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Reward System as a Determinant of Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated reward system as a determinant of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the correlational research design. The population consisted of 51,935 teachers from the 2569 public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 397 teachers from 77 public secondary schools were used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure; purposive, proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. Two sets of questionnaires were used for data collection titled "Reward System Questionnaire (RSQ)" and "Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ)" were used for data collection. The two sets of questionnaires yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.81 respectively. A total number of 397 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents but only 384 copies of questionnaire returned were used for data analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that monetary rewards and promotion have significant strong positive correlation with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. It was concluded that reward system has significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. It was therefore, recommended among others that the Ministry of Education should review and improve teachers' salary structures and allowances through regular policy reforms and timely implementation. This will enhance teachers' motivation, reduce turnover and improve overall job satisfaction and instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools. Also, the Teaching Service Board should ensure regular, transparent and merit-based promotion of teachers by adhering strictly to established promotion guidelines. This will boost teachers' morale, encourage commitment and increase job satisfaction and productivity across public secondary schools.

Keywords: Reward system, teachers' job satisfaction, monetary rewards, promotion

Introduction

Teachers are the cornerstone of the educational systems worldwide, playing a pivotal role in shaping students' intellectual, moral and social development. Globally, however, many teachers face unsatisfactory working conditions that negatively affect their job performance and satisfaction. Common challenges include inadequate remuneration, excessive workloads, poor professional development opportunities, limited access to teaching resources and lack of recognition or support from educational authorities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021). These issues seem to lead to stress, low morale and high attrition rates, thereby impacting the quality of education delivered in many countries. In developing countries like Nigeria, these global challenges are often more pronounced. Specifically, in public secondary schools across North Central Nigeria, teacher dissatisfaction has become a critical concern. According to Musa and Ibrahim (2022), teachers in this region frequently contend with poor infrastructural facilities, irregular or delayed salaries, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate instructional materials. Moreover, professional development opportunities are either scarce or poorly organized, limiting teachers' ability to innovate or update their instructional strategies. These conditions seem to contribute to decreased teachers' job satisfaction.

Teachers' job satisfaction refers to the extent to which educators feel fulfilled, valued and are contented with their roles and work environment (Ijov, 2017). It encompasses intrinsic factors, such as a sense of achievement and professional growth and extrinsic factors like salary, working conditions and institutional support (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). High job satisfaction among teachers is essential for maintaining their motivation, reducing stress and improving overall teaching quality. According to Bessa, Batista and Ruivo (2021), supportive school leadership, opportunities for collaboration and recognition significantly enhance job satisfaction. Moreover, fostering a positive work climate and addressing teachers' concerns can improve retention and commitment, benefiting both students and educational institutions (Richardson, Karabenick & Watt, 2020). Therefore, understanding and enhancing job satisfaction is critical for achieving educational goals and ensuring a stable workforce in the teaching profession. Teachers' job satisfaction could also be determined by reward system.

A reward system refers to the structured and systematic approach organizations use to recognize and compensate employees for their contributions, performance and behaviour in achieving organizational goals (Bua & Ada, 2019). It encompasses both intrinsic (recognition and job satisfaction) and extrinsic rewards (salary, bonuses and benefits) to motivate and retain employees. Effective reward systems align with organizational objectives, fostering a productive workforce by linking performance to meaningful incentives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). According to Malik, Ghafoor and Naseer (2021), a well-designed reward systems enhance teachers' engagement, job satisfaction and overall school performance. Moreover, tailoring rewards to individual teachers and team preferences can boost morale and encourage high-performance standards (Dartey-Baah & Addo, 2019). The dynamic nature of reward systems requires periodic evaluation to remain relevant, equitable and aligned with evolving teachers and school needs (Kuvaas, Buch & Dysvik, 2016). Reward system in this study is focused on monetary rewards and promotion.

