

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Career Commitment of Secondary School Teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine relative and joint influence of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on career commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. The descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised eight thousand five hundred and fifteen (8,515) secondary school teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting two hundred and fifty (250) secondary school teachers for the study. Three standardized instruments namely: Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) and Career Commitment Scale (CCS) were adopted for the study. Three research questions were raised and data collected were analyzed through Multiple Regression Analysis. The results showed that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy significantly predicted teachers' career commitment. In addition, the two variables when taken as a whole significantly predicted career commitment among secondary school teachers. The researcher recommended that secondary school teachers should be exposed to some psychological interventions such as emotional intelligence and self-efficacy training programmes to enhance their career commitment.

Keywords: Emotional, intelligence, self-efficacy, career, commitment, Ondo

Introduction

Education is crucial to the development of any developing country such as Nigeria and the success of any educational system largely depends on the quality of teaching at all levels. Teachers are primarily engaged to teach and impart knowledge to pupils and students. Teachers also engage in many tasks such as curriculum design, development, school planning, and so forth (Kudryashova, Gorbatova, Rybushkina & Ivanova, 2016). Indeed, the sustenance of the roles of education in the society depends on the level of commitment of teachers. Therefore, career commitment of teachers is fundamental and germane to the realization of educational goals.

Career commitment is the motivation individuals have towards personal advancement in their profession (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Colarelli and Bishop (1990) described career commitment as the development of personal career goals as well as the attachment to, identification with and involvement in these goals. They also emphasize that career commitment has to do with self-generated goals, and commitment to one's own career. Goulet and Singh (2002) emphasized that career commitment is the extent to which an individual identifies with and value his/her profession or vocation and amount of time and efforts spent acquiring relevant knowledge. This may imply that a person could be said to be highly committed if he/she is willing to exert energy and be persistent in ensuring that his/her career goals are achieved despite all odds. As a psychological concept, career commitment is related to motivation, persistence and willingness. Individual with higher career commitment expresses high motivation to overcome difficulties in workplace (Ballout, 2009). Iqbal, Raffat, Sarim and Siddiq (2014) asserted that there is a strong positive relationship between career commitment and employee performance. This indicated that employees who have high career commitment also demonstrate high job performance in their places of work. In addition, poor career commitment results to poor job performance among employees.

Indeed, career commitment is very crucial in the teaching sector. When teachers are highly committed to their jobs, they will be motivated to put in their best and this will reflect in the way their students are handled. However, poor career commitment to work among teachers could jeopardize the realization of school goals and educational objectives in any society. The progress and success of the teaching profession depends on the performance of teachers and other supporting staff. Van Rossenberg, et al. (2018) emphasized that any organization in the world needs workers that are highly committed to the system in order to face the world economic competition. Gbadamosi (2003) posited that commitment of workers improves performance, and good performance in turn leads to organizational effectiveness.

Unfortunately, there have been increasing cases of poor career commitment among teachers in Nigeria (Akinwale & Okotoni, 2019). Many teachers in public (government-owned) secondary schools in Nigeria are regularly observed coming late to schools, not going to classes to teach students, gossiping and doing almost nothing during working periods, pinging and chatting on phones, leaving their places of work very early, buying and selling within and outside the school premises. It has also been observed that some teachers in the rural areas come to school at will. Studies also revealed that many Nigerian teachers lack job satisfaction, career commitment and organizational commitment (Adeyemo, 2001). Salami (2007) remarked that despite efforts to recruit and retain qualified secondary school teachers by various

governments, the teaching profession is replete with teachers who lack job satisfaction and career commitment.

Many studies had been carried out on career commitment and some related variables. Poor salary, poor conditions of service, low prospects and prestige were found as factors affecting career commitment among teachers (Salami, 2007). A careful look at the available literature revealed that poor career commitment among teachers is a worldwide problem which deserves the attention of all stakeholders. In addition, there is paucity of research that examined the impact of psychological variables such as emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on teachers' career commitment in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study therefore examined the emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors of career commitment among teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Emotional intelligence as a construct was introduced to the public and academic environment in the past decades (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004). Researchers that conceived emotional intelligence believed that people with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to incorporate emotional experience into thoughts and actions. To them, the ability to guide one's thinking and actions through the use of emotions would be related to how to feel efficacious when considering career-related actions (Brown, George-Curran & Smith, 2003). Thus, emotional experience could be used to assist in career development and commitment.

