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## **Extent of Principals' Support Services for Teachers' Job Commitment in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Anambra State**

**Ifediorah Okeke, Nonye**

Department of Educational Foundations

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus

Anambra State, Nigeria

E-mail: ifedinoke@yahoo.com

&

**Okaforcha, Chimaa**

Department of Educational Foundations

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus

Anambra State, Nigeria

E-mail: choice.okaforcha@gmail.com

Phone +2348037685045

### **Abstract**

This study was conducted in secondary schools in Anambra State. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consists of 3395 teachers in the six education zones in the state. The sample for the study comprised 1,733 teachers in public and 1,662 teachers in private secondary schools in Anambra State respectively. The sample consisted 30% of the entire population. The instrument for data collection was researchers-developed questionnaire titled "Support Services for Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire" (SSTJCQ). The face and content validity of the instruments was established by three experts and the reliability of the instrument was determined using the split-half method. Cronbach's alpha method was used to obtain correlation co-efficient of 0.85 for the instrument. The researchers collected the data from the

respondents. The research questions were answered using mean ratings and the t- test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings indicate that the teacher support services in both the public secondary schools and private schools in Anambra State were limited in order to impact on teachers' job commitment in schools. Also, in the private secondary schools, teacher support services impacting teachers' job commitment were not prevailing. It was recommended among others that the State government should set up policies and programmes that will improve the working conditions of teachers, likewise give room for adequate teacher support services and empowerment for both public and private schools.

**Key Words:** Principals, Teachers, Support Services, Job Commitment, Public School, Private School

### **Introduction**

The school as an institution is set up with desired objectives, which could only be accomplished through combined and committed efforts of the teaching staff and the school administration. The school as an institution has some set goals and objectives to accomplish; and the achievement of these set goals and objectives depends upon the degree of commitment of her workforce which includes the teaching and non-teaching staff. In other words, it is through the combined efforts of this group of people working within the school that the set goals and objectives of such institution can be actualized. Supporting the statement, Fox (2013) opined that the strength of any institution (be it public or private) towards achieving its predetermined goals and objectives largely depends on the commitment and productiveness of its workforce. In the school system, teachers are one of the most important workforces, whose efforts and commitment enhance high productivity for quality education.

Teachers, as important components of the teaching workforce implement the policy at the classroom level and as such, combine their efforts for maximum productivity which leads to the realization of school goals and objectives (Gistarea, 2013). In this regard, the atmospheric conditions under which teachers discharge their duties can never be neglected because this has a great influence on their commitment and productivity. Teachers are motivated to show commitment to duty and work closely together for maximum productivity in an environment whose climate is acceptable, lively, adaptable, conducive, supportive and comfortable. Teacher commitment has been described in several ways.

According to Khoza (2004), teacher commitment is defined as the strength of a teacher's identification and involvement with the teaching job. It determines whether a person will leave or remain in the teaching profession or not. Meyer and Allen cited in Khoza (2004) defined teacher commitment as a psychological state that characterize a teacher's relationship with his or her profession, and has implications for the decision to remain involved with it. It is the emotional bond between the teacher and the school. Teachers' commitment is regarded as a power or quality needed to approach stress and change. It includes factors such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance for fallibility. Teacher commitment is of importance as it is associated with greater job effort and involvement, i.e. committed employees are less likely to leave their position and display other withdrawal behaviour such as absenteeism. As Fox (2013) noted, the strength of any profession depends upon the degree of commitment of its members. Teachers' commitment is conceptualized as being multi-dimensional. Thus, teachers' commitment is the strength of teachers' identification with and involvement in the school organization. It can be viewed as the dedication that teachers believe or perceive towards particular work and the job they carry out in the school.

