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TEACHERS' JOB ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA AND DELTA STATES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States, Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions and one null hypothesis. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 22,944 respondents, consisting of 708 principals and 22,236 teachers from 708 public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States. A sample of 416 respondents was selected using proportionate sampling technique based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table, with an additional 10% to account for non-response. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Teachers' Job Engagement Rating Scale (TJERS), while students' academic achievement was measured using WAEC results for the 2021 and 2022 academic sessions. The instrument was validated by experts and yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86. Of the 416 questionnaires administered, 374 (89.9%) were retrieved and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions on teachers' job engagement, cumulative grade point averages were used to determine students' academic achievement, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the relationship question and test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that teachers exhibited a high level of job engagement, students demonstrated a high level of academic achievement, and the relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement was very weak, negative, and not statistically significant. The study concluded that although teachers were highly engaged and students achieved highly academically, teachers' job engagement was not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement. The study recommended sustained support for teachers' job engagement and greater attention to other factors influencing students' academic achievement.

Keywords: Teachers' job engagement, academic achievement, public secondary schools, principals, correlational study, Anambra State, Delta State.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is one of the most important constructs in educational discourse. It is much more than test scores and grades. In a very real sense, it is the concrete embodiment of learning the proof that instructional goals have been met and that intellectual growth has taken place. Academic achievement is the degree to which students have achieved the specific goals and objectives following exposure to curricular contents over a period. This is reflected in the skills acquired and competencies that students can demonstrate effectively to solve academic problems. According to Ige and Ogundele (2016), students' academic achievement is a terminology that is used to determine success in the formal education system. The achievement is measured through examinations, reports, researchers' ratings, cumulative grade point averages and tests. There are many factors that influence academic achievement. Spinath (2012) defined academic achievement as performance outcomes in intellectual domains taught at school and described it as "the most important prerequisite for individual and societal prosperity." Similarly, Abdullah (2016) and Arhad *et al.* (2015) described academic achievement as the extent to which students achieve the educational goals through continuous assessment and examinations. Bhat (2013) defined academic achievement as knowledge and skills acquired, which are usually measured by test scores and standardised examinations such as WAEC and NECO. Furthermore, Ariel (2019) indicated that cognitive and non-cognitive factors in a socio-cultural context determine students' academic achievement. Anderson (2020) highlighted the significance of data on academic achievement in judging the effectiveness of educational systems.

Academic achievement of students can be good or bad. Good is when students' results are valued and a good proportion of enrolled students are successful. Poor academic achievement, in contrast, occurs if a very high proportion of students who sit for an examination fail. Poor academic performance of students in public secondary schools has been a thing of speculation and concern in Anambra and Delta States. This poor performance which is often reflected in external examinations has been largely blamed by stakeholders on the laxity of school administrators especially principals in effectively carrying out managerial practices such as instructional supervision, monitoring and ensuring teacher accountability. Nevertheless, the classroom teacher's direct role in influencing what students learn is still vitally important, beyond administrative oversight.

Academic achievement is central to the concept of educational success. Much research has been devoted to finding out what predicts, enhances or hinders academic achievement. Among them, the role of teachers has become particularly salient. Teachers are the primary architects of the learning environment. Their attitudes, behaviours, and mental states invariably influence the quality of learning experiences that students face. Job engagement has become a more prominent construct in the larger literature on teachers. Teacher's job engagement is seen as a significant factor in improving teacher's performance and overall efficiency of educational organisations, reflected by enthusiasm, dedication and job absorption (Bakker *et al.,* 2014). The major aspects of teaching include the use of instructional materials, different teaching methods, professional documentation, involvement in co-curricular activities and effective guidance of learners. Accordingly, teacher job engagement is defined as the teacher's capacity to demonstrate active engagement in the pursuit of the school's mission, vision and values through daily classroom teaching, mastery of subject content, effective instructional delivery and ongoing assessment of students' learning to meet educational objectives. Further, Owala, Odongo and Raburu (2016) describe teacher job engagement as the ability to combine knowledge, skills, instructional materials and experience in providing instruction effectively.