Ciarrochi, Chan and Caputi (2000) stressed that being able to understand, perceive and express emotions in an appropriate way could determine the success or failure of an employee in a career. Evidence is accumulating that emotional intelligence is associated with important outcomes such as high quality social relationships (Lopes, Salovey, Cote & Beers, 2005). Emotional intelligence may contribute to work performance (as reflected in salary, salary increase and company rank) by enabling individuals to nurture positive relationships at work, work affectively in teams and build social capital.

The importance of emotional intelligence in schools and organizations cannot be over emphasized. Ciarrochi, Forgas and Mayer (2001) opined that being able to understand, perceive and express emotions in an appropriate way can determine whether an individual is successful or not as an employee. With particular reference to teachers, it suffices to say that the presence of high level of emotional intelligence and its components of self-awareness, mood management, self-motivation, empathy and

managing relationships may be very important to their career commitment. Empirical studies abound that show the relationship between emotional intelligence and career commitment (Yuvaraj & Sheila, 2018; Aremu & Tejumola, 2008; Salami, 2007). A study carried out by Humphreys, Brunsen and Davis (2005) on health care workers revealed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. In another research carried out on public sector employees, Adeyemo (2007) found that emotional intelligence positively and significantly associated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. In addition, Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel (2002) emphasized that people whose levels of emotional intelligence are high employ the capacity to maintain their affective commitment to the organization. Most studies carried out on the relationship between emotional intelligence and career commitment of secondary school teachers were done in Europe and America. Few available studies carried out in Nigeria were done in metropolitan cities such as Ibadan, Ife, Lagos and so on. This present study therefore examined the predictive influence of emotional intelligence on career commitment of secondary school teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Another variable of interest in this study is self-efficacy. In the last couple of decades, the concept of self-efficacy has attracted a considerable amount of attention as a significant measure for understanding and predicting human behaviour. The concept of self-efficacy is based on the social cognitive theory. Bandura (1986) defined it as the belief a person has in his capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required in prospective situations. It should be noted that individual's self-efficacy may not reflect his/her real capability. However, perceived self-efficacy has an important role on human motivation and behaviour (Senemoglu, 2001, as cited in Uzun, Özkılıç, & Şentürk, 2010). Self-efficacy affects goals which people set for themselves, amount of effort put into reaching these goals, duration of exposure to difficulties, and reactions they show against failure (Alabay, 2006, cited in Uzun, et al., 2010).

Bandura (1994) categorized four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences (an individual's past successes and failures), physiological and affective states (somatic information conveyed by physiological and emotional arousal), vicarious experiences (skill in question is modeled by someone considered competent by and comparable to the individual) and verbal persuasion (encouragement received from a knowledgeable source). He believed that positive experiences of these types generally contribute to the formation of high self-efficacy, whereas negative experiences generally contribute to the formation of low self-efficacy.

The most prevailing and powerful influence on efficacy is mastery experience, where the successful implementation of behaviour increases self-efficacy for that behaviour.

The perception that a performance has been successful enhances perceived self-efficacy and ensures future proficiency and success. In contrast, the perception that a performance has been a failure weakens efficacy beliefs and leads to the expectation that future performance will also be inefficient.

The second influence, vicarious experience, originates from observing other similar people perform a behaviour successfully. It provides people with ideas about successful manners of action. In contrast, observing people similar to oneself fail, lowers an individual's confidence and subsequently undermines his/her future efforts.

A third source of influence is social or verbal persuasion received from others. Successful persuaders foster people's beliefs in their capabilities, while at the same time, ensure that visualized success is achievable. Negative persuasion, on the other hand, may tend to defeat and lower self-beliefs. The most contributing effect of social persuasion pivots around initiating the task, attempting new strategies, and trying hard to succeed (Pajares, 2002).

The fourth influence, psychological and affective states, such as stress, anxiety and excitement, also provide information about efficacy perception and boost the feeling of proficiency. Hence, trying to reduce an individual's stress and anxiety and modifying negative debilitating states to positive ones play an influential role in amending perceived self-efficacy beliefs. Another important affective factor, according to Pintrich and Schunk (2001), is attribution. For example, if success is attributed to internal or controllable causes such as ability or effort, efficacy will be enhanced. Nevertheless, if success is attributed to external uncontrollable factors, such as chance, self-efficacy may be diminished (Woolfolk & Burke, 2000).