Akpan (2015) identified three forms of teachers' commitment which are tools to measure institutional effectiveness and outcome. These are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment deals with the attachment of a teacher with the school organization and its goals and objectives. It is affected by job characteristics and more concerned with intrinsic factors than extrinsic factors (Akpan, 2013). Continuance commitment deals with the concern of teachers on the cost associated with leaving the teaching profession and the lack of alternative employment opportunities. Normative commitment deals with teachers' loyalty and obligation to remain in the teaching job. Thus, commitment to organization is compatible with commitment to profession (Rahamn & Hanagiah, 2002). Although these components of school commitment may differ, but have a similar impact on teachers' decision to either remain and continue or discontinue their employment with the organization (Akpan, 2013). Nevertheless, schools can become effective when teachers are committed; this will also determine their behaviour and attitude towards work. Principals have many roles to play in ensuring teachers' commitment.

In the secondary schools for instance, principals are expected to create positive school environment that can be a great help to make teachers committed. They are expected encourage teachers to exhibit such behaviours which influence their work commitment and they include: collegial teacher behaviour, intimate teacher behaviour and disengaged teacher behaviour. Collegial teacher behaviour supports professional behaviours among themselves. They are passionate, collegial and respect their colleagues' professional competencies. Intimate teacher behaviour reflects a strong and close social support network. Teachers closely know one another, are involved in close relationships and frequently meet (Raza & Arid, 2010). Disengaged teacher behaviour reflects lack of understanding and focus on professional activities. Teachers just spend time at work. Their behaviours are negative and they criticize their colleagues. Disengagement behaviour is characterized by the teachers' psychological and physical distance from each other and from the school as a whole. Teachers with high disengagement bicker and criticize one another, form cliques, annoy one another and contemplate leaving. Abundance of clerical tasks and responsibilities unrelated to teaching are salient features of hindrance.

Teachers are overloaded with busy work, paper work, committees, reports and routine duties. Morale, spirit and liveliness of the group of teachers are characteristic features of esprit. Other features are cheerfulness and commitment of teachers to education, enjoying each other and being mutually respectful and helpful, working energetically and showing loyalty to the college. All these are possible where the principal is effective.

In this respect, Akpan (2015) identified forms of support services that influence institutional commitment of secondary school teachers. Three of such services are staff development, working conditions and motivation of teachers. Staff training and development can have considerable influence on teachers' commitment and productivity. Alabi (2011) stated that acquiring teachers' services, developing their skills, motivating them to high levels of performance and ensuring that they continue to maintain their commitment to the organization are essential to achieving school organizational objectives. Staff development is associated with the general improvement of teachers in terms of attitude to work, behaviour, skills and improved job performance. It enhances teachers' commitment. In some Nigerian states, teachers in secondary schools are not provided with adequate opportunities for training and retraining programmes (in-service education) to improve their knowledge and skills for effective job performance and commitments.

Nkanu (2000) and Ogunkunle (2000) posited that inadequate provision for staff training and development in educational institutions could reduce their enthusiasm in the teaching profession and this could affect their morale, attitude to work and commitment. Therefore, staff development is an indispensable technique for motivating teachers to be committed to their professional duties and the school organization. Staff training gives teachers opportunities for self-improvement and development to meet the challenges and requirements of new equipment and technologies of performing a task (Mensah, 2012).

