

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PSYCHOLOGICAL MORBIDITY, JOB SATISFACTION AND INTENTIONS TO QUIT AMONG TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDO-STATE, NIGERIA

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Accepted: 7th September 2008

Abstract

Background: Teachers are an inseparable corner stone of the society and their satisfaction will affect the quality of service they render. Poor job satisfaction could result in job stress and this could affect their psychological health. This study aims to ascertain the level, causes of job dissatisfaction, intentions to quit and psychological morbidity among teachers in private secondary schools in a developing country.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among teachers (392) in private secondary schools in Benin-City, Edo-State Nigeria, between June 2003 to November 2003. A total population of 400 teachers who had spent at least one year in the service were included in the study. The respondents completed a self – administered designed questionnaire and a standard instrument – The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ 28)

Results: The response rate was 98%. Fifty- eight (14.8%) of the respondents had psychological morbidity (GHQ score of 4 and above). One hundred and seventy - eight (45.4%) teachers were very satisfied or satisfied with their jobs. A significant number (45.9%) of teachers would want to quit their jobs. The proportion of teachers with GHQ score 4 and above increased with the level of dissatisfaction but this was not found to be statistically significant. Poor salary was found to be the main cause of job dissatisfaction and major reason for wanting to quit the job.

Conclusion: This study shows a low level of job satisfaction among Nigerian teachers. Poor salary was the major cause of job dissatisfaction and intension to quit. Further work need to be done to ascertain the association of psychological morbidity and job dissatisfaction.

Key words: Psychological morbidity, Job satisfaction, intension to quit, teachers

Résumé

Fond: Les professeurs sont une pierre faisant le coin inséparable de la société et leur satisfaction affectera la qualité du service qu'ils rendent. La satisfaction professionnelle pauvre pourrait avoir comme conséquence le stress du travail et ceci pourrait affecter leur santé psychologique. Cette étude vise à établir le niveau, des causes de mécontentement du travail, des intentions de stopper et la morbidité psychologique parmi des professeurs dans les écoles secondaires privées dans un pays en voie de développement.

Méthodes: Une étude transversale a été conduite parmi les professeurs (392) dans les écoles secondaires privées dans la Bénin-Ville, Edo-État Nigéria, entre le juin 2003 à novembre 2003. Une population totale de 400 professeurs qui avaient passé au moins un an dans le service ont été incluses

dans l'étude. Les répondants ont accompli un individu - questionnaire conçu administré et un instrument standard - le questionnaire général de santé (GHQ 28).

Résultats: Le taux de réponse était 98%. Cinquante huit (14.8%) des répondants ont eu la morbidité psychologique (une vingtaine de GHQ de 4 et ci-dessus). Cent soixante-dix-huit (45.4%) professeurs ont été très satisfaits ou satisfaits de leurs travaux. Un nombre significatif (45.9%) de professeurs voudrait stopper leurs travaux. La proportion de professeurs avec les points 4 de GHQ et ci-dessus accru avec le niveau du mécontentement mais de ceci ne s'est pas avérée statistiquement significative. Le salaire pauvre s'est avéré la cause principale du mécontentement du travail et de la raison principale pour que vouloir stopper le travail.

Conclusion: Cette étude montre un niveau bas de satisfaction professionnelle parmi les professeurs nigériens. Le salaire pauvre était la cause principale du mécontentement et de l'intension du travail à stopper. Davantage de besoin de travail d'être fait pour s'assurer l'association du mécontentement psychologique de morbidité et de travail.

Mots clés: *Morbidité psychologique, satisfaction professionnelle, intension à stopper, professeurs*

The educational sector is very important for the development of any country. Teachers have a very important place in this sector. They are an inseparable corner stone of the society and their satisfaction will affect the quality of service they render.

