SCHOOL SAFETY FACTORS: A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR JOB COMMITMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *School safety is a critical factor for the job commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. This study examines the various aspects of school safety and their impact on teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. The study focuses on physical school safety, psychosocial school safety, school transportation safety, background verification checks of staff, and the implementation of a visitor management system. The paper highlights the importance of physical school safety measures, including building design, emergency planning, security technology, personnel, communication, maintenance, and student supervision. It emphasizes the need for schools to create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes positive mental health and addresses social and emotional issues, thereby ensuring psychosocial school safety. The study also discusses the significance of school transportation safety, including vehicle design, driver training, and the implementation of laws and regulations. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes the importance of conducting background verification checks for staff to prevent incidents involving students. It explores the role of a visitor management system in enhancing school safety by controlling and monitoring visitor access. The study identifies overcrowding, inadequate security measures, poverty, substance abuse, inadequate teacher training, corruption, and political instability as key problems contributing to poor school safety in Nigerian secondary schools. In conclusion, the study argues that ensuring school safety is crucial for the job commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. It recommends implementing adequate security measures, addressing student behavior management, providing teacher support and professional development opportunities, and promoting a culture of safety in schools. By addressing these challenges, the government can create a safer and more supportive working environment for teachers, leading to improved outcomes for students and the education system as a whole.*

KEYWORDS: School safety factors, Job commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Job commitment is a term that refers to an individual's level of dedication and attachment to their job and employer. It is the degree to which an employee is motivated to stay with their current job, and to put forth the effort necessary to perform their job well. Teacher job commitment refers to the level of dedication, responsibility, and effort that a teacher puts into their job. It is a combination of personal and professional characteristics that contribute to the effectiveness of a teacher and the success of their students. A committed teacher is someone who takes their role in shaping the future of their students seriously. They view teaching as a calling rather than just a job and put in the necessary time and effort to ensure that their students receive a high-quality education. This includes staying up-to-date with the latest educational trends and practices, creating engaging and meaningful lessons, and being available to their students outside of regular class hours. Teacher's job commitment also involves the personal characteristics of a teacher, such as their passion for their subject matter, their love of working with young people, and their commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of their students. A committed teacher is someone who is always looking for ways to improve their teaching skills and create a better learning environment for their students. Additionally, teacher job commitment encompasses professional ethics and a strong sense of responsibility. A committed teacher is someone who is accountable for their actions and is dedicated to doing what is best for their students. They understand that their role is not only to impart knowledge but also to serve as positive role models and guide their students towards becoming responsible, ethical citizens. Teacher job commitment is a critical component of effective teaching. A teacher who is fully committed to their job is more likely to have a positive impact on their students, fosters a love of learning, and contributes to a thriving educational environment.

However, in some cases, secondary school teachers in Nigeria often display poor job commitment, which over the years have negative effects on the quality of education delivered to students. This poor job commitment of teachers in Nigeria often manifests in high absenteeism and tardiness which is one of the most obvious signs of poor job commitment. It was observed in a study that teachers' attendance record is not regular and sometimes very poor (Ekasingh, Simnett & WGreen, 2019). If teachers are consistently absent or late for work, it shows that they do not view their job as a priority and are not fully committed to their responsibilities. This can have a negative impact on the quality of education for students, as they may not receive adequate instruction and guidance from their teachers. This can also disrupt the daily routine and flow of the school, and can make it difficult for other teachers and staff to plan and coordinate effectively.

Another trace of poor job commitment among teachers in Nigeria as observed by the researcher is poor teacher preparation and planning. This manifests in lack of organization as most teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria were found to be poorly prepared and sometimes struggle to keep their lessons organized as well as frequently lose track of their lesson plans or materials (Boon, Den, Hartog & Lepak, 2019). Another study observed that the majority of teachers in Nigerian public secondary schools over-rely on textbook or lesson notes and adopt lecture-style teaching without incorporating engaging and interactive activities (Arowojolu & Onuka, 2019). Similarly, an author lamented that poor classroom management is another trace of poor teacher preparation and planning in secondary schools in Nigeria. The author observed that some teachers found it difficult in managing student behavior and maintaining a positive learning environment (Dede, 2019). Similarly some teachers were found to inadequately assess and evaluate student's work to determine their level of academic achievement (Dede, 2019).

In the same vein, some teachers seem to be unprepared for student questions: A teacher who is not well-prepared may struggle to answer students' questions in a knowledgeable and confident manner while some were found to be inflexibility in the classroom, making it difficult for the them to adapt to the needs and abilities of their students (İşçi & Ari, 2019). Again, it was posited in a study that teachers in public schools in Nigeria exhibit signs of negativity or frustration, such as complaining about their job or blaming students for their own shortcomings and lack of enthusiasm (Petru Lucian Curşeu, Atatsi, JolStoffers & Kil, 2020).