Good working condition is another support service that can enhance or hinder teachers' commitment. The physical conditions under which teachers carry out their work have been linked up with their institutional commitment. The physical working conditions involve the quality of the physical environment in which teachers work and include things like lighting, temperature conditions, ventilation, noise level, spacious classroom, good maintenance of facilities and library resources. All these affect the work environment and shape teachers' attitudes and behaviour either positively or negatively towards the work. Thus, when the physical conditions in the work place are undesirable, employees tend to focus their attention on these problems and when these happen productivity suffers a great deal due to lack of commitment. In addition to the physical working conditions is the rewarding system for teachers in the State. The secondary school teachers are not well remunerated and their promotions are not regular and this could affect their level of commitment. A good reward plan for workers motivates them to perform their job better and this promotes high commitment. In the teaching profession, commitment of teachers is a function of the motivational factors they enjoy (Ahiauzu, Diepreye & Onwuchekwa, 2011). Studies have shown that motivation influences level of commitment. According to Pedro in Khan (2005), teachers' motivation emerged as most powerful predictor of school climatic conditions. Research findings of Akpan (2015) and Khan (2005) have further shown that workers can only put in their best and be committed to their organization when their needs are satisfied and they are motivated. Denga cited in Akpan (2015) reported that workers, whose needs, goals and aspirations are thwarted by the organization, develop feelings of low self-worth, become apathetic, disinterested, frustrated and tend to withhold self-commitment to the work. Thus, the way support services in secondary schools are provided and managed can influence the teachers' feelings and interest towards their job and commitment to the school. In effective schools where teachers are well managed, they can be spurred to hard work, and will become enthusiastic in the pursuance of institutional objectives.

According to Çağrı (2013), another support service that contributes to teachers' commitment and dedication is administrative implementation. Compatible administrative implementation strengthens teachers' commitment. The desire of teachers spending more time at school, making more effort for school achievement, approving compatibility of administration are among contributing causes of commitment and dedication to school. Among the factors that decide teachers' commitment and dedication degree are: interaction between teachers, teacher-student relationship, the quality of the work teachers do at school, the compatibility of school administration. Teachers who have commitment to school display such attitudes as being proud of the school he works for, evoking a desire to work harder, being interested in the future of the school. Committed teachers influence the quality of students' learning and Fried cited in Çağrı (2013, p. 4) explained the reasons as:

1. If students know that teachers get immersed in their subjects and sets high standards for students, they take their studies more seriously. At this point, teaching ceases to be a job done by force, and turns into an inspiration for students.
2. There is little chance of building a relationship based on respect and trust between teacher and student unless a collaborative learning environment and willingness to take risks are not created.
3. Students will not have motivation to learn as long as they do not have a clear idea of how to apply things they have learnt to their own lives.

Çağrı (2013, p. 19) further identified certain basic characteristics of a committed teacher as:

1. likes working with young people, and takes an interest in knowledge and ideas;
2. that students lack knowledge and skills cannot be an excuse to decrease his feeling of compassion for them;
3. cares about students;
4. is aware of world issues, and current events in the classroom and effectively reflects them in his works at school;
5. is serious and has sense of humour;
6. tolerates absurd and meaningless things that students exhibit in their behaviours but at the same time critical and very attentive to manners that students must have;
7. avoids condemning ideas of unpopular and young people and attempts to create a culture of mutual respect;
8. takes risks; therefore, as much as any person makes mistakes but derives lessons from mistakes rather than ignore them;
9. endeavors to establish and maintain a learning environment where students can learn from their mistakes; and
10. takes his missions seriously and reflects his ideas and beliefs clearly

Committed teachers know that it is their role to encourage students for an active learning and concern themselves with promoting students' intellectual and moral development. Teachers who are committed are passionate, work with enthusiasm, their dedication and commitment increase, and they believe in the importance of their job. "There are strong empirical grounds for believing that teachers can and do make a difference and that consistent high-quality teaching, supported by strategic professional development, can and do deliver dramatic improvements in student learning" (Rowe, 2003, p. 27). Commitment to teaching contributes to teachers' behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and performances (Çağrı, 2013).

Professionally committed teachers assist students in their extra time, cooperate with and are willing to work with parents, and utilize class time profitably. Many indices also determine teacher commitment to their teaching tasks. Aside leadership styles and behaviour adopted by school principals, other indices which determine teachers' work commitment include the extent to which teachers are empowered and motivated to work. This could be achieved through: teachers' participation in decision making in the school, opportunities created for teachers' professional growth and in-service training, teacher autonomy, availability of resources, teacher

remunerations and salary, promotion, use of effective rewards systems like fringe benefits, incentives, praises, and awards, among others.

