



TEACHERS TURNOVER INTENTION: IMPACT OF JOB STRESS AND DEPRESSION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the predictive influence of job stress and depression on turnover intention of teachers in Ondo state, Nigeria. Respondents were 270 (124 males and 146 females) randomly selected from 5 local government in Ondo state. For the purpose of data analysis, correlation and Multiple regression were applied. Results indicated that job stress and depression significantly predicted turnover intention of secondary school teachers. The educational planners and managers are encouraged to consider factors of job stress and depression while designing programs aimed to decrease turnover of teachers.

Keywords: Teachers, Turnover Intention, Job Stress, Depression

INTRODUCTION

With the public and private schools being faced with inadequate and mass exodus of teachers who look for greener pastures, the ministries of education are faced with a challenge of losing valuable and skilled employee who have been recruited, selected and trained with public funds (Mustapha & Mourad, 2007; Govender, 2005). Turnover intention refers to the probability of an employee to leave or quit an organization either voluntarily or involuntarily (Bigliardi, Petroni & Dormio, 2005; Balogun & Olowodunoye, 2012). This may results to inadequate teachers' staffing, work overload, low morale, ineffective teaching and low competitive advantage. Various researchers have identified job satisfaction (Mburu, 2008; Shah & Jumani, 2015), demographic variables e.g. age, gender, marital status, academic qualification and experience (Chen & Francesco, 2004; Thatcher, Stepina, & Boyle, 2002), sexual harassment, occupational stress, emotional labor and emotional intelligence (Adeyemo & Afolabi, 2007; Ogunbamila, Balogun,



Ogungbamila & Oladele, 2014) to be related with turnover. But, there is paucity of research on how depression and stress relate with turnover among teachers. This study aimed to fill this vacuum.

Literature Review

Stress, an omnipresent part of work occurs when there is disequilibrium between employees' resources to cope and external demands from work (Ogungbamila, Balogun, Ogungbamila & Oladele, 2014). For an external work demand to be labeled stressful, the individual must have perceived the demand as a threat to their coping ability. This makes the perception of stress subjective, hence, the assertion, stress is in the eye of the beholder (Lazarus, 1999). A significant positive relationship has been established between high levels of stress and psychological problems (e.g. depression, sleep problems, lack of motivation, restlessness, muscle tensions or pains (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997; Ogungbamila et al., 2014) and turnover intention (Oginni, Afolabi, Erigbe, 2013; Pascal, 2011). Stress has been found to also have a close relationship with job dissatisfaction which may in turn lead to turnover intention (Shah & Jumani, 2015). In the absence of morale and presence of job insecurity (a source of work stress), employees' may quit their job (Shah & Jumani, 2015).

For effective teaching, the teacher is expected to have a congruent emotion devoid of hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness which are the core symptoms of depression (Radloff, 1977; Xue, YI-Long, Yang, Li, Shu & Lie, 2014). Depression affects a relatively large proportion of individuals, teachers inclusive, and its symptoms include among others, loss of sleep, tiredness, loss of concentration on daily routines, irritability (Radloff, 1977; Xue et al, 2014). The Nigerian education system places a higher work demand and pressure on teachers due to inadequate teaching staff (Bola, 2010). This pressure may results to mental health problems (e.g. depression). Researchers (e.g. Dragano, He, Moebus, Jockel, Erbel & Siegist, 2008; Fergusson, Frost, & Hall, 2012; Lu, Zhong & Chen, 2013) have reported that adverse psychological environment and workload predicted depression among teachers and this factor could contribute to them quitting their job either voluntarily or involuntarily if unable to meet their higher demands from their jobs.

There is paucity of research on the comparison that exists among public and private schools on their intention to quit their teaching profession. But, we hope that public school teachers will have less intent to quit their work than private school teachers. This may be because some of the public school teachers have to travel long distances to reach school on time in order to deliver effectively and efficiently (Oyewumi, Ibitoye, & Sanni, 2012). Fluctuating salaries, heavy work load, and poor school management are also probable reasons why public secondary school teachers form intention to quit as compared to their counterparts in private school (Orina, 2014).