Monetary rewards refer to financial compensation provided to employees for their services, including salaries, bonuses, allowances and other financial benefits (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). These rewards motivate teachers, meet their basic needs and provide a sense of value for their work (Adeyemi, 2020). Teachers who perceive their compensation as equitable and adequate are more likely to exhibit high job satisfaction, commitment and productivity. However, in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, insufficient monetary rewards such as delayed salaries, irregular allowances and low pay could likely lead to dissatisfaction, high turnover and reduced morale (Bua, 2020). Competitive salaries and timely payment of allowances could positively influence the work environment and improve teacher retention across the region. Ofoegbu and Alonge (2018) highlight that financial incentives enhance job satisfaction and motivate teachers to deliver quality education. Thus, adequate monetary rewards are pivotal for attracting and retaining skilled teachers and strengthening teachers' promotion.

Promotion refers to the advancement of a teacher to a higher position or level within a school, accompanied by increased responsibilities, recognition and often better compensation and benefits (UNESCO, 2017). It is a key indicator of teachers' job satisfaction because it signifies acknowledgment of their professional contributions. In many public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, career progression is often delayed, which undermines teacher morale. Teachers who experience timely and merit-based promotions tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, commitment and productivity (Wang & Degol, 2019). Conversely, irregular or perceived unfair promotional procedures result in dissatisfaction and declining performance. According to Ali (2020), career progression opportunities significantly impact teachers' retention.

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the intellectual and moral fabric of society, particularly in public secondary schools, where they influence the educational outcomes of countless students. However, challenges such as inadequate job satisfaction, stemming from poor reward systems, continue to impede their effectiveness. A well-structured reward system including monetary incentives and promotions could be essential for motivating teachers, fostering their commitment and improving their performance. Based on the above premises, the researcher is interested to investigate reward system as a determinant of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' job satisfaction remains a critical concern as it directly determine the quality of teaching and learning outcomes in secondary education systems. In North Central Nigeria, educational stakeholders including school administrators, parents, government officials and education regulators appears to have increasingly expressed concern over indicators of weak job satisfaction among teachers in public secondary schools. These concerns manifest in poor classroom management, ineffective use of instructional materials, declining discipline and reduced commitment to professional responsibilities. The researcher has also observed persistent issues such as high absenteeism, lateness, low morale, attrition, limited participation in school activities, frequent grievances, strained interpersonal relationships and resistance to innovation among teachers in the region. These patterns suggest underlying dissatisfaction that may be linked to inadequate or ineffective reward systems. Likely, structured reward mechanisms such as monetary incentives and promotion could enhance teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Efforts by government and educational authorities, including improved salary structures, teacher training programmes and policy reforms, have been implemented to address these concerns (Idris, 2022). However, despite these interventions, dissatisfaction among teachers persists, indicating that existing measures may be insufficient or poorly implemented. This persistent gap underscores the need to empirically investigate reward systems as determinants of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate reward system as a determinant of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

3. determine the relationship between monetary rewards and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.
4. investigate the relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

3. What is the relationship between monetary rewards and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?
4. What is the relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Monetary rewards have no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.
4. Promotion has no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted the correlational research design. The population consisted of 51,935 teachers from the 2569 public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 384 teachers from 77 public secondary schools were used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure; purposive, proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. Two sets of questionnaires were used for data collection titled "Reward System Questionnaire (RSQ)" and "Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ)" were used for data collection. The two sets of questionnaires yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.81 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The decision rule for rejecting or not rejecting the null hypothesis was based on the comparison between the p-value (the probability that the observed correlation occurred by chance) and the level of significance (α). Where the p-value was $\leq \alpha$, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. Meaning there is enough evidence to conclude that a significant correlation exists between the two variables. Where the p-value was $> \alpha$, the null hypothesis (H_0) was not rejected. Meaning there was no enough evidence to conclude that a significant correlation exists between the two variables.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between monetary rewards and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?*

Table 1: Relationship Between Monetary Rewards and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	r	Decision
Monetary Rewards	384		
		0.87	Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	384		

The result in Table 1 shows relationship between monetary rewards and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that the correlation coefficient of 0.87 falls within 0.5 to 1.0 which indicate a strong positive correlation. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between monetary rewards and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?*

