Primary School Teachers' Commitment and Attitude to the Teaching Profession as Predictor of their Teaching Competence in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

OSIESI, Mensah Prince1, ODINKO, Monica Ngozi2, OKE, Chigozie Celestina

¹Department of Educational Management and Business Studies, Faculty of Education, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Nigeria mensah.osiesi@fuoye.edu.ng, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7660-6127

²Institute of education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Email: moniquengozi@yahoo.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8128-2238

³Department of Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Oye, Ekiti state, Nigeria chigozie.oke@fuoye.edu.ng, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1555-1257

Abstract: This study investigated primary school teachers' commitment and attitude to the teaching profession as predictor of their teaching competence in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research type of the non-experimental design. All primary school teachers in Ekiti state public schools made up the study's population. The required number of respondents for the study was chosen using a multi-stage sampling procedure. In all, 160 teachers constituted the study sample. A self-developed instrument tagged "Teacher Commitment, Attitude and Competence Questionnaire" was adopted for data collection. This instrument had four sections. The Cronbach alpha reliability indexes of the sections gave 0.82 (attitude measures), 0.80 (commitment measures) and 0.78 (competence measures). Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentages, and multiple regression analysis at 5% level of significance. Results revealed that Ekiti state teachers' commitment to the teaching profession is high; Ekiti state primary school teachers possess a positive attitude towards the teaching profession and teachers' attitude towards the teaching profession do significantly influence teachers' teaching competence. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that incentives that can enhance teachers positive attitudes towards the teaching profession be provided, and professional development and training programmes be organised regularly for teachers, irrespective of their cadres, as this could boost their positive attitudes.

Keywords: Attitude; Commitment; Competence, Primary School; Teachers, Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction

Primary education is a form of education that is majorly designed for children aged 6 to 11 plus. It is posited that the failure or success of it, could significantly hamper the growth and efficiency of the other systems of education such as the secondary and the tertiary. UNESCO (2001) stated that it's the principal sub-sector of the education system that caters for the education needs of young ones; thereby causing a positive change and development of societies. The applicability of primary education may be construed from the following perspectives: the economic perspective as it yields income for governments, school proprietor, teachers and other school staff; the political perspective as various political regimes at one point in time and the other had shown interest and support for primary education; the academic/intellectual perspective as it encourages and enhances academic excellence and educational service provision; the social perspective as it serves as the defender of societal values by instructing children what is right and wrong; to mention but a few. For the primary education to achieve the aforementioned, teachers at the level have a big role to play in achieving the various objectives of the primary education.

The primary school teacher is the basis of a real and all-inclusive education. He pilots the teaching and learning transaction in the school setting. Eruka (2006) reiterated that teachers are persons who had gone through an official professional training in education at one time or the other and proficient in inculcating the right attitude, skills and knowledge to pupils. The responsibilities of teachers are numerous as they are expected by anxious stakeholders in education to portray a high commitment and positive attitude towards the teaching profession and to be highly competent especially while discharge of their teaching obligations as expected of them.

Okeke & Mtyuda (2017) reaffirmed that teachers socially transform the learners they teach in more ways than one; as they are the epitome of the core values, beliefs and acceptable conduct of the society at large. Teachers are the significant factor that could influence learners achievement. They are professionals who convey unto learners the life needed skills, knowledge and experience for a functional living. They are societies' role models and leaders, teaching and living by example, and ensuring the successes of the systems of education (Mogra, 2010). Teachers see teaching as a noble career (Hazadiah, 2007); and a way to promote children's learning (Aldemir & Sezer, 2009).

Teaching and learning at the primary level of education seems to be below expectation with regards to learners' learning outcomes as well as teachers' teaching output. These are likely to be caused by the kind and level of attitudes, commitment as well as teaching competences of the primary school teachers. Studies relating to teachers commitment, attitude and performance abound in literature (Siri et al., 2020, Reddappa, 2019; Akinwale and Okotoni, 2019; Owusu-Fordjour, 2021; Metin & Asli, 2018; Yamali,

