

A Comparative Study on Causes of Teacher Attrition in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria

Alabi, Festus Oluwole

Department of Educational Management

Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Previous works on causes of teacher attrition in secondary schools have been predominantly qualitative and phenomenological. This paper, predicated by the Herzberg's two-factor theory however, compared the causes of teacher attrition in public and private secondary schools using descriptive design of a survey type and focusing on the extrinsic and intrinsic conditions of the teaching profession. The population consisted of all the professional teachers in the 304 public and over 285 private secondary schools in Ondo State as at 2015/2016 academic session. 15 public secondary schools and 15 private secondary schools were purposively selected across the 18 Local Government Areas of the state, and 5 teachers with not less than 5 years teaching experience were purposively selected in each school to make 75 teachers in public and 75 in private secondary schools. Three research questions were raised and one hypothesis was tested. The instrument for gathering data for the study was a 35-item researcher developed and validated questionnaire titled "Causes of Teacher Attrition in Secondary Schools Descriptive Questionnaire (TASSDQ) with a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.69$. Findings show that the causes of attrition in schools irrespective of the proprietorship include irregular/non-payment of salaries and fringe benefits, stressful teaching tasks, poor public perception about teaching, and employment of non-professionals, among others. However, unsatisfactory salary is not a cause of teacher attrition in public secondary schools whereas it stands as a major cause in private secondary schools. Also, findings reveal a significant difference in the causes of teacher attrition between public and private secondary schools ($t(148) = 1.196; >.05$). Given these findings, the recommendation is that the proprietors and principals of secondary schools should evolve a management strategy that enhances the dignity of teachers through the provision of such opportunities for intrinsic and extrinsic conditions as feelings of responsibility, challenge, recognition, and effectiveness in the remuneration system.

Keywords: *Teacher attrition, Public secondary schools, Private secondary schools.*

Corresponding Author: Alabi, Festus Oluwole

Background to the Study

While education industry is perhaps the single most complex, and dynamic in the development of any nation because of its determining influence on the quality of human capital and invariably, productivity in other industries, the teacher factor has always been particularly critical, especially in the realization of the goals of education. There is an increasing complaint among secondary school teachers of increase in workload, low work morale and poor students' performance as a result of teacher attrition. That suggests the rationale for the concerns and worries of all stakeholders in societal development, especially policy makers and educational practitioners over the rate of teacher attrition in schools.

According to Aminu (2014) one of the greatest challenges facing many schools around the globe today is the issue of teacher attrition. Teacher attrition refers to the number of teachers quitting the teaching profession either wittingly or unwittingly. Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson (2011) observe that attrition occurs when the individual realises his/her dissatisfaction with his/her membership of an organisation and decides to resign or when the organisation realises that the individual is a failure and decides to sack.

According to Ingersol (2013) and Change (2009) 25% of teachers in United States of America (USA) leave the teaching profession for another profession within the first working year while about 40% leave within five years of their entry. The situation is about the same in developing countries as Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) (2009) notes that high level of teacher attrition is a serious problem facing the education sector in Ghana. In Nigeria several studies of teacher attrition in Nigeria secondary schools are available in literature which point to higher rate, especially in the Northern part with about 10% to 20%, (Adamu 2009) than in the southern part with about 10% to 15% (Popoola 2009) and in the private schools than in the public schools (Bottit, Fautel and Burns (1991). The qualitative studies that resulted into the above position identified low and irregular payment of salaries and allowances, high work load and unacceptable leadership style among other variables as major causes of teacher attrition in schools. However attrition covers more than acceptable remuneration, high workload and bad leadership style as shown in those qualitative studies. Attrition should be seen as a problem requiring holistic examination, using appropriate data and thus be studied descriptively from the perception of teachers themselves who are the single most critical element after students, in the education industry. This is more so that, as Ivancevich et al (2011) put it " even the introduction of pension scheme for teachers and the use of teachers salary with those of their reference others in the government ministries has only led to a high quest for teaching without a corresponding quest to remain when alternatives are available. " It is in this regard that this paper focuses on the perception of teachers on the causes of teacher attrition in Ondo state secondary schools with regard to extrinsic and intrinsic conditions in the teaching profession.

Statement of the Problem

There are widespread complains on the high incidence of students' indiscipline, falling standard of education and students' drop out in secondary schools attributable to teachers rampant cases of attrition in secondary schools. There is hardly a full academic session that one or more teaching staff will not quit a school for one reason or the other. This is a serious scenario in the educational development of the country.

