Relationships of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy to Work Attitudes among Secondary School Teachers in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to work attitudes of secondary school teachers in southwestern Nigeria. The sample consists of 475 secondary school teachers (males = 230, females = 245) randomly selected from southwestern Nigeria. Measures of demographic data form, career commitment, organizational commitment, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and work-family conflict were administered to the teachers. Data collected were analysed using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Results of the study indicate that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy had significant relationships with work attitudes. However, age, sex and work experience had none. The implications of the findings for selection, training, counselling and retention of teachers were discussed. It was recommended that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of the teachers should be enhanced to improve their work attitudes.

Key words: Job satisfaction, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, turnover, career commitment, organizational commitment

INTRODUCTION

There are evidences that most teachers in the school system in Nigeria are not satisfied with their jobs (Adegoroye, 1999; Uwaimeiye and Onyewadume, 2001). There is high turnover or drop-in-drop-out syndrome among the teachers (Fagebo, 1998; Nwagwu and Salami, 1999). It is also evident that people join the teaching profession as the last resort when all efforts to get into other professions have failed (Adeyemo, 2001; Nwagwu and Salami, 1999; Salami, 1999). However, because of the central position teachers occupy in the educational system of Nigeria, the National Policy on Education admitted that "no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers." The policy therefore, recommended some steps towards the enhancement of an effective and efficient teaching profession. These included training and recruitment of more teachers at both primary and secondary school levels (Adepoju, 2001).

Surprisingly, however, there is a wide gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. This gap has resulted in disheartening consequences and unwarranted failure. The major problem with production of teachers has to do with getting persons of the right personality traits, caliber, orientation and emotional intelligence to be interested in teaching, opting for it and getting committed to it, rather than those who want it as a last resort or stepping stones to other more lucrative jobs. Despite all efforts to recruit and retain qualified secondary school teachers by various governments (Federal and States) the teaching profession is replete with teachers who lack job satisfaction, career commitment and organizational commitment (Adeyemo, 2001; Nwagwu and Salami, 1999). High turnover has been reported among the Nigerian teachers because of poor salary, intolerable conditions of service, low prospects and low prestige (Fagebo, 1998; Salami, 1999). Although, over the years several attempts have been made to solve these problems, they still remained unresolved. A cursory look at the literature show that high rates of teacher attention is a worldwide problem that deserve attention of all stakeholders in education.

Teacher retention and attitudes: Relatively high rates of teacher attrition have been identified as a major issue for the teaching profession over several decades (Gold *et al.*, 1991; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002). Although researchers were concerned about the transmission of teacher training to effective practice, the concern about relatively high attrition rates has clearly influenced many of the investigations into work pressure, stress and burnout experienced by teachers at the beginning of their careers (Goddard and O'Brien, 2003; Schonfield, 2000).

Gold *et al.* (1991) reported that high attrition rates in beginning teachers was estimated to be in the order to

20- 25% within the first three to five years of employment. In a recent study in Australia, Goddard and O'Brien (2003) found that after an average of 7.27 weeks employment, 33% of the teachers investigated indicated that they were considering leaving their current job. Six months later (after) 8.34 months of teaching, 29% of the respondents indicated that they were seriously considering leaving their current job.

Goddard and O'Brien (2003) found that almost one third of respondents surveyed indicated serious intentions to leave their current teaching position. Furthermore, quantitative analyses showed that turnover intentions were strongly related to burnout particularly high work pressure and lack of administrative support. Other studies on reasons for high turnover among teachers identified insufficient reward lack of opportunity, lack of control and independence, poor career prospects and salary, stress and negative attitude toward teaching (Lam *et al.*, 1995).

Buckley *et al.* (2004) investigated the effects of school facility quality on teacher retention among K-12 teachers in Washington DC and found that facility quality was an important predictor of the decision of teachers to leave their current position. Research also show that in general, teachers list family or personal reasons, such as pregnancy, the demands of child rearing and health problems as reasons for leaving the profession (Benner, 2000; Rowan *et al.*, 2002). Job dissatisfaction, due to poor salary, poor administrative support and student discipline problems are among the most frequent reasons teachers give for leaving the profession (Tye and O'Brien, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001).