Similarly, poor job commitment among secondary school teachers has also manifested over the years in their disinterest or poor interest in professional development. Another indicator of poor job commitment is a lack of interest in professional development opportunities. For instance, a study found that teachers' attendance at workshops, conferences, or training sessions that would enhance their skills and knowledge is low while some of them hardly participate in extracurricular activities such as coaching sports teams or advising student clubs (Raveendran & Gamage, 2019). This can limit their opportunities for growth and development as educators, and can also have a negative impact on the quality of education for students.

Negative attitude and lack of enthusiasm is another indication of poor job commitment among teachers in Nigeria as observed by the researcher. Some teachers hardly exhibit energy and passion in the classroom and thus make it difficult for students to stay engaged and motivated and often express dissatisfaction with their job, which can have a negative impact on school morale and the overall educational environment (Singh, 2019). Another indicator of poor job commitment among teachers is failure to meet expectations and deadlines. Some teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria often fail to meet expectations and deadlines for grading assignments, preparing lesson plans, and carrying out other duties and responsibilities (Ugwu, Okoroji & Chukwu, 2019). It was also observed that resistance to change and innovation as another indicator of poor job commitment among teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria as teachers in public secondary hardly embrace new teaching methods, technology, or pedagogical approaches, which seem to have limited their effectiveness in the classroom and also limit their opportunities for professional growth and development this has often led to poor quality of education for students, as they may not receive the latest and most effective instruction and training (Zahra, Mohammadreza & Alireza, 2019).

Poor job commitment among teachers can have a profound and far-reaching impact on students, schools, and the education system as a whole. Teachers play a critical role in shaping the minds and futures of young people, and their level of commitment to their job can have a significant impact on student outcomes. One of the most noticeable consequences of poor teacher job commitment is a decline in the quality of education that students receive. Teachers who are not fully committed to their job may not be interested in their students' learning and may not put in the time and effort required to create engaging and effective lesson plans. This can lead to a less stimulating and less effective learning environment, which can result in lower student achievement and a lack of motivation to learn.

In addition to impacting students' learning, poor teacher job commitment can also harm the morale and motivation of other teachers and staff within a school. When one teacher lacks commitment, it can create a negative atmosphere that can spread to other staff members, reducing the overall level of job satisfaction and commitment within the school. This can lead to high turnover rates, difficulty attracting and retaining quality teachers, and a decline in the overall reputation of the school.

Poor teacher job commitment can also have a broader impact on the education system as a whole. When teachers are not fully committed to their job, they are less likely to participate in professional development opportunities, engage in research and innovation, or advocate for policy changes that can improve the education system. This can limit the progress and effectiveness of the education system, leading to decreased competitiveness and lower quality outcomes for students. Poor teacher job commitment can have serious and far-reaching consequences for students, schools, and the education system as a whole. It is important for school leaders, policymakers, and education stakeholders to support and motivate teachers to maintain their commitment to their job and to provide them with the resources and support they need to be effective in the classroom.

Concept of School Safety

School safety refers to the measures taken by educational institutions to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors. This can include a variety of strategies and technologies designed to prevent violence, theft, and other criminal activities. One important aspect of school safety is the physical design of the building itself. This can include features such as secured entrances and exits, surveillance cameras, and access control systems that limit entry to authorized individuals. Schools may also implement safety protocols that regulate who are allowed to enter the building, such as requiring visitors to show identification or sign in.

Another important aspect of school safety is the development of emergency response plans. This may include procedures for responding to natural disasters, such as earthquakes or hurricanes, as well as man-made crises, such as active shooter incidents or bomb threats. Schools may also conduct regular drills to practice their response to these types of scenarios.

Another key component of school safety is the presence of trained safety personnel, such as school resource officers or safety guards. These individuals can be responsible for maintaining order, preventing criminal activity, and responding to emergencies. They may also play a role in educating students and staff about safety and safety best practices. In addition to physical safety measures, schools may also implement technology solutions to improve safety. For example, many schools now use electronic notification systems to alert staff and students in the event of an emergency. They may also use students' identification systems to monitor who is on campus and where they are at any given time. It's also important for schools to foster a culture of safety and safety. This can include promoting open communication between students, staff, and administration, as well as providing training and resources to help students and staff identify and respond to potential safety threats.

Types of School Safety

Physical School Safety

Physical school safety refers to the measures taken to ensure the safety of students, teachers, and staff in a school environment. This includes measures to prevent accidents, violence, theft, and other security threats. Physical school safety is a critical component of creating a safe and secure learning environment, as it can greatly impact the overall well-being of students and staff, as well as the academic success of students.