Self-efficacy beliefs can influence an individual to become highly committed to successfully execute the behaviours necessary to produce desired outcomes. Self-efficacy theory states that the level and strength of self-efficacy will determine (1) whether or not a behaviour will be initiated, (2) how much effort will result, and (3) how long the effort will be sustained in the face of obstacles. According to Bandura (1993), humans make life decisions based on their perceived self-efficacy by undertaking activities and choosing situations they deem to be within their capabilities for success. Additionally, activities associated with failure are avoided. When humans have a strong sense of perceived self-efficacy, they put forth a greater effort to accomplish a task despite the obstacles they encounter than those who have a weak sense of self-efficacy.

Efficacy beliefs have also been associated with various important aspects of the teaching profession. For instance, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca and Malone (2006)

found that teachers who demonstrated high level of self-efficacy are more enthusiastic and satisfied with their jobs. In addition, Imants and Van Zoelen (1995) reported that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy exhibited greater commitment to their profession. Salami (2007) investigated the degree of correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to work attitudes among 475 secondary school teachers in southern Nigeria. Results of the study indicated that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy had significant relationships with work attitudes.

Coladarci (1992) asserted that high self-efficacy teachers persist when things do not go smoothly and are more resilient in the face of setbacks. He noticed among efficacious in-service teachers a high sense of professional commitment. According to Coladarci (1992), teachers with high self-efficacy scores are more committed to their jobs in elementary and middle schools. Many studies have found significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' career commitment (Adio & Popoola, 2010; Niu, 2010; Salami, 2007). Niu (2010) noted that there was positive correlation between self-efficacy and career commitment in the samples of 1,025 employees in foodservice industry. He found that employees with high level of self-efficacy had higher level of career commitment. Besides, employees with higher self-efficacy are not only at the higher needs level, but also they are more motivated to pursue self-growth, self-realization, and be willing to plan and carry out their career activities. For such employees, they will express high self-fulfillment.

Klassen and Chiu (2011) indicated that there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and occupational commitment in the sample of 434 practicing teachers. The result illustrated that teachers with high self-efficacy are more committed to the profession when they feel confident in their performance and controlling the teaching situation. They expressed greater confidence to their career.

Regarding career commitment of secondary school teachers in Ondo State, there are few empirical studies that had considered the contribution of self-efficacy to teachers' career commitment. Therefore, the specific purpose of this study was to examine the joint and relative contributions of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to career commitment of secondary school teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Ho2: Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy taken as whole will not significantly contribute to career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Ho3: Each of the independent variables (emotional intelligence and self-efficacy) will not significantly contribute to career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. This research design enabled the researcher to collect data from respondents for the purpose of analysis, interpretation and generalization. The population comprised eight thousand five hundred and fifteen (8,515) male and female secondary school teachers in Ondo State. The sample consisted of 250 teachers (Male = 94 (37.6%), females = 156 (62.4%)) randomly selected from twenty secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure equal representation of male and female teachers. Three hundred copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the selected teachers but only 250 were properly filled and used in the analysis while 50 were incompletely filled and were discarded. The teachers' mean age was 38 years with standard deviation of 4.24 and an age range of 25-50. The experience of the teachers ranged from 3-18 years and the average years of teaching experience was 9.

The Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SREIT) developed by Schutte *et al.* (1998) was adopted to measure emotional intelligence of the respondents. It contains 33 items using a four point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Schutte *et al.* (1998) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .90 for the 33-item scale. The internal consistency coefficients of the four sub-scales established by the researcher of the present study were .86, .79, .82 and .74 for emotional perception, utilizing emotions, managing self-relevant emotions and managing others' emotions respectively. SREIT has been used successfully among Nigerian teachers (Salami, 2007). The General Perceived Self-Efficacy (GSE) by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) was a 10-item statement using a four point scale ranging from (1) Not at all true, (2) Hardly true, (3) Moderately true to (4) Exactly true. Examples of items on the questionnaire are: (1) I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort. (2) When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions. For the reliability of the GSE, Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) reported high internal consistency with a Cronbach of .90. The researcher of the present study used test re-test approach to determine the reliability of the instrument in Nigeria. This yielded .83 reliability coefficient. The Career Commitment Scale (CCS) developed by Blau (1985) was adopted to elicit information on teachers' career commitment. The Scale has 24 items assessed on a 4-point ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). This Scale has been widely used by researchers due to its impressive psychometric properties. The Cronbach's alpha reported for this scale by Blau (1985) was 0.76. The demographic and biographic information of the respondents involving

age, sex, years of teaching experience were obtained as part of the career commitment scale.