In Anambra state, it is unfortunate that most secondary school teachers (be it public or private) are subjected to work under conditions where there is few or no office facilities; where classrooms are overcrowded with students; where promotion, payment of salaries and other entitlements are unduly delayed; where teachers are inadequately motivated, and where there is inadequate provision for in-service training of teachers. Working under such deplorable conditions, create a negative school climate in which the morale of teachers could be low (Akpan, 2008). This could result in lack of commitment to work and the institution. Douglas (2010), Zhang and Liu in Duff (2013) had linked teacher commitment to open and supportive school climate. In other words, closed, autocratic and unhealthy school climate as practiced by some principals could affect teachers' commitment. When the climate is perceived to be unfavourable, some teachers display nonchalant attitudes to work and lack of commitment or zeal in carrying out assigned task.

Teachers' commitment to their duties in a school could be enhanced or diminished by factors such as student behaviour, collegial and administrative support, parental demands and education policies (Day, 2004). United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Lawrence and Deepa (2015) observed that in recent times, educational reforms in many countries have led to the deterioration in the working conditions of teachers, in turn producing demoralization, abandonment of the profession, absenteeism, and a negative impact on the quality of education offered to students. They also outlined the following as some of the hazards to teachers' commitment in education: lack of self-motivation, monotonous way of teaching, too much importance given to completion of task, lack of encouragement from higher officials or management, insufficient salary and so on.

Gupta and Gehlawat (2013) have reported that teachers in private schools are more committed to their profession than did those in public schools. In contrast, Gerald in Nazari and Emami (2012) reported that there is no significance difference in teachers' commitment in public and private schools. Adeyemi (2006) further asserted that generally teachers (whether public or private school) are more likely to be committed in positive (open) school climate than the negative (closed) (unhealthy) one. However, the level of work commitment between teachers in the public and private schools might sometimes vary. This difference in commitment could be as a result of their school climates and the environmental orderliness. Any environment that is in order always increases the outcomes of the school by the fact that, teachers and students who are the major factors in this research work will perform excellently well in their responsibilities. This will be a key to minimize the poor grade performance among the principal, staff members and students. This, to an extent, is predicted on the available support services to the teachers. The question at this point is: what are the support services for teachers in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state?

**Research Question:** What are the prevailing teacher support services for teachers' job commitment in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private school teachers on the prevailing teacher support services for teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Methodology

This study was conducted in secondary schools in Anambra State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. All the secondary schools both public and private in all the 6 education zones in the state which include Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha were studied. There are 257 public secondary schools and 298 private secondary schools in the 6 education zones. The population of the study consists of 3395 teachers in the six education zones. The sample for the study comprised 1,733 teachers in public and 1,662 teachers in private secondary schools in Anambra State respectively. The sample consisted 30% of the entire population.

The instrument for data collection was researchers-developed questionnaire titled “Support Services for Teachers’ Job Commitment Questionnaire” (SSTJCQ). SSTJCQ is a 4-point scale type, structured thus: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points; Agree (A) = 3points; Disagree (D) = 2points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The face and content validity of the instruments was established by three experts: two in educational administration and planning and one in measurement and evaluation; all in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the split-half method. This was done by administering copies of the instrument to 20 teachers from public secondary schools and another 20 teachers from private secondary schools) in Enugu state. Cronbach’s alpha method was used to obtain correlation co-efficients of 0.85 for the instrument. The researchers collected the data from the respondents. The research questions were answered using mean ratings and the t- test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at.05 level of significance.

### **Presentation of Results**

This section presents results in tables; analysed data gathered from the respondents in the study and equally highlighted the summary of findings.