According to person-environment fit theory (French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974), when there is congruence between the individual needs, values, goals, abilities, or personality and environmental characteristics which may include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, demands of a job or role, cultural values, or characteristics of other individuals, the employee experience low level



of stress and depression. As a consequence, incongruence between an employee and the environmental factors may result in stress and depression (Oginni, et al., 2013; Ogungbamila et. al. 2014) which in turn leads to turnover intention.

Hypotheses

- i. Depression and job stress will significantly independently and jointly predict turnover intention
- ii. Private school teachers will have more intent to quit their job than their counterparts in public schools.

METHODS

Design and Participants

This was a cross-sectional survey. The participants were 270 teachers, sampled from 20 public and private secondary schools in 5 local government Areas in Ondo state, Nigeria. They comprised 124 males and 146 females, whose ages ranged between 25 and 65 years ($M = 33.04$; $SD = 7.86$). They had spent an average of 5.2 years ($SD = 4.85$) on the job. In terms of academic qualification, 22 (8.1%) of the participants had up to School Certificate, 20 (7.4%) had National Certificate in Education/ Ordinary National Diploma, 176 (65.2%) had Higher National Diploma/ first degree, and 52 (19.3%) had postgraduate degree. In the case of religion, 93 (34.4%) of the participants were Christians, 52 (19.3%) were Muslims, 101 (37.4%) practice other religion, and 24 (8.9%) do not practice any religion.

Measures

Depression was measured using Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), developed by Beck, Ward, Mendelso, Mock and Erbaugh (1990) was used to measure the participants' level of depression. It was a 21-item inventory rated on a 3-point scale (0 = No; 3 = Yes). Beck, Steer, and Brown (1994) reported a test-retest reliability coefficient of .80. In the present study, a .83 Cronbach's alpha was obtained. High score on the scale indicated that the individual was highly depressed while low score indicated low level of depression.

Job Stress was measured using Theorell's (1988) Job Stress Scale (JSS). It was a 17-item version of the modified 49-item scale originally developed by Karasek (1979) to tap employees' perception of job demands, job control, and social support. Job demands (5 items), and job control (6 items) subscales were rated on a 4-point scale (1 = often; 4 = never/almost never). Social support (6 items) was also rated on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree). Sample items included: "Do you have to work very fast?" (Job demands), "Do you have a choice in deciding how you do your work?" (Job control), "My co-worker supports me" (reverse scored) (social support). Theorell (1988) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .79, .87, and .85 for the job demand, job control, and social support subscales, respectively. Ogungbamila et. al. (2014) also obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .71 for the overall scale. In this study, a Cronbach's alpha of .79 was obtained for the overall scale. High score on the scale indicated high job stress and low score implied low job stress.



Turnover intention was measured using a 3-item scale developed by Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth (1978). The scale measured employees' thought of quitting, the intention to search for another job elsewhere, and the intention to quit. The scale was scored on a on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). Sample item included: "I think a lot about leaving this organization". Balogun and Olowodunoye (2012) and Ogungbamila et. al. (2014) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .71 and .73 respectively for the scale among a Nigerian sample. In this study, a Cronbach's alpha of .70 was obtained for the scale. Scores above the mean indicated high turnover intention.

Procedure

The researcher sought and got the permission from principals of the various secondary schools that participated in the study to involve their teachers in the study. After a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, the consents of the participants were sought and they were given assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were randomly selected using odd and even number sampling method from teachers list provided by the principal of each participating school. Each participant with odd number was given research instrument to complete based on their willingness to continue in the research. Data collection took a period of seven weeks. Two hundred and seventy questionnaires were administered, two hundred and nine were collected and found usable for analysis, yielding a response rate of 77.4%.

RESULTS

Descriptive and correlations

The results of the descriptive and Correlational analyses of the variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean, SD, and Correlations among the Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	37.08	9.44	1							
2. Gender	-	-	.13	1						
3. Academic Qualification	-	-		.03	1					
4. Job experience	-	-	.40**	.11	.12	1				
5. Religion	-	-	.04	-.09	.06	.01	1			
6. Depression	21.34	7.15	-.02	.08	.09	.06	.34*	1		
7. Job Stress	71.84	16.04	.11	-.00	.01	.08	-.21**	.45	1	
8 Turnover Intention	32.08	10.84	-.06	-.06	-.19**	-.12	.07	.09	.07*	1

Note: *p< .05. ** p < .01. N = 309. Gender was coded female 0; male 1. Academic qualification was coded up to School Certificate 1; National Certificate in Education/ Ordinary National Diploma 2; Higher National Diploma/ first degree 3; and postgraduate degree 4. Job experience was coded casual 1; junior 2; senior 3.