Objective of the Study

The major purpose of this study is therefore to examine the causes of teacher attrition with regard to the extrinsic and intrinsic conditions of teaching in Ondo state public and private secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of teacher attrition in Ondo state public and private secondary schools?
2. What is the perception of teachers on the availability of extrinsic conditions of teaching in public and private secondary schools?
3. What is the perception of teachers on the availability of intrinsic conditions of teaching in public and private secondary schools?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the causes of teacher attrition between the public and private secondary schools in Ondo state.

Theoretical Framework

The study is predicated on Herzberg's theory of motivation. The basis of this theory is that a job should meet the worker's need for both physiological and psychological growth. This is because there is a set of extrinsic and intrinsic conditions in a job which influence workers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction in a workplace. The extrinsic conditions, otherwise called job context, according to Herzberg (1966) results in employees' job dissatisfaction when absent from a job but their presence does not necessarily spur workers interest to higher job performance. They are just needed to ensure that there is "no dissatisfaction". Examples are salary, working conditions; inter personal relationship among workers and leadership styles employed.

The intrinsic conditions are related to the nature of the job itself such as the work itself, the possibility of advancement and growth, recognition and responsibility. These conditions are tagged satisfiers or motivators because they contribute to satisfaction when present in a job, hence job retention. That is why contemporary job design theory defines intrinsic motivation in relation to workers "empowerment" which results from feelings of responsibility, challenge recognition and from such job features as variety, autonomy, and significance, and also from outside the job itself as pay and remuneration.

Methodology

Research Design: - Descriptive survey research design was used

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population of the study consisted of all the professional teachers in the 304 public and 285 private secondary schools (EMIS 2014) in Ondo state in the 2015/16 academic session. A purposive random sampling was employed to select 30 secondary schools (15 public and 15 private) of not less than 15 years of existence (governmental approved) from each of the 3 geo-political zones (Ondo North, Ondo central, and Ondo south) to which the state is divided, totalizing 30 secondary schools. 5 certified teachers (B.Ed) with not less than 5 years teaching experience were purposively drawn from each of the 30 schools. A total number of 150 teachers were sampled as subjects.

Instrumentation

The instrument used was a self developed and validated questionnaire titled "Teachers' Perception of the Causes of Teacher Attrition Descriptive Questionnaire" (TPCTADQ). It consisted of three (3) sections, A B and C. Section A sought demographic information of respondents, while section B contained 15 items which focused on causes of teacher attrition in secondary schools. Section C also contained 15 items which sought information on the level of availability of the extrinsic and intrinsic conditions of the teaching profession in the schools. It

was meant for teachers to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on the items. It was structured on a four point Likert scoring scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The reliability was determined in the pilot testing involving some selected secondary schools serving teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. Their responses were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with reliability coefficient of 0.69.

Administration of the instrument was carried out by the researcher. Data collected were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics as frequency counts and mean to answer the research questions. The decision rule on acceptance or rejection was based on a criterion mean of 2.50, which was derived from the values assigned to the response value. Therefore, any item with mean 2.50 and above is positive while any one with mean below 2.50 is negative. However, t-test was used to answer the only hypothesis for the study.

Results

Research Question: What are the causes of teacher attrition in Ondo State Public and Private Secondary School?

Table 1: Causes of teacher attrition in Ondo State Public and Private Secondary Schools.

S/N	Items	Public Secondary Schools		Private Secondary Schools	
		\bar{X}	Rank order	\bar{X}	Rank order
1	Unsatisfactory salary relative to relevant others	2.4	12 th	3.2	1 st
2	Irregular payment of salary	2.8	3 rd	2.9	4 th
3	Non or late provision of fringe benefits	2.9	2 nd	3.0	3 rd
4	Excessive workload/ class size	2.5	9 th	2.7	9 th
5	Excessive Paper work	2.5	9 th	2.8	8 th
6	Lack of opportunities for advancement	2.5	9 th	2.8	5 th
7	Lack of challenging tasks (teaching is boring)	2.8	3 rd	2.2	11 th
8	uncomfortable physical work environment	2.4	12 th	2.2	11 th
9	Lack of collegial support	2.6	7 th	2.7	9 th
10	Autocratic leadership style	2.6	7 th	2.8	5 th
11	Non involvement in decision making	2.8	3 rd	3.1	2 nd
12	The conviction that teaching is relatively insecure	2.4	12 th	2.8	5 th
13	Poor public perception about teaching	2.8	3 rd	2.6	12 th
14	Change in teacher's family status (marriage, divorce or transfer)	2.2	15 th	2.4	13 th
15	Employment of non-professional teachers in schools.	3.0	1 st	2.7	8 th
	Grand mean	2.6		2.7	

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2016.