2018; Hidayah & Tobing, 2018; Raveendran & Gamage, 2019; Sarmawa et al., 2015); however, it seems that none has investigated the extent to which primary school teachers' commitment and attitude towards the teaching profession predict their teaching competences, especially in Nigeria. Thus, this study examined primary school teachers' commitment and attitude to the teaching profession as predictor of their teaching competence in Ekiti state, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Teachers' attitude and commitment to the teaching profession can impact on the overall performance of learners and teachers alike. The professional outputs of teachers may be tantamount to their attitudes and commitment in the profession. Stakeholders of education in Nigeria have continued to complain of poor teachers' teaching competences overtime. Many factors can be attributed to this abnormally, needing redress; as there is need for teachers' competences in teaching to be boosted. It is against this backdrop that this study examined primary school teachers' commitment and attitude towards the teaching profession as predictor of their teaching competence in Ekiti state, Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1. What is the level of primary school teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in Ekiti state?
- 2. What is the attitude of primary school teachers' towards the teaching profession in Ekiti state?
- 3. To what extent do primary school teachers' commitment and attitude towards the teaching profession predict their competence in teaching?

2. 0 Literature Review

2.1 Teachers' Attitude and Competence in Teaching

Teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession is influenced by their personality (Harun, 2006), the impact of their teacher education programme (Muhammad & Raja, 2008), and their desire to teach (Suppiah, Hari, Sunder & Velayudhan, 2012). Attitudes are a long-term collection of sentiments, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies toward socially significant individuals, events, things, or symbols (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). A positive attitude toward the teaching profession is crucial to the wellbeing of the teaching profession. Teachers' overall attitudes will go a long way in resolving school and classroom issues as they arise. Day (2004) suggested that the work performance, burn out, absenteeism and turnover of teachers which invariably predict pupils achievement and attitude towards schooling is dependent on the attitude of the teacher.

Teachers' positive attitude towards teaching favours their commitment to duties and job performance (Ojo, 2006; Darling-Hammond; 2000). Teachers have been said to have a negative attitude to the teaching profession and not meeting up with their teaching tasks (Ofoegbu, 2014). Teachers' positive or negative attitude towards the teaching profession, could also in more ways than one direct or affect their commitment to teaching and the profession. Owusu-Fordjour (2021) and Reddappa (2019) studies found that most teachers had a positive attitude toward the profession, and there was a positive relationship between teachers' attitude toward the profession and their teaching competence in his study on teaching competence of pre-service teachers during teaching practice in relation to their attitude towards the profession. On same note, Ahmad et al. (2013) study did reveal that teachers positive attitude have a higher teaching competence. Odike and Kingsley (2018) study revealed that teachers attitude towards the teaching profession is negative.

2.2 Teachers' Commitment and Teaching Competence

The emotional tie that teachers have with their pupils is referred to as teacher commitment. It has long been perceived as one of the most important aspects of good teaching. As a result, teachers with a high level of commitment can make a difference in their students' learning and accomplishment. Teacher commitment is linked to providing a successful learning environment in which students improve their talents and achieve greater success. Teachers that are committed to teaching have the responsibility to constantly experiment with new techniques of teaching in order to improve students' learning experiences. Teachers that are dedicated to their pupils have the capacity to equip them with new teaching tactics that will help them achieve higher levels of success. Kurniadi et al. (2017) explain that teacher commitment is an internal interpretation of a teacher about how they absorb and interpret their work experience. Harinoto and Bogetriatmanto (2018) state that someone with high work commitment will have a better work result.

Furthermore, committed teachers can foster enthusiastic learners by encouraging students to participate in school activities. High-quality teaching requires teacher commitment, which includes dedication to the school, students, career advancement, professional knowledge base, and teaching profession (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004). Teachers that are dedicated to their profession are passionate about what they do (Garrison & Liston, 2004). Teachers who are committed to their profession are thought to be happier in their jobs and strive to provide excellent instruction (Somech & Bogler, 2002). They are concerned about their performance and strive for high standards in order to deliver quality instruction. Their commitment to the school is undeniable, as is their desire to see the school's objectives met (Carbonneau, Vallerand, Fernet, & Guay) (2008). Committed teachers always strive for excellence to make a difference in the development of students (Dannetta, 2002).