A large body of theoretical and empirical literature suggests a positive relationship between teachers' work-related attitudes and students' outcomes. Bernal and Donoso (2013) assert that teaching is a creative, organised and capable of responding to a variety of learning objectives in demanding educational environments. Effective teaching practices are important in creating a motivating classroom environment that enhances students' motivation and participation (García et al., 2014). Schaufeli et al. (2002) within the engagement framework, characterised work engagement by three dimensions vigour, dedication and absorption-which are associated with positive outcomes such as improved task performance and quality service delivery. Positive attitudes toward work, better performance, and proactive behaviour are associated with high job engagement, according to Salanova et al. (2005), and Bakker et al. (2020) maintained that highly engaged employees use their positive energy and enthusiasm to achieve productive work outcomes. Teachers have been shown to have a critical role in the academic and long-term outcomes of the students in the educational context (Blazer, 2016; Raj et al., 2014; Jackson, 2012). Teachers have been identified as vital agents of national development and central to the achievement of school excellence (Asiyai, 2022, Nwosu 2017; Emunemu&Isuku, 2020). Furthermore, classroom motivation, often influenced by teachers' engagement, has been shown to be positively related to academic performance and school success (Almeida et al., 2012; Caamaño et al., 2012). In the same vein, the conceptual link between positive classroom climate and student motivation (Heather, 2006; Cornejo & Redondo, 2001) suggests that engaged teachers should predict better academic results.

These are strong theoretical and empirical claims linking teacher engagement and student achievement but few studies have specifically investigated this nexus in the setting of public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States, Nigeria. While existing literature has examined school facilities, principals' leadership styles, instructional supervision, and student characteristics in general, the particular role of teachers' job engagement like their vigour, dedication, and absorption in their professional duties has been less studied in this region. The study becomes necessary against the background of the persistent concerns about students' academic achievement in Anambra and Delta States and the acknowledged importance of the teacher in this regard. It is intended to ascertain the actual degree of academic success, whether it be high or low, and to ascertain how closely it relates to teachers' job engagement.

Statement of the Problem

Parents, guardians, teachers, curriculum experts and the general public have for several years, consistently expressed concern over the persistent poor academic performance of students in public secondary schools as reflected in external examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), National Examination Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). This is particularly worrying when thousands of students sit for these examinations every year but only a small percentage of them get the five credit passes including English Language and Mathematics to qualify for admission into higher education institutions. In many cases, teachers are being blamed for this continuous poor performance in academics.

Studies show that many teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States have low levels of job engagement. Some teachers are not much interested and committed to their teaching responsibilities, are late in coming to school, skip classes, spend too little time preparing lessons or engage in other income-generating activities during school hours, thereby hindering effective classroom instruction. Such behaviours are likely to reduce

the quality of the instruction, limit the students' opportunities to learn, and adversely affect the students' academic performance. Therefore, the impact of teachers' job engagement on students' academic success has been increasingly concerned by stakeholders. Several researches have identified the determinants of students' poor academic achievement in Nigeria, with a considerable focus on school infrastructure, teacher motivation, school leadership, teaching and learning strategies and student attributes. However, little research has been carried out specifically on teachers' job engagement as a variable related to students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States. This is where the study becomes important. The problem of this study, therefore, put in question form is: How does teachers' job engagement relate to students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States, Nigeria?

Research Questions

1. To what extent are teachers engaged in their jobs within public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States?
2. What is the level of students' academic achievement in Anambra and Delta States public secondary schools?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States?

Research Hypotheses

There is no significant relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States.