Teacher attitudes: A study of the attitude profiles of beginning teachers by Lam *et al.* (1995) revealed that a high proportion of the trainee teachers experienced negative feelings about various aspects of career prospects, particularly salary and career advancement. Almost 37% of the trainee teachers felt that the teaching profession was not always their ambition. This is similar to the findings of Goddard and O'Brien (2003) who reported that two (24%) of all their beginning teachers said that they would not choose teaching as their first career if given the opportunity to choose their career path again.

Studying the teachers' affective characteristics however, seems to be one promising area of research that has potential for providing answers to or shedding some light on the enigma. Although Adepoju (2001) and Cherniss (2000) argued that affective characteristics (personality traits and emotional intelligence) serve as vehicle through which the teachers' professional skills

and qualifications could work to produce effective performance, the unique contributions of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to important work-related attitudes, have not received much empirical attention and support. Little research has been conducted in an organizational context and therefore as Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) suggested there is need for rigorous research to underpin the usefulness of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in organizational settings whether public or private on both personal and organizational levels. It is hoped that the information to be derived from the results of this study will assist the teachers and organizations in enhancing the work attitudes of the teachers thus stemming the tide of high turnover in the teaching profession.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree to which secondary school teachers' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are related to their work attitudes (career commitment, organizational commitment, work-family conflict).

Emotional intelligence and work attitudes: Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as either ability (Mayer *et al.*, 1999) or a personality trait (Schutte and Malouff, 1999). Mayer and Salovey (1999) defined emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Later on, emotional intelligence was refined and defined as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

A number of studies have reported some links between emotional intelligence and some work attitudes such as career commitment, organizational commitment and work-family conflicts (Carmeli, 2003). Career commitment is defined as one's attitude toward one's profession or vocation (Blau, 1985). Employees may encounter difficulties in pursuing a career that may result in dysfunctional emotions. According to Carmeli (2003) emotionally intelligent individuals are expected to recognize, manage and use their emotions to eliminate the ensuing obstacles and advance their career horizons better than people with low emotional intelligence. This is true when the profession has some high levels of complexity and demands. Teaching work can be demanding and leads to high levels of stress. Emotional intelligence can enable people to control this stress

effectively and prevent its negative effects on one's attitude towards his/her profession. Empirical evidence shows that emotional intelligence is related to career commitment (Aremu, 2005; Carmeli, 2003).

The concept of organizational commitment subsumes three constructs: affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as positive feelings of identification with, attachment to and involvement in the work of the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1984). Normative commitment is the commitment based on a sense of obligation to the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1996). Continuance commitment is the extent to which employees feel commitment to their organizations when they consider the costs of leaving the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1984). Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to; those with strong continuance commitment remain because they need to; while employees with strong normative commitment remain because they feel ought to do so. In this study, organizational commitment measured with the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Mowday *et al.* (1979) was related to emotional intelligence.

Teaching job may be demanding and involves difficulties with heavy workload and controlling of unruly students which may result in feelings of frustration. Emotionally intelligent teachers are able to place themselves in a positive state of mind. They are likely to know how to avoid dysfunctional emotions and use emotions in adaptive ways to alleviate feelings of frustration. There is some evidence in the literature that emotional intelligence is positively related to organizational commitment (Carmeli, 2003).

Work-family conflict is an inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Carmeli, 2003). In short, participation in the work (family) role is affected by participation in the family (work) role. Both the organizations and employees have the responsibilities of eliminating work-family conflict. Organizations/companies adapt work to peoples' lives. Empirical evidence show that individuals with high emotional intelligence were able to balance family interference with work and vice versa (Carmeli, 2003).