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Teachers' job commitment to the teaching profession, teachers' commitment to teaching and learning, and teachers' commitment to school were researched at secondary schools in Osun State by Akinwale and Okotoni (2019). These were conducted in order to determine the level of job commitment among teachers in the state. Teachers' commitment to the teaching profession was found to be low, according to the findings. Siri et al. (2020) looked at how teacher competency and dedication might help teachers perform better. The findings revealed that teacher competency and commitment had a considerable favorable impact on professional teachers' performance. Also, Cabigao (2019) study determined the relationship between teachers' commitment and competence. The result of the study revealed that teachers' commitment to teaching have a positive relationship with their teaching competence. Studies have revealed that commitment can influence work performance (dan Suryaman, 2018; Isa et al., 2016; Estiningtyas & Darmanto, 2018; Oyeniyi et al., 2017; Metin & Asli, 2018; Yamali, 2018). However, Hidayah and Tobing (2018), Raveendran and Gamage (2019) and Sarmawa et al. (2015) study proved that teachers' commitment had no significant impact on their competences in teaching.

2.3 Teachers' Teaching Competence

Competence of teachers encompasses teachers' understanding and knowledge of learners' learning needs, curriculum, subject content knowledge, the teacher's role and the education system (Cubukcu, 2010; Kanu & Ukpabi, 2007). It can be termed as the ability to efficiently achieve a slated task (Ayeni, 2005); able to accomplish ones assigned responsibilities (Ololube, 2006); transcends mere interest in sharing knowledge (Harris & Muijs, 2005); mastery of curriculum contents (Hakim, 2015); a standard academic qualifications and the art of developing learning and teaching materials innovatively; exploiting information and communication technology in enhancing professionalism and sustainable reflective actions (Sukrapi, Muljono & Purnaningsih, 2014). More so, "The teacher's competence is determined by his approach, sense of vision, and motivation in sharing knowledge," according to Ayeni (2005). When teachers are professionally competent, they perform better in their teaching duties, encouraging and empowering pupils to learn and achieve better (Shukla, 2014). Also, Chan (2005) averred that teacher quality especially in teaching is not only governed by knowledge, qualification, but by their enthusiasm, morale, subject matter knowledge and commitment to teaching.

According to Marielle, Danielle, and Clermont (2001), professional competencies of teachers in the teaching profession include the ability to: adapt his or her teaching to the needs and characteristics of students with learning disabilities or social maladjustments; act as a professional inheritor, critic, and interpreter of knowledge or culture when teaching pupils; evaluating pupils' progress in learning the subject content and mastering the related competencies; plan, organize, and evaluate pupils' progress in learning the subject content and mastering the related competencies; communicate clearly in the language of education, both orally and in writing; using perfect grammar; displaying ethical and responsible professional behavior in the fulfillment of his or her teaching obligations.

Teachers' competence entails participating in professional development both individually and in groups; piloting teaching/learning situations that are appropriate to the students concerned and to the subject content with the goal of developing the competencies targeted in the programs of study; developing teaching/learning situations that are appropriate to the students concerned and to the subject content with the goal of developing the competencies targeted in the programs of study Incorporating information and communication technology (ICT) into the planning and implementation of teaching/learning activities, as well as for instructional management and professional development; cooperating with members of the teaching team in completing tasks involving the development and evaluation of the competencies targeted in the programs of study, taking into account the students involved, and cooperating with school staff, parents, community partners, and students in achieving the school's educational goals (Marielle, Danielle, & Clermont, 2001).

Methodology

Research Design

The study is a survey research type of the non-experimental design. The research type was chosen since the dependent and independent variables had already occurred and the researcher had no direct control over them.

Population, Sampling Technique and Sample

All primary school teachers in Ekiti state public schools made up the study's population. The required number of respondents for the study was chosen using a multi-stage sampling procedure. To begin, two senatorial districts in the state were purposefully chosen. Each senatorial district has two local government areas which were selected at random. Fifteen public primary schools were chosen from the LGA's via purposeful sampling. This is to ensure that schools are separated by a significant distance in order to prevent excessive interaction between teachers from one school and those from another.

A self-developed instrument tagged "Teacher Commitment, Attitude and Competence Questionnaire" (TCACQ) was adopted for data collection. The instrument had four sections (A, B, C & D). Section A was used to capture the demographic data of the respondents with respect to gender, qualification, area of specialization by training and years of teaching experience. Section B contained questions designed to measure teachers' attitude towards the profession; with Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.82. It

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had fifteen items in all; and were placed on a dichotomous scale of Agree=1 and Disagree=2. The section C comprised of items measuring teachers' commitment to the profession; with Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.80. It had thirteen items which were also placed on a dichotomous scale of Agree=1 and Disagree=2. Section D contained items that measured teachers' competence in teaching; with Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.78. It had fourteen items placed on a dichotomous scale of Yes=1 and No=2. This instrument was first shown to two experts in Educational Evaluation, faculty of education, federal university Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria. The final draft of the instrument was prepared in tune with their observations. The researchers and four research assistants administered the instruments to teachers in the sampled schools (160 teachers in all). Data were collected for six weeks. These instruments were fully responded to and the return rate was 100%. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) and inferential statistics (multiple linear regression) at 5% level of significance.