Research methods

Research Design

The study adopted correlational design. This study is correlational in nature because it sought to establish the relationship that exists between several variables of the study. Correlational research method is used when a researcher is interested in establishing the relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables. In this regard, the correlational method of ex-*post facto* research design was employed in the investigation, which is hoped to help the researcher to achieve the purpose of the study. *Ex-post facto* research design is used because the researcher has no control over the independent variables whose manifestations had occurred. The independent variables were used in their natural occurrences.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State and Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the population consists of 22,944 respondents, made up of 708 principals and 22,236 teachers drawn from 708 public secondary schools across the two states.In Anambra State, the population comprises 8,056 respondents, consisting of 256 principals and 7,800 teachers from 256 public secondary schools. The schools are distributed across the three senatorial districts: Anambra Central Senatorial District with 103 schools, 103 principals, and 2,889 teachers; Anambra South Senatorial District with 67 schools, 67 principals, and 2,025 teachers; and Anambra North Senatorial District with 86 schools, 86 principals, and 2,867 teachers.In Delta State, the population comprises 14,888 respondents, made up of 452 principals and 14,436 teachers from 452 public secondary schools. The distribution by senatorial district shows that Delta Central Senatorial District has 180 schools, 180 principals, and 6,160 teachers; Delta North Senatorial District has 161 schools, 161 principals, and 5,272 teachers; while Delta South

Senatorial District has 111 schools, 111 principals, and 3,003 teachers.The population figures were obtained from the Post Primary Education Board, Awka, Anambra State (May, 2023) and the Ministry of Secondary Education, Asaba, Delta State (May, 2023).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study is 416 respondents drawn from a population of 22,944 principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States. The sample size was initially determined as 378 using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. However, the sample size was increased by 10% to 416 to account for potential non-response and to enhance the representativeness of the sample, as recommended by Sekaran and Bougie (2016) and Creswell (2014). The study adopted a proportionate sampling technique to ensure fair representation of principals and teachers in the sample. The sample was distributed proportionally to the population of each group, resulting in a sample of principals and teachers drawn in proportion to their respective population sizes.

Research Instrument

The researcher used a questionnaire structured by her to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was tagged Teachers' Job Engagement Rating Scale (TJERS). Section A of the questionnaire represents the demographic data of the respondents such as state, and status. Section B contains 20 items on Teachers' Job Engagement Rating Scale (TJERS). The principals responded to the TJERS. The researcher structured the items on a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 4 for strongly agree. The mid-point of the rating scale is 2.50, which is used as benchmark for accepting or rejecting a mean score. Section C is a students' academic achievement thatwas computed using WASCE results of 2021 and 2022. The scale that was used is A1=8, B2=7, B3=6, C4=5, C5=4, C6=3, D7=2, E8=1 and F9=0 (see appendix). The data gathered from the questionnaires were correlated with the result collated with the checklist.

Validity of the Instrument

In order to establish the validity of the instrument, the researcher took some steps. For instance, experts in the Department of Educational Management and Foundations and the researcher's supervisors determined the face and content validity of the instrument. The researcher submitted the instrument first to the supervisors. Thereafter, the instrument was submitted to two experts who are professors of educational administration. With their expertise, they critically examined and scrutinized the items one by one, to see if they were clearly written using unambiguous terms, not overloaded as well as the appropriateness of the language used. The experts provided comments that were used to modify the items of the instrument before the final copies were printed.

Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher employed Cronbach alpha reliability determination technique, which measures the internal consistency. The researcher produced 30 copies and administered same to secondary school principals and teachers in other locations of Anambra and Delta States who did not participate in the original study. The reason for a different location is to ensure that those that eventually took part in the study do not have access to it until the actual day. The researcher used Cronbach alpha reliability determination technique to measure the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of Teacher Job Engagement Rating Scale (TJERS) is 0.86. Thus, the instruments were justified reliable for use for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally visited the schools to administer the questionnaire to the respondents. Three research assistants coached by her assisted the researcher in the administration of the instrument. The coaching included the researcher encouraging the assistants to ensure that the respondents properly filled and returned the questionnaire in good condition. For ethical reason, the researcher obtained the permission of the school principal. The team assured the respondents that the process is voluntary and that they are free to accept or decline to participate in the study. The instruments were administered to 416 principals and teachers in sampled public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States 374 out of for the total number of administered questionnaires which representing 89.9% were successfully retrieved. The number of questionnaires that were returned correctly filled were used for analysis of data.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher intends to use several statistical tools to analyze the data. Thus, mean and standard deviation with a benchmark of 2.50 was used to answer research questions 1. Mean scores ranging from 0.00 to 0.49 was rejected but mean scores ranging from 2.50 and beyond were accepted. The mean score of cumulative grade points for students' academic achievement was usedto answer research question 2. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions 3 and test hypothesisat 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of teachers' job engagement in Anambra and Delta States public secondary schools?

