooms, libraries, and proper waste disposal facilities. Additionally, many secondary school teachers have limited access to essential resources such as personal offices, computers, telephones, and security provisions. Furthermore, their compensation does not equate to jobs that require similar educational qualifications and work intensity. The overwhelming workload further restricts most teachers from excelling in their profession without experiencing excessive hardship and personal sacrifices. Job satisfaction is influenced by a combination of multiple factors, and it is the responsibility of management to foster a positive work environment that enhances employee satisfaction. According to Okumbe (2022), employees value a conducive work environment that ensures personal comfort and enhances work efficiency. A well-maintained, modern workplace equipped with adequate and relevant tools contributes to job satisfaction. The provision of productivity-enhancing tools, including upgraded information technology, enables employees to perform their tasks more efficiently, thereby boosting job satisfaction.

Several studies in Nigeria have underscored the significant influence of working conditions on teacher job satisfaction. For instance, Olaitan (2016) identified a strong relationship between class size and job satisfaction, noting that larger class sizes often result in decreased satisfaction levels among teachers. Additionally, he reported that inadequate salaries and the lack of opportunities for professional development were major contributors to dissatisfaction among Nigerian teachers. The prevailing working conditions in Nigeria’s education sector fall significantly below the standards observed in more developed countries.

This study examined the correlation between working conditions and job satisfaction among teachers by assessing various elements of working conditions and teacher satisfaction. The study seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations that can enhance teachers' working conditions, ultimately improving job satisfaction and promoting better educational outcomes.

The research is anchored on the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory. It aligns with Enjoh (2018) in asserting that favourable working conditions lead to better performance. Conversely, when teachers experience dissatisfaction, they may become disengaged, leading to a drop in education quality. High teacher turnover rates, which are often linked to dissatisfaction, disrupt educational continuity and negatively impact student learning outcomes (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Despite the critical role teachers play in secondary schools in Delta State there is a concerning discrepancy between the working conditions they experience and their overall job satisfaction. There are the general feelings among stakeholders that the school environment and other factors appear to have negative impact on the extent to which teachers are willing to constructively engage the students for better academic performance. The research addresses the impact of working conditions on job satisfaction of teachers by examining the various components of working conditions and their relationship with job satisfaction among teachers.

**1.1 Research Questions**

The research questions include:

1. What are the working conditions experienced by teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2. Is there a significant relationship between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**1.2 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were generated;

1. There is no significant relationship between working conditions and Job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State
2. There is no significant relationship between workplace interpersonal relationship and teacher’s job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

A mixed-methods approach was adopted for the study. Utilizing these methods together provided a more in-depth understanding of the connection between working conditions and job satisfaction among teachers in public schools in the state.

The target population for the quantitative aspect of this research consisted of teachers from all 462 public secondary schools distributed across different Local Government Areas in Delta State.

 A sample of 200 teachers was used while stratified random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of teachers.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the quantitative phase of the study. This questionnaire, titled "Working Conditions and Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (WCJSQ)," was designed to capture demographic details, working conditions, and job satisfaction levels. The WCJSQ comprised two sections: Section A focused on background information, while Section B contained items addressing the relationship between the variables. The questionnaire items were positively framed and structured on a four-point scale.

The instrument underwent validation by specialists in educational management, and measurement and evaluation. Their expert reviews and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the test-retest method. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the results, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.75, confirming the instrument’s consistency.

The research instrument was personally distributed to the selected schools, ensuring direct contact with respondents for data collection.

The collected quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistical techniques, including mean, frequency distribution, and standard deviation, were employed. Correlation analysis was equally conducted to determine key factors that significantly influence job satisfaction.

**3. RESULTS**

Research Question 1: What are the working conditions experienced by teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 1** Mean of respondents on the working conditions experienced by teachers.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/no** | **Variable on working conditions experienced and Professional Development Opportunities** | **N** | Strongly Agree(SA) | Agree(A) | Disagree(D) | Strongly Disagree(SD) | **Mean** | **STD** |
|  | I have access to necessary teaching materials and resources? | 200 | 88 | 56 | 16 | 40 | 2.96 | 1.15 |
|  | I am well paid and I am satisfied with my Salary | 200 | 12 | 20 | 100 | 68 | 1.88 | 0.82 |
|  | I feel adequately compensated for your work | 200 | 20 | 12 | 84 | 84 | 1.84 | 0.93 |
|  | I have attended a professional development workshops or training in the past year | 200 | 40 | 60 | 24 | 76 | 2.32 | 1.18 |
|  | The rate of the level of administrative support in your school is excellent | 200 | 28 | 60 | 28 | 84 | 2.16 | 1.12 |
|  | I feel my workload is manageable | 200 | 36 | 92 | 44 | 28 | 2.68 | 0.93 |
|  | I believe my opinions and concerns are considered in decision-making at my school | 200 | 4 | 52 | 52 | 92 | 1.84 | 0.88 |
|  | **Group Mean** |  | **2.24** | **1.00** |

Table 1 shows only variables items 1 and 6 having means scores above the bench mark mean score of 2.50 indicating that these were working conditions experienced by public secondary schools teachers in Delta State. However variables items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 had a mean score below the bench mark mean score of 2.50 indicating that these were working conditions were not experienced by public secondary schools teachers in Delta State. Furthermore, the group mean for all the variables had a mean score of 2.24 which is below the mean bench mark of 2.50 indicating that in general working conditions experienced by public secondary schools teachers in Delta State were tilting towards the negative direction or not favourable based on the group mean score of 2.24 not up to the 2.50 bench mark.