Results and Discussion

RQ 1: What is the level of primary school teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in Ekiti state?

S/No	Statement	Agree	Disagree
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)
1	I prepare my lesson notes regularly	132 (83.6)	28 (16.4)
2	I improvise teaching aids when teaching	144 (90.6)	16 (9.4)
3	I arrive at school early enough	147 (92.4)	13 (7.6)
4	I always prepare well in terms of subject knowledge for every class	147 (92.4)	13 (7.6)
5	I check and mark my pupils notes regularly	152 (95.3)	8 (4.7)
6	I am serious at my teaching job	150 (94.4)	10 (5.8)
7	I always cooperate with my head teacher	148 (92.9)	12 (7.0)
8	I give assignments to my pupils regularly	152 (95.3)	8 (4.7)
9	I do my best daily at improving my daily classroom transactions	151 (94.7)	9 (5.3)
10	I enjoy attending to and solving my pupils' needs and problems	150 (94.1)	10 (5.8)
11	I always mark pupils homework and give necessary feedback	152 (95.3)	8 (4.7)
12	I regularly assess my pupils	149 (93.5)	11 (6.4)
13	I always participate in my school co-curricular activities	151 (94.7)	9 (5.3)

Table 1: Primary School Teachers' Commitment to the Teaching Profession in Ekiti State

Table 1 above depicts the level of Ekiti state teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. It is evident that the sampled teachers in this study are well committed to their jobs as a teacher and the teaching profession, since these teachers overwhelmingly agreed to all the items measuring their commitment levels to the profession. Thus, it can inferred that the Ekiti state teachers' commitment to the teaching profession is high.

RQ 2:	What is the	attitude of	primary s	school	teachers'	towards	the teachi	ng pro	ofession in Ekiti state?
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Table 2: Primary School Teachers' Attitude to the Teaching Profession in Ekiti State

S/No	Statement	Agree	Disagree
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)
1	I naturally love teaching	127 (80.7)	33 (19.3)
2	My being in the teaching profession is a right decision ever made	123 (71.9)	37 (28.0)
3	I am always eager to teach	97 (56.7)	63 (43.2)
4	I will want to be a teacher in my next life	105 (67.8)	55 (32.2)
5	I am never bored of teaching	87 (50.9)	73 (49.1)
6	I am fulfilled being a teacher	110 (70.7)	50 (29.2)
7	I enjoy writing my lesson plan	85 (49.7)	75 (50.3)
8	I enjoy marking my pupils class work and assignment	129 (81.8)	31 (18.1)
9	I have never felt tired of teaching	101 (65.5)	59 (34.5)
10	Teaching makes me happy	96 (56.1)	64 (43.8)
11	I love writing my lesson notes	93 (60.8)	67 (39.2)
12	I am pained when any of my pupil fail	111 (64.9)	49 (35.1)
13	I am well respected because I am a teacher	97 (56.7)	63 (43.2)
14	My self-esteem is high because I am a teacher	97 (56.7)	63 (43.2)
15	I am very satisfied being a teacher	91 (59.6)	69 (40.4)

Table 2 shows the attitude of Ekiti state primary school teachers towards the teaching profession. All the sampled teachers unanimously agreed to the items measuring their attitude towards the teaching profession. Hence, it can be inferred that Ekiti state primary school teachers possess a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.

RQ 3: To what extent do primary school teachers' commitment and attitude to the teaching profession predict their competence in teaching?

Table 3.1: Model Summary and ANOVA for Primary School Teachers' Commitment and Attitude to the Teaching Profession predict their Competence in Teaching.

R	= 0.21
R Square	= 0.04
Adjusted R Square	= 0.03
Std Error of the Estimate	= 1.66

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Regression	19.89	2	9.96	3.60	.03*		
Residual	433.80	157	2.76	0.00			
Total	453.69	159					
*Significant at p<0.05							

Table 3.1 shows the multiple regression correlation coefficient (R) depicting the linear relationship between predictor variables (teachers' attitude and commitment to the teaching profession) and teachers' competence in teaching; is 0.21. R square $(R^2) = 0.04$ (4%) and adjusted R square $(R_{adj}) = 0.03$ (3%); depicting that the predictor variables jointly accounted for 3% of the variance in primary school teachers' competence in the teaching profession and is statistically significant (p<0.05).