Table 1: Level of Teachers' Job Engagement in Anambra and Delta States Public Secondary Schools using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation

S/N	Teachers in this school;	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.
1	Are always present at school	3.76	0.43
2	Conduct early morning assembly	3.38	0.49
3	Participate in ensuring school discipline	3.39	0.49
4	Give exhortation during assembly when called upon to do so	3.37	0.53
5	Write lesson plan daily	3.42	0.49
6	Keep a record of topics taught daily in the diary	3.37	0.48
7	Give student class assignment	3.39	0.49
8	Marks student assignment	3.45	0.50
9	Participate in co-curricular activities	3.36	0.48
10	Assist in solving school problems	3.41	0.49
11	Make suggestions during staff meetings	3.45	0.50
12	Show interest in students' welfare	3.48	0.50
13	Attend class regularly to teach students	3.47	0.50
14	Are punctual to school	3.49	0.50
15	Show concern for school mission and values	3.43	0.50
16	Are committed to achieving school goals	3.45	0.50
17	Takes responsibilities	3.49	0.50
18	Feels excited to teach students	3.58	0.49
19	Accepts responsibilities	3.52	0.53
20	Display dedication to duty	3.45	0.54
	Aggregate Mean	**3.46**	**0.50**
	Criterion Mean	**2.50**	

Table 1 revealed the level of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States. The findings indicate that teachers demonstrate a high level of job engagement across various school activities. Items such as always being present at school ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76), feeling excited to teach students ($\bar{x}$ = 3.58), accepting responsibilities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.52), and being punctual to school ($\bar{x}$ = 3.49) recorded high mean scores, indicating strong commitment and dedication among teachers. Similarly, activities such as writing lesson plans ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42), marking assignments ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45), participating in co -curricular activities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.36), and contributing during staff meetings ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45) also showed high engagement levels. Furthermore, teachers were actively involved in maintaining school discipline ($\bar{x}$ = 3.39), attending classes regularly ($\bar{x}$ = 3.47), and showing concern for students' welfare ($\bar{x}$ = 3.48), reflecting a strong sense of responsibility and professional commitment.The aggregate mean of 3.46, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States exhibit a high level of job engagement.

Research Question 2: What is the level of students' academic achievement in Anambra and Delta States public secondary schools?

Table 2: Level of Students' Academic Achievementin Anambra and Delta States Public Secondary Schools

Level of Students' Academic Achievement	Frequency	Mean	Std. Dev.
Low academic achievement	0		
Moderate academic achievement	165	70.19	3.78
High academic achievement	209		
Total	374		

Key: 0-49 = Low; 50-69 = Moderate; 70-100 = High

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between teachers'jobengagement and students' academic achievement in Anambra and Delta States public secondary schools?

Table 3: Relationship Between Teachers' Job EngagementandStudents' Academic Achievementin Anambra and Delta States Public Secondary Schools

Variances	N	Teachers' Job Engagement	Students' Academic Achievement	Decision
Teachers' Job Engagement	374	1	-.018	
Students' Academic Achievement	374	-.018	1	Weak

Decision Rule: .1.00 to 0.30: Weak; 0.31 to 0.50: Moderate; 0.51 to 0.70: Strong; 0.71 and above: Very strong

Table 3 revealed that the relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States is very weak and negative. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r = -0.018) indicates a negligible inverse relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement. This implies that variations in teachers' job engagement have almost no association with students' academic achievement in the schools studied.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers'jobengagement and academic achievement in Anambra and Delta States public secondary schools.