Teacher self-efficacy and work attitudes: Another independent variable that contributes to work attitudes examined in this study is teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is a belief that teachers have in their abilities to organize and execute courses of action that are required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context (Tschanne-Moran *et al.*, 1998). The conceptual focus of research on teachers' self-efficacy is derived from Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as personal judgements of one's capabilities to perform tasks at designated levels. According to him, people regulate their level and distribution of effort according to the effects they expect their actions to have. Consequently, their behaviour is better predicted from their beliefs than from the actual consequences of their actions.

Research reports have shown that students of efficacious teachers generally outperformed students in other classes (Henson, 2001). Teacher efficacy was predictive of achievement on the Iowa test of Basic skills (Moore and Esselman, 1992). Regarding teacher behaviours, efficacious teachers persist with struggling students and criticize less after incorrect student answers. Teachers with high self-efficacy were found to be more motivated to persist when faced with setbacks and willing to exert effort to overcome difficulties (Tschannen *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore, teachers with high self-efficacy rend to experiment with methods of instruction, seek improved teaching methods and experiment with instructional materials. Coladarci (1992) observed higher professional commitment for efficacious in-service teachers.

Supporting the role of teacher efficacy in the teaching job, Chen (2005) argued that previous researches consistently showed that teachers with higher self-efficacy were more effective in their classrooms by exhibiting enthusiasm for teaching, being open to students' ideas, using innovative instrumental methods that reflect their instruction and motivating students to learn. Teacher efficacy has been proved to be powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers' persistence, enthusiasm, commitment and instructional behaviour, as well as student outcomes such as achievement and motivation (Knobloch and Whittington, 2003; Moran and Hoy, 2001). Aremu (2005) found significant relationship between self-efficacy and commitment to career and organization. Clearly the reviewed literaure show that teachers' self-efficacy is significantly related to the teachers work attitudes.

Research evidence also indicated that individuals with high self-efficacy were able to resolve work-family conflicts whenever they arise (Bandura, 1997; Cinamon, 2005). Considering the above submission it was expected that teachers' self-efficacy will be related to the teachers' work attitudes (career commitment, organizational commitment and work-family conflicts).

Hypotheses: Based on the reviewed literature and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and career commitment of secondary school teachers.
- There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment of secondary school teachers.
- There is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict of secondary school teachers.
- There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and career commitment.
- There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and organizational commitment of the teachers.
- There is a negative relationship between self-efficacy and work-family conflict of the teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: This study adopted a survey research design that utilized an ex post facto research type in which questionnaires were used in collect data from the respondents.

Participants: The sample for this study consists of 475 secondary school teachers (males = 230 (48.42%), females = 245 (51.57%) randomly selected from five states in southwestern Nigeria. One hundred secondary school teachers were randomly selected from five schools at the rate of 20 per school in each state capital in the five states involved in the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure equal number of male and female teachers. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed to the teachers, 475 were properly filled and used in the analysis while 25 were incompletely filled and were discarded.

The mean age of the teachers was 36.75 years with standard deviation of 4.30 and an age range of 21-55 years. Level of education of the teachers were the Nigeria Certificate in Education, NCE (120, 25.26%), B.A.Ed/B.Sc.Ed/B.Ed. (225, 47.36%), B.A./B.Sc. plus PGDE (80, 16.84%), M.Ed. (50, 10.53%). The teaching experience of the teachers ranged from 2-26 years.

Emotional intelligence: Emotional intelligence was measured with the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SREIT) developed by Schutte *et al.* (1998). SREIT has 33 items with four subscales that adopt a five-point scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The internal consistency reliabilities of the four scales range from .78-.85 for this study. SREIT has been used with success among Nigerian samples (Aremu, 2005).

Organizational commitment: Organizational commitment was measured by the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Mowday *et al.* (1979). The OCQ has 15 items that describes the individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. A 5-point Likert-type response scale was used to measure responses. High internal consistency has been reported with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.82-0.93. Mowday *et al.* (1979) cite evidence of convenient, discriminant and predictive validity as it correlates positive with self-esteem and optimism and negatively with anxiety; depression and physical symptoms.