Teaching									
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients						
Model	В	Std. Error	Beta	Т	Sig.				
(Constant)	15.69	.59		26.59	.00				
Teachers' Attitude	09	.03	24	-2.68	.01*				
Teachers' Commitment	.04	.04	.11	1.25	.21				

 Table 3.2: Summary of Relative Contribution of the Predictor Variables on Teachers' Competence in

 Tasking

*Significant at p<0.05

Moreover, as shown on table 3.2, one of the two predictor variables: teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession is a potent predictor of teachers' competence in teaching (β =-.24, t=-268, p<0.05). Teachers' commitment to the profession (β =-.11, t=1.25, p>0.05) made no contribution to the prediction of teachers' competence in teaching. Thus, teachers' attitude towards the teaching profession do significantly influence teachers' teaching competence.

Discussions

Findings from this study has revealed that the Ekiti state teachers' commitment to the teaching profession is high. This is a welcomed development. Committed teachers do add colour to the profession and enhance opportunities for improved learners' and school performance. Teachers who are committed to the profession are punctual and regular in school and class, enjoy writing lesson plan and notes, are able and willing to improvise teaching aids, adequately prepare for and deliver lessons, appropriately assess and evaluate both teaching and learning, adequately proffer necessary feedback on learners' learning progress to the learners, parents and the school, to mention but a few. This finding contrasts those of Akinwale and Okotoni (2019) whose study revealed that teachers commitment level in teaching was low. The reasons for this may not be far fetch; as their study was conducted in another geographical

setting where teachers may have been owed salaries for months, and their study sample was on secondary school teachers, where many of them are likely involves in other businesses outside teaching or may have enrolled for higher educational concerns.

Findings arising from this study does indicate that Ekiti state primary school teachers possess a positive attitude towards the teaching profession. Could the reason for this positive attitude be as a result of their remuneration/incentives? or due to the various SUBEB and UBEC intervention programmes in the state? However, this finding is in tandem to those of Owusu-Fordjour (2021) and Reddappa (2019) studies that indicated positive attitude of teachers towards the teaching profession. Nonetheless, the finding disagrees with that of Ofoegbu (2014), and Odike and Kingsley (2018) whose study revealed that teachers had a negative attitude towards the profession.

The findings of the study has revealed that teachers teaching competence has a positive relationship with the attitude of teachers towards the teaching profession. This is understandable since the attitudes teachers possess towards the profession can determine their levels of interest, lesson preparation, highly motivated, punctual to school, attentive to the needs to students, and even their commitments to teaching. These will eventually metamorphose into their being competent in the job. This finding supports those of Ahmad et al. (2013), Reddappa (2019) and Owusu-Fordjour (2021) which found a positive relationship between teachers positive attitude toward the profession and their teaching competence. Findings also indicated that teachers' commitment to the profession does not influence their competence in teaching. That a teacher is commitment in teaching may be due to other reasons that are unrelated to teaching. Many teachers could be commitment to the profession merely because of their survival on the remuneration and other benefits accruing from the job on which they survive on. This disagrees with the findings of Siri et al. (2020) and Cabigao (2019) whose findings showed that teachers' commitment to the teaching profession positively impacts on their teaching competences.

Conclusion

Teachers' attitudes, commitment and competences are vital teachers' variables that could direct or determine learners' and school performance ratings. In view of the findings of this study, it is obvious that teachers attitude towards the profession does influence their competences in the profession. Therefore, for primary school teachers in Ekiti state possesses a positive attitude which has been influencing their competences in teaching and profession.

Recommendations

The study thus recommends:

i. Incentives that can enhance teachers positive attitudes towards the teaching profession be provided;

ii. Professional development and training programmes should regularly be organised for teachers, irrespective of their cadres, as this could boost their positive attitudes.

Limitation and Future Research

This study was carried out in Ekiti state, in southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the study's

concern was on teachers' attitude, commitment and how these influence teachers' teaching competence. Also, the study was basically on primary school teachers. As such, conducting similar study outside the present geographical area, with other variables not considered herein, and using other levels of educational institutions (the secondary and tertiary) could boost the body of literature.

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