Table 4: Significance of Pearson's r Relationship Between Teachers' Job Engagement and Students' Academic Achievement

N	Cal. r	α Level	Cal. p-value	Decision
374	-.018	0.05	0.731	NS

NS=Not Significant

Table 4 showed that the relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States ($r = -0.018$, $p = 0.731 > 0.05$) is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in the schools studied. This suggests that teachers' job engagement alone may not directly influence students' academic performance in the context of these schools. Educational administrators and policymakers may need to consider other factors, such as teaching methods, school resources, student motivation, and classroom environment, to effectively improve students' academic outcomes.

Discussion of Results

Level of Teachers' Job Engagement in Anambra and Delta States Public Secondary Schools

The finding of the study revealed that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States exhibit a high level of job engagement. This finding supports existing theoretical and empirical studies on teachers' job engagement, which emphasize the importance of teachers' active involvement, dedication, and commitment to their professional responsibilities. The finding lends support to the position of Bernal and Donoso (2013), who asserted that teaching involves creativity, organization, and the ability to meet diverse learning objectives within demanding educational environments. The high level of engagement observed in this study confirms that teachers are effectively fulfilling these expectations by demonstrating commitment to instructional delivery and active participation in school activities. Similarly, the finding corroborates the view of García *et al.* (2014), who emphasized that effective teaching practices contribute to a motivating classroom environment. The high engagement level observed implies that teachers are actively creating conducive learning environments that enhance students' motivation and participation.

Furthermore, the finding supports the conceptualization of teacher job engagement by Owala, *et al.*, (2016), who described it as the ability to integrate knowledge, skills, instructional materials, and experience in delivering instruction effectively. The high level of engagement recorded in this study suggests that teachers are not only present but are actively involved in meaningful teaching practices that enhance learning outcomes. In addition, the finding is in agreement with the work of Bakker et al. (2020), which posits that employees with high job engagement channel positive energy and enthusiasm into productive work outcomes. The observed high engagement among teachers reflects their ability to invest energy, commitment, and enthusiasm into their teaching roles. This also aligns with the dimensions of engagement proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002), namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. The teachers' punctuality, commitment to duties, and enthusiasm for teaching, as revealed in this study, are clear indicators of these engagement dimensions.

Moreover, the finding supports the assertion of Salanova et al. (2005), who noted that high job engagement is associated with positive work attitudes, improved performance, and

proactive behavior. The high level of engagement observed among teachers in this study suggests that they are likely to demonstrate effective teaching practices, maintain discipline, and contribute positively to school development. Similarly, the view of Markwich and Robertson-Smith (2009), which conceptualizes engagement as a state of energy and dedication, is reinforced by the present finding. Empirically, the finding is consistent with the study of Etubu and Ukaigwe (2018), who found that decision-making significantly predicts teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The high level of engagement observed in the present study supports their conclusion that when teachers are involved in school processes and supported by management, their level of engagement increases. The similarity in findings may be attributed to comparable educational environments and administrative structures across Nigerian secondary schools.

However, variations reported in some studies, where moderate or low levels of engagement were observed, may be due to differences in contextual factors such as inadequate resources, poor working conditions, or ineffective leadership. In contrast, the high level of engagement found in this study may be attributed to supportive management practices, availability of instructional resources, and teachers' intrinsic motivation. Therefore, sustained efforts should be made to maintain and strengthen teachers' engagement through supportive leadership, participatory decision-making, and conducive working environments.