Decision rule: mean score of 2.50 and above is accepted while mean score below 2.50 is not accepted.

The data on table 1 show that the grand mean of 2.6 for public secondary school and 2.7 for private secondary schools are greater than the accepted mean of 2.50 implying that the items on table 1 have been accepted as the causes of teacher attrition in secondary schools in Ondo State irrespective of the proprietorship.

However the items analysis indicates that items 1, 8, 12 and 14 in public schools have mean scores which are less than the accepted mean of 2.50 and therefore are not accepted as causes of teacher attrition. The data on table 1 also show that while unsatisfactory salary is not a cause of teacher attrition in public secondary school, with a mean of 2.4, it ranks first as major cause in the private secondary school with a mean score of 3.2

Research Question 2: What is the perception of teachers on the availability of extrinsic conditions of teaching in public and private secondary schools?

Table 2: Teachers' Perception on the Availability of Extrinsic Conditions of Teaching in Public and Private Secondary Schools.

S/N	Items	Public secondary schools	Private secondary schools
16	There is free flow of information	2.5	2.6
17	I am involved in decision making	2.5	2.3
18	There is high collegial support	2.5	2.3
19	My monthly salary is above 100 dollars	3.2	2.2
20	There is regular payment of salary	2.2	2.2
21	There is adequate provision of fringe benefits	2.4	2.2
22	I am highly respected as a teacher	2.4	2.2
23	The classroom environment is conducive	2.4	2.5
24	The school environment is attractive	2.4	2.6
	Weighted mean	2.5	2.3

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2016.

Table 2 shows that teachers agreed that there is free flow of information, involvement of teachers in decision making, collegial support and payment of the minimum monthly salary of 100 dollars (mean scores 2.5; 2.5; 2.5; and 3.2) in their schools, but disagreed with items 20 -24 with the following mean scores: 2.2, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.4. In the same vein, the private school teachers agreed with items 16, 23, and 24 which focus on the availability of free flow of information, conducive classroom environment and attractive school environment but disagreed with items 17 - 22. The weighted mean for the public school is 2.5 while that of the private school is 2.3, implying that there is availability of extrinsic conditions in teaching profession in the public secondary schools while the reverse is the case in private schools.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of teachers on the availability of intrinsic conditions in public and private secondary schools?

Table 3: Teachers' Perception on the availability of Intrinsic Conditions in Public and Private Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Public sec. schls	Private sec. schls
25	Teaching here is challenging	2.4	2.4
26	the class size/ work load here is moderate	2.3	2.2
27	There is adequate job rewards	2.2	2.3
28	There is job security	2.6	2.2
29	There are development programmes for teachers	2.5	2.2
30	The teachers here are all professionals	2.8	2.2

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2016.

Table 3 shows that teachers in public secondary schools agreed that there is job security, developmental programmes for teachers and that the teaching staff are all professionals, as shown in the positive mean rating of items 28, 29 and 30 while items 25, 26 and 27 are negative, implying that they are not available. However, all the six items responded to in the private secondary school have mean scores below 2.50. This indicates that there is no provision for intrinsic conditions in the teaching profession in the private school.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the causes of teacher attrition between public and private secondary schools in Ondo State.

Table 2: Summary of difference in the causes of teacher attrition between public and private secondary schools in Ondo State

Variation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-val
Public secondary school	75	2.61	.2264	148	1.196	.699
Private secondary school	75	2.73	.2890			

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2016.

Table 2 shows that $t\text{-cal } 1.196 > t\text{-val } .699$, implying that there is a significant difference in teachers causes of attrition between public and private secondary schools in Ondo State [$t(148) = 1.196, > .05$]. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

One of the findings of this study is that the causes of attrition in public secondary schools are irregular payment of salary, non or late provision of fringe benefits, lack of opportunities for advancement, excessive work-load/class size, lack of collegial support, autocratic leadership style, non involvement in decision making, poor public perception about teaching and employment of non professionals in teaching profession, This finding is supported by the work of Grismmer and Kirby (1987) who reported that non involvement in decision making and irregular promotion, among others are reasons why teachers quit their job. However, while unsatisfactory salary is not a cause of teacher attrition in the public secondary schools, it stands as a major cause in private secondary schools.