Work-family conflict: Work-Family Conflict was measured by means of (WFCS) by Hassan (2004). WFCS assessed the extent too which work-related roles interfere with family responsibilities. It has three sections: Work and Husband/Wife Subscale (7 items); Work and children subscale (7 items); and work and in-laws subscale (6 items). The FWCS used a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items on the scale. The coefficient alpha for the WFCS was .89. The scale correlates highly with the Work-Family Conflict Scale by Netemeyer *et al.* (1996).

Career commitment: Career commitment was assessed by a 7-item scale developed by Lam *et al.* (1995). The measure was assessed on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5-Strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.75.

The demographic and biographical information of the respondents involving age, sex, years of working experience, job position or rank, were obtained as part of the career commitment scale.

Procedure: The 5 instruments-SREIT, OCQ, GSES, WFCS and Career Commitment scales were administered to the teachers in the secondary school involved in this study by the researcher and 6 research assistants who were 3 undergraduates and three postgraduates students. The consents of the teachers and the school authorities were obtained and the purpose of the study was explained to them before distributing the instruments.

Data analysis: To assess the relationship of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to work attitudes (career commitment, organizational commitment and work-family conflict), hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed. Each model had three steps. The first step involved entering the control variables (age, gender and

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and intercorrelation matrix of all variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
XOrganizational commitment	1.00							
Career commitment	0.20*	1.00						
Work-family conflict	-0.31*	-0.15	1.00					
Gender	0.12	0.09	0.13	1.00				
Age	0.09	0.15	0.08	0.12	1.00			
Working experience	0.14	0.13	0.07	0.06	0.12	1.00		
Emotional intelligence	0.33*	0.28*	0.24*	0.11	0.13	0.09	1.00	
Self-efficacy	0.32*	0.30*	-0.23*	0.08	0.07	0.11	0.20*	1.00
Mean	63.43	30.24	75.50	1.50	38.30	7.50	120.42	34.65
S.D.	4.70	3.20	5.40	0.50	7.80	4.50	8.60	6.70

Note: N = 475, S.D. = Standard Deviation, * p<0.05

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients of the variables used in the analysis. Results in Table 1 indicate that there were significant relationships among the independent variables and the dependent variables. However, no significant relationships were found between the demographic variables and the dependent variables. The results thus provide preliminary support for significant relationships of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to work attitudes.

Table 2 presents the results of hierarchical regressions for the effects of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on each of the work attitudes. Emotional intelligence was positively and significantly related to career commitment (β = 0.32, t = 4.50, p<.05) supporting Hypothesis 1. This finding is consistent with the argument that emotionally intelligent teachers display higher career commitment. The results in Table 2 also provide evidence that teachers with high emotional intelligence develop high organizational commitment (β = 0.25, t = 2.4, p<0.05), thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 was also supported as the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict was negative and significant (β = -0.28, t = -2.60, p<0.05). This is an indication that teachers who have high emotional intelligence are more likely to effectively control their work-family conflicts.

Support was found for Hypothesis 4 and 5 as teachers with high self-efficacy developed high career commitment (β = 0.29, t = 3.0, p<0.05) and high organizational commitment (β = 0.32, t = 3.10, p<0.05). The results also support Hypothesis 6 as self-efficacy was found to be negatively and significantly related to work-family conflicts (β = 0.30, t = -3.21, p<0.05). This is

Table 2: Results of hierarchical regression analysis of the prediction of work attitudes from emotional intelligence and self-efficacy

Variable entered	Career commitment Beta (t)	Organizational commitment Beta (t)	Work-family conflict Beta (t)
Step 1			
Gender	0.02(0.45)	0.01(0.63)	.06(0.56)
Age	-0.19(-1.87)	0.15(1.33)	-.02(-1.20)
Working exp.	-0.04(-.56)	0.02(0.24)	-.03(-0.32)
R^2	0.078	0.052	0.083
F_{change}	1.80	1.30	1.19
df	3.471	3.471	3.471
Step 2			
Emotional intelligence	0.32(4.50*)	0.25(2.4*)	-0.28(-2.60*)
R^2	0.202	0.18	0.115
R^2_{change}	0.124	.138	0.032
F_{change}	8.74*	6.50*	5.30*
df	1.470	1.470	1.470
Step 3			
Self-efficacy	0.29(3.0*)	0.32(3.10*)	-0.30(-3.21*)
R^2	0.33	0.270	0.187
R^2_{change}	.128	0.090	0.072
F_{change}	5.78*	4.40*	3.60*
df	1.469	1.469	1.469