Level of Students' Academic Achievementin Anambra and Delta States Public Secondary Schools

The second finding of the study revealed that students in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States demonstrate a high level of academic achievement. This finding supports existing theoretical and empirical studies on academic achievement, which emphasize that students' performance is a reflection of effective teaching, conducive learning environments, and the attainment of educational objectives. The finding lends support to the conceptual views of Nara and Abdullah (2016), as well as Arhad *et al.* (2015), who defined academic achievement as the extent to which students attain educational goals through continuous assessment and examinations. The high level of achievement observed in this study indicates that students are successfully meeting curricular objectives and demonstrating mastery of learned content. Similarly, the finding corroborates the view of Bhat (2013), who described academic achievement as knowledge and skills acquired, typically measured through test scores and standardized examinations such as WAEC and NECO. The high mean score reported in this study suggests that students are performing well in such evaluative measures.

Furthermore, the finding supports the perspective of Ariel (2019), who posited that students' academic achievement is a function of both cognitive and non-cognitive factors within a socio-cultural context. The high achievement level observed may reflect not only students' intellectual capabilities but also supportive school environments, effective teaching practices, and positive socio-cultural influences that enhance learning outcomes. In addition, the finding aligns with the assertion of Anderson (2020), who emphasized that academic achievement data is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of educational systems. The high level of students' performance found in this study suggests that public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States may be implementing effective instructional strategies and curricula that promote learning success.The finding is consistent with studies such as those of Blazer (2016), Raj *et al.* (2014), as well as Jackson (2012), which established that teachers significantly influence students' academic and long-term outcomes. The high level of achievement observed in this study supports these findings, suggesting that teachers in the

study area are effectively contributing to students' learning and performance. This is further reinforced by Asiyai (2022) and Nwosu (2017), who identified teachers as critical agents of national development, and by Emunemu and Isuku (2020), who emphasized that teachers are central to achieving school excellence.

However, the present finding appears to contrast with some studies that highlight challenges affecting students' academic achievement. For instance, Thompson and Miller (2021) reported that socioeconomic constraints can hinder students' access to learning resources, while Garcia (2022) noted that underfunded schools often struggle to provide adequate instructional materials. Similarly, Harris (2022) identified mental health challenges as barriers to effective learning, and Chen (2024) highlighted the difficulties faced by students with special learning needs. Despite these potential constraints, the high level of academic achievement recorded in this study suggests that such challenges may be mitigated in the study area through effective school management, teacher commitment, and supportive learning environments.

The differences between the present finding and some contrary studies may be attributed to contextual variations such as differences in educational policies, school leadership effectiveness, teacher quality, and availability of resources. Schools in Anambra and Delta States may benefit from relatively better administrative practices, teacher engagement, and community support, which collectively enhance students' academic outcomes. In conclusion, the finding that students demonstrate a high level of academic achievement strongly supports existing theoretical and empirical literature, particularly those emphasizing the role of teachers and school effectiveness in shaping student outcomes. While some studies highlight challenges that may hinder achievement, the present finding suggests that such factors can be effectively managed within supportive educational environments. Therefore, sustained efforts should be made to maintain and further improve the quality of teaching, learning resources, and school leadership to ensure continued high academic performance among students.

Relationship between Teachers' Job EngagementandStudents' Academic Achievementin Anambra and Delta States Public Secondary Schools

The third finding of this study revealed that the relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States is very weak, negative, and not statistically significant. This implies that although teachers may exhibit varying levels of engagement in their professional duties, such engagement does not significantly translate into improved academic achievement among students within the context of the study. Conceptually, teachers' job engagement is expected to positively influence students' academic outcomes. Teaching, as noted by Bernal and Donoso (2013), involves creativity, organization, and the ability to motivate learners, while effective teaching practices contribute to a positive classroom climate that enhances students' motivation and performance (García et al., 2014). Similarly, Owala, et al., (2016) emphasized that teacher engagement entails the integration of knowledge, skills, instructional materials, and experience in delivering subject matter effectively. From this perspective, a positive relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement would ordinarily be expected. Furthermore, work engagement, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002), is associated with positive outcomes such as improved task performance, motivation, and quality service delivery (Salanova et al., 2005). Bakker et al. (2020) also posited that highly engaged employees channel their energy into productive work behaviours. In the educational setting, such attributes should ideally

enhance teaching effectiveness and, by extension, students' academic achievement. However, the present finding does not align with these theoretical expectations, as it indicates a weak and negative relationship.