Another finding of the study shows that certain aspects of the intrinsic conditions of teaching profession such as professionalism of staff, job security, and provision of developmental programmes for staff are provided in the public schools to the exclusion of private schools. This

finding could be attributed to the fact that proprietor of private schools are self-financing entrepreneurs who must meet the government demands and at the same time make profit or at least break even, hence might want to increase teachers' workload, assign large class size and provide conflicting role demands with little or no motivation for teachers. This finding has justified the position of Gonzalez (1995) that certain aspects of teaching characteristics like large class size, high school teaching assignment, excessive paper work coupled with multiple role demands make teachers to leave their jobs.

The study further reveals a significant difference in the causes of teacher attrition between the public and private secondary schools. For instance, while unsatisfactory salary is not considered as a cause of teacher attrition in public secondary schools, it is a major cause in the private secondary school. This finding is in consonance with the research finding of Paul (2004) and Bobbit, Fautel and Burns (1991) who discover low income status as the main reason why most teachers in private schools quit teaching profession.

Conclusion

It is obvious from the findings that the management of secondary schools, both public and private paid little attention to the extrinsic and intrinsic conditions of the teaching profession, hence high rate of attrition which is even higher in the private secondary schools in Ondo state, Nigeria. Therefore, concerted efforts are required by administrators of secondary schools to provide enabling extrinsic and intrinsic pedagogical variables for teachers in order to curb teacher attrition, instil motivation and ensure optimum performance in schools.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government through the Ministry of Education should re-accredit every secondary school regardless of proprietorship, public and private, to ensure that all the yardsticks necessary for full implementation of the National policy on Education are met before approval is granted for continuity.
2. Government should institute a policy of minimum pay and for teachers as well as ensuring that only the professional teachers are recruited into the teaching force in the first instance in all schools irrespective of proprietorship.
3. School administrators should adhere strictly to such ethical and pedagogical considerations in the teaching force as pupil: teacher ratio (25:1), clear delineation of duties and responsibilities and job security so as to arouse self motivation and job retention in the staff.

References

- Aminu, A. A. (2014). A qualitative study on the effects of teacher attrition. *Journal of Education and Literary Studies*, 2(1), 121-133.
- Babalola, J. B. & Ayeni, A. O. (2009). *Educational management: Theories and tasks*. Ibadan: Macmillan.
- Bobbit, S. A., Faupel, E. & Burs, S. (1991). *Characteristics of stage movers, and leavers: Results from the teacher follow-up survey, 1988-1989 (NCES Publication No. 91-128)*. Washington D.C: US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and improvement.
- Bukley, J., Schnadir, M. & Shang, Y. (2004). *The effects of school facility quality on teacher retention in Urban School District*. Retrieved on 06/06/2012 from <http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/teacherrtention.pdf>.
- Change, M. L. (2009). An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout examining the emotional work of teachers. *Educational Psychology Review* 21 (3) 193-218.
- EMIS (2014). *Education management information system*. Akure: Ministry of Education
- Gonzalez, P. (1995). *Factors that influence teachers' attrition*. NSTEP information Brief, Pp 1–9.
- Grismmer, D. W. & Kirby, S. N. (1987). *Teacher attrition: the uphill climb to staff of the Nations Schools*. RAND. R. 3512-CS TP.
- Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. New York: World Publications Company. A mentor group, New American library.
- Ingersol, R. (2013). Why do teacher quit? *The Atlantic magazines refrained on 15th November, 2014* from www.attantic.com/education achieve.
- Ivancevich, J., Konopaske R., & Matteson, M. (2011). *Organisational behaviour and management*. Mcgraw-Hill Irwin.
- McShaw, B. (2002). The European education research space, round table presentation to the European education research association conference, Lisbon Portugal, September. *Journal of emerging trends in Educational Research and policy Studies (JETERAPS)*
- Paul, B. (2004). *Teacher motivation in sub-Sahara Africa and Asia*. Centre for international Education Sussex University.
- Popoola, A. (2009). Rotten apple: An investigation of the preponderance of unsatisfied teachers in Nigeria. *Int. NGO Journal*, 4(10), 441-445.