**Research Question:** What are the prevailing teacher support services for teachers’ job commitment in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1: Mean Scores and SD of the Respondents Ratings on the Prevailing Teacher Support Services for Teachers Commitment in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Anambra State**

N = 3395

S/N	Support Services for Teachers' Job Commitment	Public		Decision	Private		Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD		$\bar{X}$	SD	
1	Opportunities for in-service training and teacher professional growth as part of support services are created for teachers' development.	2.47	1.10	<b>Disagree</b>	2.48	1.12	<b>Disagree</b>
2	Teachers are encouraged with good incentives to work harder in my school.	2.43	1.09	<b>Disagree</b>	2.47	1.08	<b>Disagree</b>
3	Fringe benefits and bonuses are provided for teachers in my school.	2.44	1.12	<b>Disagree</b>	2.43	1.08	<b>Disagree</b>
4	Effective collaborative means are provided for teachers to support each other in my school.	2.53	1.11	<b>Agree</b>	2.47	1.09	<b>Disagree</b>
5	My schools' physical learning environment is orderly and conducive with adequate facilities provision for teaching and learning.	2.49	1.09	<b>Disagree</b>	2.49	1.10	<b>Disagree</b>
6	Instructional materials are adequate to support teachers in the teaching tasks in my school.	2.46	1.11	<b>Disagree</b>	2.46	1.11	<b>Disagree</b>
7	At the end of every term teachers are given awards in appreciation for their commitment.	2.46	1.13	<b>Disagree</b>	2.40	1.11	<b>Disagree</b>
8	The principal uses constructive criticism to correct teachers' mistakes.	2.49	1.11	<b>Disagree</b>	2.39	1.09	<b>Disagree</b>
9	There is room for teachers' active participation in the decision making in my school.	2.48	1.13	<b>Disagree</b>	2.47	1.12	<b>Disagree</b>
<b>Mean of Means and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>2.47</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

On Table 1, results of the respondents' mean ratings from the public secondary schools revealed that only item 4 was rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 in agreement with the statements, showing that effective collaborative means was the teacher support service for teachers prevailing in the public schools. All other items 1-3 and 5-9 were rated below 2.50 in disagreement with the statements. The mean of means of the public schools is 2.47, showing



respondents negative reactions to many of the items. The standard deviation of the public schools ranged from 1.09 – 1.13, showing small deviation. This indicated that respondents were close to one another in their responses. Additionally, results from the mean ratings of the respondents in the private schools under Table 1 indicated that all the items from 1 to 9 were rated below 2.50 in disagreement with the statements, showing that all the teacher support services were not prevailing in the private schools. The mean of means of private schools was 2.45 and indicated respondents' negative responses to the items. The standard deviation of the private schools ranged from 1.08 – 1.12, showing small deviation. This indicated that respondents were close to one another in their responses. The mean of means and standard deviations of both the public and private schools slightly varied showing small difference in the scores, but still clustered within the mean scores. Indications from this research question reveal that teachers support services were not prevailing in the public and private secondary schools. Such teachers support services like in-service training and opportunities for teachers' professional growth, good incentives, fringe benefits and bonuses, adequate facilities and instructional materials, use of awards and constructive criticism and active participation in decision making were not prevailing in the public and private schools. However, effective collaborative means were provided for teachers in the public schools when compared with the private school where support services for teachers were not provided.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private school teachers on the prevailing teacher support services for teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 2: t-test comparison of no significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private teachers on the prevailing teacher support services for teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State**

Group	Sample Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of Freedom	t-Cal.	t-Crit.	Decision
Public	1733	2.47	1.11	3393	0.29	$\pm 1.9650$	Not Significant
Private	1662	2.45	1.10				

The result as shown in Table 2 revealed that, the t-test calculated is 0.29, while the t-test critical table value is  $\pm 1.9650$ . This value obtained (calculated) is less than the critical observed table value which is  $\pm 1.9650$  and falls within the acceptable region. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) of no significant difference in the mean ratings is thus accepted while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) not accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private school teachers on the prevailing teacher support services for teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Summary of Findings

1. The leadership behaviours prevailing in the secondary schools in Anambra State was the supportive, good humanitarian, assertive and disengaging type. Whereas in the private secondary schools, the supportive, directive, good humanitarian and assertive kind of leadership behaviours prevailed.