As shown in Table 1, depression had no significant relationship with turnover intention [r (309) = .07, p > .05]. Job stress was found to have a connection with turnover intention [r (309) = .07, p > .05].

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1 was tested using multiple regression analysis. The results are presented on Table 2

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Independent and Joint Prediction of Depression and Job Stress on Turnover Intention Among Teachers.

Predictors	Dependent Factor	B	R	R ²	F	P
Depression	Turnover intention	.45	.51	.26	22.65	<.05
Job stress		-.41				

Results indicated that depression significantly predicted turnover intention ($\beta = .45$, $p < .05$). This implied that depression is a strong factor in turnover intention among teachers. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was confirmed. Job stress also significantly predicted turnover intention ($\beta = .41$, $p < .05$). Hypothesis 1 was also confirmed. The expected joint prediction of depression and job stress on turnover intention of teachers was also confirmed by the above results [$R^2 = .26$; $F(6, 307) = 22.65$, $p > .05$]. Hypothesis 1 was therefore accepted.

Table 3: Summary of t- Test on Turnover Intention

Teachers type	N	X	SD	Df	t	p
Public school teachers	174	83.43	1.87	307	6.37	<.05
Private school teachers	135	65.12	1.62			

As indicated in Table 3, private school teachers ($M = 83.43$; $SD = 1.16$), compared to their public school counterpart ($M = 65.12$; $SD = 1.87$) formed a significantly lower turnover intention [$t(307) = 6.37$, $p < .05$]. This disconfirmed Hypothesis 2.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the extent to which job stress and depression were connected with turnover intention. Occupational differences in turnover intention among public and private teachers were also investigated.

As indicated in Table 2, job stress significantly predicted turnover intention among teachers. This results was in consonance with the findings of previous studies (e.g. Pascal, 2011; Oginni et al, 2013; Shah & Jumani, 2015) that job stress has a positive connection with turnover intention. This result is not surprising seeing how the education sector in Nigeria has suffered a lot of mismanagement and lack of adequate trained personnel which has led to increase job insecurity and overstretching of available ones. Every individual who work in the education sector



as teachers may have decided to stay on their job due to the situation of not being able to get a better one if they quit the one they term as stressful. Due to inability to get a better alternative employees may be compelled to stay on their job while longing for a greener pastures (Ogunbamila, *et.al* 2014).

The result of the current study also indicated that depression was connected with turnover intentions of teachers. This finding corroborated the findings of previous researchers (Fergusson *et al*, 2012; Lu, Zhong & Chen, 2013) who reported a significant relationship between depression and intention to quit. Depressed people have been reported to develop apathy towards life events (Joiner & Rudd, 2000) work inclusive. When an individual is depressed, they may feel insecure with themselves, their work and significant others, and may also find their work as too demanding, hence, intending to quit. This is evidenced in the current economic situation in Nigeria where workers (teachers) work without getting paid for months, and does not have hope that they will get paid in the next months. This pathetic situation may lead to a feeling of hopelessness, which is a core symptom of depression.

The present study also revealed that private secondary school teachers reported lower turnover intention than their public school counterparts. Although, there is paucity of research to support this claim, this may be because workers in private secondary schools often enjoy frequent payment of salaries and are not threatened with “no work, no pay rule” which characterized the Nigeria educational system due to incessant strike actions by public school teachers. The present political challenges plaguing the nations’ political terrain in which round pegs are placed in square holes to make educational policies may also be a contributory factors to high turnover intention among public secondary school teachers.

Conclusion

This study has shown that job stress and depression are strong factors in turnover intention among teachers. Based on the findings of this research, it was suggested that government and stakeholders in the education ministries should put in place policies that will discourage depression and reduce job stress since most of the teachers may be employing defense mechanisms (denial) to cope with the reality of their job stress and depressive circumstances which may but last for a while before symptoms of psychological disorders surfaces.

Although this study has contributed to literature, it is not void of limitations. The sample size of the participants in this study poses a limitation to its generalization. Hence, the result should be cautiously generalized and future studies should include more participants that cut across both secondary and primary schools that cut across the southern parts of the country.



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