Table 2: Relationship Between Promotion and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	r	Decision
Promotion	384		
		0.88	Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' job satisfaction	384		

The result in Table 2 shows relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that the correlation coefficient of 0.88 falls within 0.5 to 1.0 which indicate a strong correlation. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: Monetary rewards have no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Table 3: Significant Relationship between Monetary Rewards and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	r	Df	*P*	Decision
Monetary Reward	384				
		0.87	382	0.000	Significant Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	384				

The result in Table 3 shows significant relationship between monetary rewards and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that r = 0.87; df = 382; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05. Since P-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that monetary rewards have no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria was rejected. This implies that monetary rewards have significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Promotion has no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Table 4: Significant Correlation between Promotion and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	r	Df	*P*	Decision
Monetary Reward	384				
		0.88	382	0.000	Significant Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	384				

The result in Table 4 shows significant relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that r = 0.88; df = 404; p-value =

0.000 < 0.05. Since P-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that promotion has no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria was rejected. This implies that promotion has significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding revealed that monetary rewards have a significant and strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This finding is justified because financial incentives directly address teachers' basic economic needs, reduce financial stress and enhance their sense of security and well-being. When salaries, allowances and bonuses are paid regularly and adequately, teachers are more motivated, committed and satisfied with their jobs. This finding is consistent with the finding of Olatunji and Ajibade (2018), which revealed a significant positive relationship between monetary incentives and job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers in Kwara State. Their study showed that teachers who enjoyed regular salary payments and allowances reported higher satisfaction levels, which aligns closely with the present study's outcome. The study by Isaac and Terhemba (2021) found that financial remuneration significantly influenced teachers' job satisfaction in Benue State, with salary and housing allowance emerging as major predictors. These studies relate to the present research because they all examined public secondary school teachers within the North Central region and established that consistent and adequate monetary rewards enhance job satisfaction. While the reviewed studies were limited to specific states, the present study extends the scope to the entire North Central Nigeria, thereby confirming that the positive influence of monetary rewards on job satisfaction is not location-specific but regionally consistent. The methodological similarities, particularly the use of correlational approaches and questionnaire instruments, further strengthen the justification for this finding. Within the boundaries of the study, it is found that monetary rewards have significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

The second finding revealed that promotion has significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The significant strong positive relationship between promotion and teachers' job satisfaction is justified because promotion symbolizes recognition of effort, professional growth and career advancement, which enhances teachers' morale, self-worth and commitment to their duties. Teachers who experience timely and merit-based promotions are more likely to feel valued and motivated, leading to higher job satisfaction. This finding agrees with that of Yusuf and Ibrahim (2020), who reported that teachers in Kogi State that benefited from regular and merit-based promotions expressed higher job satisfaction, while those who experienced delays were dissatisfied. Likewise, Agbo and Umeh (2022) found a significant positive relationship between promotion and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Nasarawa State, emphasizing that timely promotion improved commitment and reduced turnover intentions. These studies are directly related to the present study as they investigated similar variables within public secondary schools in the North Central geopolitical zone. The alignment lies in the shared conclusion that promotion serves as a strong motivational tool influencing teachers' satisfaction. Although the reviewed studies were conducted at state levels, the present study broadens the analysis to multiple states across North Central Nigeria, thereby reinforcing the generalizability of the relationship. The use of correlational designs and similar statistical tools across the studies further validates the consistency of this finding. Within the boundaries of the study, it is found that promotion has significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This study established that, reward system has significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This implies that reward system in the areas of monetary rewards and promotion have significant strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

5. The Ministry of Education should review and improve teachers' salary structures and allowances through regular policy reforms and timely implementation. This will enhance teachers' motivation, reduce turnover and improve overall job satisfaction and instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools.
6. The Teaching Service Board should ensure regular, transparent and merit-based promotion of teachers by adhering strictly to established promotion guidelines. This will boost teachers' morale, encourage commitment and increase job satisfaction and productivity across public secondary schools.

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