Job satisfaction has been defined as the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation.¹ It has also been described as a state of mind, a feeling, a mental and emotional attitude.¹ It is a widely accepted fact that the level of satisfaction one derives from an employment goes a long way in affecting the level of productivity.¹

The sources of job satisfaction among teachers include healthy school environments, favorable workplace conditions, supportive school administrations and adequate parental supports and proper salaries and fringe benefits.² Teachers have clearly identified students as primary and central factor that has an impact on both their professional enthusiasm and discouragement.³ The effects of job satisfaction can be seen in the effects the teachers morale has on the students attitude and learning. Raising teacher's morale level not only makes teaching more pleasant for the teacher but also learning more pleasant for student.⁴ This creates an environment that is more conducive for learning.⁴ It was found that where morale was high, schools showed an increase in student achievement.⁵ So also, low levels of morale and satisfaction can lead to decreased teacher productivity and burnout which is associated with loss of concern for and detachment from the people with whom one works, decreased quality of teaching, depression, greater use of sick leave, efforts to leave the profession and a cynical and dehumanized perception of students.⁵

Job satisfaction acts as an antidote for one of the major problems of the teaching profession, which is job stress. Stress has been described as coping or failing to cope with the demands and constraints

placed on a person. Poor job satisfaction among teachers could therefore result in job stress and this could affect their psychological health. This study aimed to assess the level of job satisfaction, causes of job dissatisfaction, psychological morbidity and intentions to quit of teachers in private secondary school in Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted among teachers (392) in private secondary schools in Benin-City, Edo- State, Nigeria, from June 2003 to November 2003, in the three Local Government (LGA) in the city.

A total population of 400 teachers who had spent at least one year in the service and were full time, were included in the study. The minimum sample size was 384 using 50% as the prevalence rate of job satisfaction. This was obtained using the standard formula for minimum sample size for a prevalence study.⁶

A structured questionnaire was used to collect information on demographic data, level of job satisfaction, causes of job dissatisfaction and intention to quit of the respondents. A 5 point Likert scale (ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied) was used to grade levels of satisfaction. The questionnaire was self-administered and was pretested among teachers in another local government outside the city. The final questionnaire that was used was a product of the modifications detected by the pretest.

A standard instrument, the GHQ 28 was used to assess the psychological health of the workers. It is a self-administered screening instrument designed to measure psychological health with high specificity and sensitivity.⁷⁻⁹ As recommended, an overall GHQ score was obtained using the 0-0-1-1 scoring system for the four responses possible for each item.⁷ Scores of 4 and above indicate an increased likelihood of psychological ill health.

The researchers visited the Post Primary Education Board in Benin City and received a comprehensive list of private secondary schools in the city. There were 82, 87, and 89 schools in Ikpoba Okha, Egor and Oredo LGA respectively. Six schools in each LGA were selected for the study using simple random sampling method. The total numbers of teachers in the schools were estimated and using the same sampling fraction teachers were selected from each of the schools.

The respondents were informed that their responses would be held in strict confidence. Thus eligibility to participate in the study was based on the respondents' willingness to take part. The school authorities were also assured that their schools would in no way be identified by name in the course of the project. Analysis was done using PEPI version 3 (Programs for epidemiologist).¹⁰

Results

Three hundred and ninety two teachers responded, giving a response rate of 98%. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were between the age groups of 26 -30 years (41.1%) and 31-35 years (21.7%). One hundred and seventy-five (44.6%) were males and 217 (55.4%) were females. Two hundred and fifty seven teachers (65.6%) had spent 1 to 5 years in service, 83(21.1%) had spent 6-10 years, 34 (8.7%) had spent 11-15 years, 9 (2.3%) had spent 16-20years, while 9(2.3%) had spent over 21 years in service. Marital status of the respondents showed that 187 (47.7%) were married, while 165 (42.1%) were single.

Fifty- eight (14.8%) of the respondents had psychological morbidity (GHQ score of 4 and above) (Table 2). Twenty seven (15.4%) male teachers had psychological morbidity, while 31 (14.3%) female teachers had psychological morbidity. More male teachers (15.4%) had psychological morbidity than female teachers (14.3%) though this difference was not found to be statistically significant ($X^2 = 0.1$; $df = 1$; $P = .751$). (Table 2)