Note: N = 475, * 0<0.05

an indication that teachers who have high self-efficacy are more likely to control effectively their work-family conflicts.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are related to work-attitudes of secondary school teachers. This study advances the literature regarding emotional intelligence and self-efficacy by empirically demonstrating the important roles of these variables in developing positive work attitudes of secondary school teachers.

The results indicate that teachers who have high emotional intelligence and high self-efficacy develop more emotional commitment to their organizations and are also more committed to their career. That emotional intelligence was significantly related to career commitment and organizational commitment support the work of previous researches who found similar results (Aremu, 2005; Carmeli, 2003).

These results might be due to the fact that emotional intelligent teachers are able to recognize, manage and use their emotions to eliminate ensuing obstacles and advance their career horizons than those with low emotional intelligence. They are also likely to be able to cope with the job demands, frustrations and stress involved in teaching. Hence, they are able to develop high commitment to their career and organizations.

That self-efficacy was significantly related to career commitment and organizational commitment support the findings of previous researchers who reported similar findings (Aremu, 2005; Bandura, 1997; Knobloch and Whittington, 2003; Tschannen-Moran *et al.*, 1998). Teachers with high self-efficacy are likely to be motivated to persist when faced with setbacks and will be willing to learn and use new approaches to overcome difficulties. Hence, they are likely to develop high commitment to their career and organizations.

Results of this study also revealed that emotional intelligence was negatively and significantly related to work-family conflicts. This result is consistent with the work of Carmeli (2003) who found that emotionally intelligent managers had lower work-family conflicts because they were able to control such conflicts. Teachers with high emotional intelligence were able to balance work and family programmes such that they are able to attain a healthy midpoint. Similarly, it was found in this study that self-efficacy was negatively and significantly related to work-family conflicts.

These results corroborate the findings of earlier researchers who reported that individuals with high self-efficacy were able to resolve work-family conflicts wherever they arise (Bandura, 1997; Carmeli, 2003; Cinamon, 2005). Teachers with high self-efficacy are likely to be able to use appropriate available resources and social support to maintain a balance between work and family demands when there is work-family conflict.

Implications of the findings: The results of the present study demonstrated that work attitudes (career commitment, organizational commitment and work-family conflicts) are influenced by emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of the teachers. A teacher with high emotional intelligence and high self-efficacy will likely be more committed to his/her career and organization she/he works for and will develop more control over his/her work-family conflicts. The implication of these findings is that retaining talented and knowledgeable teachers becomes the concern of both the organizations and the individual teacher. Organizations need to select teachers who have high emotional intelligence and self-efficacy because this may have positive impact on the extent to which they can succeed in retaining their valuable work force.

Similarly, teachers who have high emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are likely to be able to balance work with family demands in order to minimize work-family conflicts. Therefore, counselling and personnel psychologists need to mount intervention programmes designed to enhance the emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of teachers in their various organizations. Various organizations that employ teachers have the responsibility for providing attractive and conducive working environments that will motivate the teachers and enhance their commitment to their career and organizations. The organizations should also design programmes that would enable the teachers balance work and family needs so as to resolve any ensuing work-family conflict.

Limitations and future studies: Some limitations of this study are worth mentioning. Although this study utilized validated and usable measures, the data collected were from self-report measures that have their obvious limitations. Future studies on this topic could add interview schedules to augment data collection from questionnaires. The data collected were from secondary school teachers (one level of the teaching profession), future studies could include teachers from other levels namely: Primary and tertiary level, private and public educational institutions. These limitations notwithstanding, this study has contributed significantly in demonstrating the influence of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on the work attitudes of secondary school teachers in Nigeria.

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