2. The teacher support services in both the public secondary schools and private schools in Anambra State were limited in order to impact on teachers' job commitment in schools. Also, in the private secondary schools, teacher support services impacting teachers' job commitment were not prevailing.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private school teachers on the prevailing teacher support services for teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Discussion of Results**

Result of the research question found that teacher support services in both the public secondary schools and private schools in Anambra State for were limited for teachers' job commitment in these schools. The result showed no significant difference between public and private schools when it comes to the provision of teacher support services. The results showed that opportunities for in-service training and teacher professional growth, good incentives, fringe benefits and bonuses, conducive physical learning environment, adequate instructional materials, awards, constructive criticism from principals, and teachers' active participation were not prevailing in the public schools. Also, in the private secondary schools, the teacher support services influencing teacher commitment were not prevailing. This finding agrees with Akpan (2015) whose study discovered that in most secondary schools under public or private, teachers are subjected to work under conditions where there are few or no office facilities, where classrooms are overcrowded, where promotion, payment of salaries and other entitlements are unduly delayed and motivation inadequate. This situation affects teachers' morale and the resultant effect is lack of commitment to work. Supporting this finding, Khan (2005), discovered that teachers' motivation emerged as most powerful predictor of school climatic conditions which have shown that workers can only put in their best and be committed to their organization when their needs are satisfied and they are motivated. However, public school teachers have high job security unlike their counterparts in private schools. Due to lack of job security in the private schools' sector, teachers put high commitment as to secure their job for a long period of time. This is also responsible for less concern on teachers' quality of work life in the private sector. Highlighting the importance of teachers support services, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Lawrence and Deepa, (2015) observed that in recent times, educational reforms in many countries have led to the deterioration in the working conditions of teachers, in turn producing demoralization, abandonment of the profession, absenteeism, and a negative impact on the quality of education offered to students. They also outlined the following as some of the hazards to teachers' commitment in education: lack of self-motivation, monotonous way of teaching, too much importance given to completion of task, lack of encouragement from higher officials or management, insufficient salary and so on. According to Çağrı (2013), another factor that contributes to teachers' commitment and dedication is administrative implementation. Compatible administrative implementation strengthens teachers' commitment. The desire of teachers spending more time at school, making more effort for school achievement, approving compatibility of administration are among contributing causes of commitment and dedication to school.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers as important machineries in education constitute one great factor that promotes quality education through their teachings. The study submits that school support services in public and

private schools in Anambra State have not been positively imparted on many school teachers. This has equally affected teachers' commitment in the schools making it difficult to actualize goals. However, there is no significant difference between teachers' job commitment in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations have been proffered:

1. Anambra State School Management Board and proprietors of private schools should implement effective school administrative policies and strategies that would ensure that principals actively maintained positive and open climate in their schools for positive outcomes.
2. Efforts should be made by the State government and proprietors of private schools to improve teachers' job commitment level in both private and public secondary schools in Anambra State. This could be realized when the Anambra State government and private school owners pay priority attention in solving teachers' problems and challenges in which they encounter in their teaching profession.
3. Principals of public and private secondary schools should constantly organize effective supervision and regular staff meetings in order to find out teachers' areas of needs that will improve their commitment to work.
4. Leadership of public and private secondary schools should ensure that they adopt effective leadership styles that will encourage teachers' job commitment. This includes that principals of public and private secondary school should maintain a democratic and positive school climate, likewise establish good collaborative practices which is in the best interest of teachers.
5. The State government should set up policies and programmes that will improve the working conditions of teachers, likewise give room for adequate teacher support services and empowerment for both public and private schools. Procedure should be worked out to checkmate private schools in order to ensure that they comply in carrying out programmes that will aid teacher support services and empowerment in their schools.

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