One hundred and fifty one teachers (38.5%) were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs, 16.1% were undecided, while 45.4% were very satisfied or satisfied with their jobs (Table 3). Eight-five (48.6%) male teachers were satisfied with their jobs, 35 (20.0%) were undecided, while 55 (31.4%) were dissatisfied about their job. Among the female teachers, 93(42.9%) of them were satisfied, 28(12.9%) were undecided, while 6 (44.2%) were dissatisfied. More female teachers were found to be dissatisfied with their jobs than the male teachers

and this was found to be statistically significant ($X^2 = 7.86$; $df = 2$; $p = .02$). (Table 3)

Table 4 shows that 26 (17.2%) dissatisfied teachers had psychological disorder, 12 (19.0%) undecided teachers had psychological disorder, while 20 (11.2%) satisfied teachers had psychological disorder. The proportion of teachers with GHQ score 4 and above increased with the level of dissatisfaction but this was not found to be statistically significant (Table 4).

A significant number (45.9%) of teachers would want to quit their jobs (Table 5). More male teachers (61.7%) would want to quit than female teachers (33.2%). This difference was found to be statistically significant ($X^2 = 31.763$; $df = 1$; $P < .0001$). (Table 5)

Among the respondents that would want to quit their job, poor salary was found to be the major reason for wanting to quit the job (47.2%). Other reasons were to go for another career (28.9%), to further education (6.1%), as a result of too much stress (6.1%), and lack of satisfaction (5.0%). Twelve of the respondents (6.7%) gave no reason for wanting to quit the job. Poor salary was also found to be the main cause of job dissatisfaction which was mentioned by 140 (92.7%) teachers. (Table 6). Other causes of job dissatisfaction included job insecurity (36.4%), poor facilities (29.1%), stressful profession (23.8%), undisciplined students (19.9%) and poor management (14.6%) (Table 6).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 392)

Demographic characteristics	No. (%)
Age (years)	
<20	5 (1.3)
21 – 25	64(16.3)
26 – 30	161(41.1)
31 – 35	85(21.7)
36 – 40	38(9.7)
>40	39(9.9)
Sex	
Male	175 (44.6)
Female	217 (55.4)
Length of Service (Years)	
1 – 5	257 (65.6)
6 – 10	83(21.1)
11 – 15	34(8.7)
16 – 20	9(2.3)
>20	9(2.3)
Marital status	
Married	187(47.7)
Single	165(42.1)
Divorced	20(5.1)
Separated	16(4.1)
Widowed	4(1.0)

Table 2. Presence of psychological disorders (GHQ score, 4 and above) among teachers

Psychological disorder	Teachers		Total (%)
	Males (%)	Females (%)	
Yes	27(15.4)	31 (14.3)	58 (14.8)
No	148(84.6)	186 (85.7)	334 (85.2)
Total	175 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	392 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 0.100$; $df = 1$; $P = .751$. Not significant

Page | 35

Table 3. Sex distribution and level of satisfaction of teachers

Level of satisfaction	Males (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Satisfied	85 (48.6)	93 (42.9)	178 (45.4)
Undecided	35 (20.0)	28 (12.9)	63 (16.1)
Dissatisfied	55 (31.4)	96 (44.2)	151 (38.5)
Total	175 (100)	217 (100)	392 (100)

$\chi^2 = 7.86$; $df = 2$; $p = .02$. Statistically significant

Table 4. Job dissatisfaction and psychological disorder (GHQ score 4 and above) among teachers in private practice

Psychological disorder	Dissatisfied (%)	Undecided (%)	Satisfied (%)	Total (%)
Yes	26 (17.2)	12(19)	20 (11.2)	58 (14.)
No	125 (82.8)	51(81)	158 (88.8)	334 (85.2)
Total	151 (100)	63 (100)	178 (100)	392 (100)

$\chi^2 = 3.396$; $df = 2$; $p = .183$, not significant

Table 5. Teachers that would like to quit the profession by sex

Teachers that want to quit	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Yes	108 (61.7)	72 (33.2)	180 (45.9)
No	67 (38.3)	145 (66.8)	212 (54.1)
Total	175 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	392 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 31.763$, $df = 1$ $p < .0001$, statistically significant

Table 6. Reasons for dissatisfaction with the teaching profession

Reason for dissatisfaction	No. of respondents (%)
Poor salary	140 (92.7)
Job insecurity	55 (36.4)
Poor facilities	44 (29.1)
Stressful	36 (23.8)
Undisciplined students	30 (19.9)
Poor management	22 (14.6)

Multiple responses: 151 (38.5%) respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the teaching profession

Discussion

This study has shown that less than half (45.4%) of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs. This could go a long way in affecting the level of productivity. In a study carried out among nurses in

private hospitals in Nigeria, it was found that only 37.4% of the nurses were satisfied with their job.¹⁰ This finding was also similar to the findings of a study in Nigeria (developing country) among nurses in a Federal Government Teaching Hospital where the level of satisfaction was found to be 36%.¹² This low level of job satisfaction could be as a result of poor job conditions in Nigeria.