The three instruments were administered on the secondary school teachers selected for this study by the researcher and three research assistants who were postgraduate students. Teachers' and school Principals' consents were obtained. The purpose of the study and the scales to be completed were carefully explained to the respondents before distributing the instruments. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression to establish the role of independent variable (emotional intelligence and self-efficacy) on dependent variable (career commitment).

Presentation of Results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables under study as well as the bivariate correlations among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and career commitment.

Table 1: Inter-correlational matrix of Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy and Career Commitment (N = 250)

Variables	EI	GSE	CC
Emotional Intelligence	1		
General Self-Efficacy	0.75*	1	
Sig.	.000		
Career Commitment	.0.72*	0.67*	1
Sig.	.000	.000	
Mean	107.18	31.46	80.58
S.D.	11.52	0.45	7.09

* = $p < 0.05$ (Significant results)

The bivariate correlations on Table 1 showed that there was a significant relationship between career commitment and emotional intelligence ($r = .72, p < .05$) and self-efficacy ($r = .67, p < .05$).

Ho2: Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy taken as whole will not significantly contribute to career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Table 2 presents the Multiple Regression Analysis on career commitment of secondary school teachers in Ondo State.

Table 2: Regression Analysis on Career Commitment of secondary school teachers

Multiple $r = 0.75$
 Multiple r^2 (Adjusted) = 0.56
 Standard error of the estimate = 4.72

Analysis of Variance					
Source of variation	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	P
Regression	2	7019.88	3509.94	157.48	.000*
Residual	247	5505.17	22.29		
Total	249	12525.07			

Results of data analysis in Table 2 revealed that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, taken as a whole, significantly predicted teachers' career commitment ($r = 0.75$, $r^2 = 0.56$, $F_{(2, 247)} = 157.48$, $p < 0.05$). When combined, both emotional intelligence and self-efficacy predicted about 56% of the variation in their career commitment while 44% was due to chance. The implication of this finding is that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy significantly predicted secondary school teachers' career commitment.

Ho3: Each of the independent variables (emotional intelligence and self-efficacy) will not significantly contribute to career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Table 3 shows the contributions of each independent variable (emotional intelligence and self-efficacy) to career commitment of secondary school teachers.

Table 3: Relative Contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of career commitment

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Beta	t-ratio	P
	Beta	SEB	Beta		
Emotional intelligence	0.31	0.039	0.50	7.77	.000*
General Self-efficacy	0.53	0.11	0.31	4.75	.001*

* = $P < 0.05$ (Significant results)

The results contained in Table 3 revealed that each independent variable (emotional intelligence, self-efficacy) significantly contributed to career commitment of secondary school teachers. Considering the magnitude of each variable, results in Table 3 showed that the contribution of emotional intelligence to career commitment ($\beta = 0.50$, $t = 7.77$) was higher than that of self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.31$, $t = 4.75$).

Discussion of the findings

This study examined the relationships among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and career commitment, and investigated the extent to which emotional intelligence and self-efficacy predicted career commitment of secondary school teachers. The results of the study revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted career commitment. This finding of the study is in line with the results of past studies (Yuvaraj & Sheila, 2018; Aremu & Tejumola, 2008; Salami, 2007). This result is not surprising as emotionally intelligent teachers are known for having the ability and capacity to recognize, manage and use their emotions effectively to eliminate any obstacles and advance their career horizons than their counterparts with low emotional intelligence. Such teachers are able to effectively cope with job demands, frustrations and job stress involved in teaching. Hence, teachers who are emotionally intelligent are able to demonstrate high level of commitment to their profession.

The outcome of the study also revealed that self-efficacy significantly predicted career commitment. This is in agreement with the findings of previous researchers who reported significant correlations between self-efficacy and career commitment (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Adio & Popoola, 2010; Niu, 2010). The possible reason for this finding is that teachers with high level of self-efficacy are usually highly motivated to persist when faced with setbacks and willing to learn and employ new approaches to overcome challenges. Therefore, highly self-efficacious teachers are likely to demonstrate high level of commitment to their careers and organizations.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were good predictors of career commitment. The higher the level of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of teachers in secondary schools, the higher their level of commitment to their jobs and organizations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

1. Counselling psychologists, researchers and teacher trainers should pay more attention to enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in secondary schools. In fact, enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy would significantly influence teachers' commitment and productivity.
2. In addition, emotional intelligence should be included in the training of teachers at all levels.
3. Teaching Service Commission (TSC) should always consider recruiting teachers whose emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are high into the teaching profession.

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