The finding contradicts empirical evidence that suggests a strong link between teacher-related factors and student outcomes. For instance, studies such as Almeida et al. (2012) and Caamaño et al. (2012) have shown that classroom motivation—often influenced by teachers' engagement relates positively to academic performance and school success. Similarly, the conceptual linkage between classroom climate and student motivation (Heather, 2006; Cornejo & Redondo, 2001) implies that engaged teachers should foster better academic outcomes. The divergence of the present finding from these studies may be attributed to contextual factors that mediate the relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement.

However, the finding indirectly aligns with studies that emphasize that teacher engagement alone is insufficient to guarantee improved academic achievement. For example, Etubu and Ukaigwe (2018) found that decision-making significantly predicts teachers' job engagement, suggesting that engagement is influenced by organizational and managerial factors. This implies that even when teachers are engaged, external variables such as leadership practices, availability of instructional resources, students' socio-economic background, and school environment may significantly determine students' academic performance. Thus, the weak relationship observed in the present study may reflect the influence of these intervening variables. A plausible explanation for the negative and non-significant relationship observed is that students' academic achievement is a multifaceted outcome influenced by numerous factors beyond teachers' job engagement. While engaged teachers may demonstrate dedication and enthusiasm, factors such as inadequate teaching resources, large class sizes, poor learning environments, students' personal attitudes, and socio-economic challenges may limit the extent to which teacher engagement translates into improved academic performance. Additionally, if engagement is not effectively directed towards instructional quality and student-centered practices, its impact on achievement may remain minimal. In comparison with other studies that reported strong positive relationships between teacher effectiveness and student performance, the present finding suggests a more complex and indirect relationship. It highlights the possibility that teacher engagement must be complemented by supportive school leadership, adequate resources, effective instructional strategies, and conducive learning environments to yield significant improvements in students' academic outcomes.

The finding of this study indicates that teachers' job engagement, although theoretically important, has a very weak and non-significant relationship with students' academic achievement in the study area. This suggests that teacher engagement alone is not a sufficient determinant of students' academic success. It is therefore imperative for educational stakeholders to adopt a holistic approach that integrates teacher engagement with other critical factors such as effective school management, resource provision, and supportive learning environments in order to enhance students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study concludes that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States demonstrate high degree of job engagement through their commitment, dedication and active participation in instructional and school-related activities. The study concludes that students in these schools are academically high achievers, which means that they are usually achieving the expected learning outcomes and are meeting the educational goals of the curriculum. The

study found that there is a weak, negative and not statistical significant relationship between teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement despite high levels of teachers' job engagement and students' academic achievement. This implies that the level of teachers' engagement with their work is not sufficient on its own to explain the differences in students' academic achievement. This means that while teachers' job engagement is an important predictor of effective teaching and school functioning, it does not appear to be a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra and Delta States. Therefore, it is probable that other factors besides teachers' job engagement affect students' academic performance, suggesting that educational stakeholders should adopt a more comprehensive strategy to enhance students' academic success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators and education officials should continue to formulate policies and practices to support and promote teachers' work engagement through continuous professional development programs, recognition of excellent performance, participative decision-making, and creation of a positive teaching and learning environment.
2. Teachers should demonstrate a high level of job engagement through their consistent commitment, dedication and professionalism in undertaking their instructional and administrative duties for effective teaching and learning in public secondary schools.
3. The Ministries of Education, Post Primary School Service Commissions and other educational stakeholders must identify and address other variables that have a significant influence on students' academic achievement such as study habits, parental involvement, availability of instructional resources, school leadership and learning environment as teachers' job engagement alone has been found not to be a significant predictor of students' academic achievement.

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