Majority of the teachers were between the ages of 26 and 35 years. This shows that the teachers were young. The length of service also shows that majority of the teachers had spent 10 years and below.

Fifty-eight (14.8%) teachers had psychological morbidity. This value is lower than that found among nursing staff in private hospitals in Benin City, Nigeria.¹¹ More dissatisfied teachers had psychological morbidity than satisfied teachers but this was not found to be statistically significant. This was similar to the findings among nurses in private practice in Edo- State, Nigeria.¹¹

Respondent's sex was found to influence job dissatisfaction. This was similar to studies carried out by Wahba among librarians,¹³ where it was found that female librarians were more dissatisfied than male librarians. The male librarians gave more importance to personal development and free decision making in their jobs than the female librarians.¹²

A significant number (45.9%) of teachers would want to quit their job. This has a serious implication on the growth of any nation, as the educational sector is very important for the development of any country. It has been found that employees who are dissatisfied in their job become less committed or give up the profession altogether.¹⁴ Rapid turnover is not good for a school as it is unsettling for the students¹⁵ and is unfavorable for the school and staff as it uses up more time in the familiarisation process and recruitment of new staff.¹⁶

Although the female teachers were more dissatisfied than their male counterparts, more male teachers had intention to quit. This could be, as a result of the fact that men are more mobile and economic reasons require them to quit. Socio-culturally, women are more at ease with the teaching profession by virtue of the demands vis-à-vis their feminine disposition and cultural requirement of being responsible for domestic issues. The immediate implication of this is that teaching has a gender specific undertone, which invariably accounts for male discomfort to stay at the job.

Poor salary was found to be the main cause of job dissatisfaction. This is similar to the findings of a study among nurses in private hospitals in Edo- State, Nigeria.¹¹ but at variance with the findings of a study among nurses in a Federal Government Teaching hospital in Nigeria where lack of equipment was found to be the major cause of job dissatisfaction¹² Poor salary was also the major reason given for wanting to quit the job. Other reasons given for job dissatisfaction included job insecurity, which could be as a result of the fact that the schools are privately owned. Poor facilities and stressful nature of the job were also given as a cause of dissatisfaction. The teaching profession has been known to be stressful. The International Labor Organisation (ILO) has expressed its concern about teachers stress and has reported that a 'battle fatigue' which has its origin in stress, it's being expressed by 25% of the teaching profession in the United Kingdom and is causing health problem.¹⁷ Undisciplined students was a reason for dissatisfaction. This is not surprising as teachers have identified students as the primary and central factor that has impact on both their professional enthusiasm and discouragement.³ Poor management has also been identified as a reason for dissatisfaction. Robbins and his colleagues indicated that the more important factors conducive to job satisfaction include mentally challenging work,

equitable rewards, supportive working conditions and supportive colleagues.¹⁸ For this to occur there is a need for proper management of the organization as management process is essentially a decision making process.

In conclusion, this study has shown a low level of job satisfaction of the teachers in private schools. A significant level would want to quit their job. Poor salary was the major cause of job dissatisfaction and reason for wanting to quit their job.

Only 14.8% of them had psychological morbidity. More dissatisfied teachers had psychological morbidity but this was not found to be associated with job dissatisfaction. It is recommended that there should be a salary increment for teachers in private secondary schools as it has been found to be the major cause of job dissatisfaction and the reason given for wanting to quit the job. There is also a need to identify and attend to other causes of job dissatisfaction.

Acknowledgment

The authors are grateful to all the secondary school teachers who took part in the study for their co-operation during the collection of data.

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