Research Question 2**:** Is there a significant relationship between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 2a: Multiple regression showing the relationship between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .229a | .052 | .038 | 1.02186 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), positive interactions with students, positive interactions with colleagues, see students succeed academically |

**Table 2b: ANOVAa**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 11.338 | 3 | 3.779 | 3.619 | .014b |
| Residual | 204.662 | 196 | 1.044 |  |  |
| Total | 216.000 | 199 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: Teachers Job Satisfaction |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), positive interactions with students, positive interactions with colleagues, see students succeed academically |

Table 2a shows the Regression Statistics of the relationship between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction. The table revealed a Multiple R value of 0.229, indicating the presence of a weak but positive correlation between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction up to about 22.9%. The table also shows the R Square value of 0.052, indicating that workplace interpersonal relationship are responsible for teachers job satisfaction up to about 5.2%. Table 2b shows further that there is statistical significance between workplace interpersonal relationship and teachers’ job satisfaction at a 0.05 significance level. Conclusively, the multiple regression model between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction of teachers in public secondary schools in Delta state, indicates that a weak positive relationship does exist between workplace interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction of teachers in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between working conditions and Job satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

**Table 3:** Multiple regression showing relationship between working conditions and job satisfaction

|  |
| --- |
| *Regression Statistics* |
| Multiple R | 0.374 |
| R Square | 0.140 |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.127 |
| Standard Error | 0.974 |
| Observations | 200 |

The table revealed a Multiple R value of 0.374, highlighting that there is moderate positive relationship between the variables for working conditions and Job satisfaction up to about 37.4%. Also revealed in the table is the R Square value of 0.140, implying that working conditions are responsible for Job satisfaction up to about 14.0%. The model therefore shows that a moderate positive relationship does exist between working conditions and Job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2**:** There is no significant relationship between work interpersonal relationship and teacher’s job satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

**Table 4:** Multiple Regression showing the relationship between interpersonal relations and teachers’ job satisfaction

|  |
| --- |
| *Regression Statistics* |
| Multiple R | 0.229 |
| R Square | 0.052 |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.038 |
| Standard Error | 1.022 |
| Observations | 200 |

Table 4 shows the *Regression analysis* for the relationship between work interpersonal relationship and teacher’s job satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools. The table indicates a Multiple R value of 0.229, showcasing a weak positive relationship between class size and Job satisfaction up to about 22.9%. Furthermore, the R Square value of 0.052, implies that work interpersonal relationship are responsible for Job satisfaction up to about 5.2%, indicating therefore that a weak positive relationship does exists between work interpersonal relationship and Job satisfaction in Schools in Delta State.

**4. DISCUSSION**

The study indicated that the working conditions encountered by teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State were generally unfavourable. However, despite these challenges, both male and female teachers reported overall job satisfaction. Klassen and Anderson (2009) noted a shift in teachers' concerns over time, highlighting that in 1962 salary was their primary concern whereas by 2007, dissatisfaction stemmed from the absence of job satisfiers.

Additionally, the study found a moderate yet positive correlation between class size and teacher job satisfaction in Delta State’s public secondary schools. In discussing classroom size, Tria (2023) pointed out that it aligns with one of the earliest models of job satisfaction which centres on an employee's feelings and attitudes toward their work.

Moreover, the findings revealed that workplace interpersonal relationships had a weak but positive association with teachers' job satisfaction. This suggests that while workplace relationships do contribute to job satisfaction, their impact remains relatively minor.

**5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The findings suggest that teachers' job performance is significantly influenced by the working conditions. Job satisfaction is a dynamic construct shaped by multiple interacting factors (Yuh & Choi, 2017). It reflects employees' perceptions of their work environment, incorporating both rational and emotional elements, as well as internal factors (such as a teacher's personal characteristics) and external factors such as school policies and leadership (Özkan & Akgenç, 2022).

The following recommendation is made based on the findings:

* The work environment for teachers should be improved upon to promote better performance and job satisfaction.

**6. POLICY IMPLICATION AND RESEARCH GAP**

The findings obtained in the study has implication for scientific community in the several ways.. The findings confirm that working conditions have a significant influence on teachers' job satisfaction. The study established that the working conditions experienced by teachers in these schools are generally unfavourable.

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