Here are some important aspects of physical school safety:

a. Building Design: The design of a school building can greatly impact the safety of students and staff. Schools should be designed with safety in mind, with secure entrances, clear sight lines, and easy-to-use locking mechanisms on doors and windows.

b. Emergency Planning: All schools should have an emergency plan in place that outlines procedures for responding to various types of emergencies, such as natural disasters, fires, and active shooter situations. The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it is effective and relevant.

c. Security Technology: Schools can use security technology to enhance physical safety, such as video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and access control systems. However, it is important to balance the use of technology with privacy concerns and to ensure that students and staff are not subject to excessive surveillance.

d. Personnel: Schools should have trained security personnel on site to respond to emergencies and monitor the school grounds. In addition, all staff should be trained in emergency procedures and how to respond to security incidents.

e. Communication: Effective communication is key to physical school safety. Schools should have multiple ways to communicate with students, teachers, and staff in the event of an emergency, such as text messages, phone calls, and email alerts.

f. Maintenance: Regular maintenance of the school building and grounds is essential to ensure that they are safe and secure. This includes regular checks of fire alarms and sprinkler systems, electrical systems, and lighting.

g. Student Supervision: Adequate supervision of students is essential to ensure their safety in and around the school. This includes during school hours, at lunchtime, and during after-school activities.

Psychosocial School Safety

Psychosocial school safety refers to the emotional and social well-being of students and staff in a school environment. This concept recognizes that staff and students' mental health and overall well-being play a significant role in their ability to learn and succeed in school. The goal of psychosocial school safety is to create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes positive mental health and helps students feel safe and valued. This involves addressing a range of social, emotional, and behavioral issues that can impact student well-being, including bullying, harassment, stress, anxiety, and depression. A safe and supportive school environment can have a profound impact on students' academic achievement and overall success. Research has shown that students who feel safe and supported are more likely to attend school regularly, perform better academically, and experience less stress and anxiety.

In order to create a psychosocial safe school environment, school administrators, teachers, and staff must work together to establish clear policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment. This can involve implementing anti-bullying programs, providing training to staff on recognizing and responding to signs of emotional distress, and offering support services to students who may be struggling with mental health issues (Shepherd & Gruber, 2019). In

addition, schools must foster a positive and inclusive culture that values diversity and promotes respect and understanding among students. This can involve promoting positive relationships among students, encouraging open communication, and offering opportunities for students to participate in activities that promote teamwork and collaboration (Shin, 2019). It is also important for schools to involve families and the wider community in efforts to create a psychosocial safe school environment. Schools can work with parents and community organizations to provide support and resources for families, and to help raise awareness about the importance of emotional and social well-being.

School Transportation Safety

School transportation safety is a crucial aspect of ensuring that staff and most importantly children arrive at and return from school safely. This involves the proper design, maintenance, and operation of school buses and other vehicles used to transport children, as well as the creation and enforcement of laws, policies, and procedures aimed at preventing accidents and injuries. One of the main components of school transportation safety is the design and maintenance of the vehicles used to transport children. School buses, for example, are designed with safety features such as high-backed, padded seats, seat belts, and emergency exits. They are also subject to regular safety inspections to ensure that they are in good working condition.

Another key aspect of school transportation safety is the training of drivers. School bus drivers must undergo extensive training on safe driving practices, as well as on the proper use of the vehicle's safety features. This includes training on how to handle emergency situations, such as a fire on board the bus or an accident.

Laws and regulations also play a critical role in ensuring school transportation safety. For example, many states have laws in place requiring the use of seat belts on school buses and limiting the number of children that can be seated on a single bus. There are also regulations governing the minimum age of school bus drivers and the number of hours they can drive each day.

In addition to laws and regulations, school transportation safety can also be enhanced through the use of technology. For example, GPS systems can be used to track the location and speed of school buses in real-time, allowing for quicker response in the event of an emergency. Video cameras can also be installed on school buses to monitor the behavior of students and drivers and to help investigate any incidents that occur.

Finally, school transportation safety requires the cooperation and engagement of everyone involved, including parents, students, teachers, and school administrators. Parents can encourage their children to follow school bus safety rules and to use seat belts, while teachers and administrators can educate students on the importance of being safe while riding the bus.

Background Verification Check of Staff

Background verification checks of staff are an important aspect of school safety and can help to prevent incidents involving students. Such checks can help to ensure that individuals who work with children do not have a history of criminal behavior or a history of misconduct that would make them unsuitable for working in a school setting. A typical background check for school staff may include a criminal background check, a check of the individual's employment history, verification of educational and professional certifications, and reference checks. Some

schools may also perform a fingerprint-based criminal history check, which provides a more comprehensive view of the individual's criminal history.

It is important to note that background checks should be performed consistently and fairly, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Additionally, the results of a background check should be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of making employment decisions. In conclusion, background verification checks can help to ensure the safety of students in schools by screening out individuals who may pose a risk. It is important for schools to implement these checks in a consistent and fair manner, while also respecting the privacy rights of employees and applicants.

Visitor Management System

Visitor Management System (VMS) is a computer-based solution designed to control and monitor the movement of visitors in schools. The primary goal of VMS is to enhance school safety by ensuring that only authorized visitors are granted access to the school premises. VMS also provides schools with a means of tracking and verifying the identity of visitors, and of alerting school staff in case of any security breaches. The implementation of VMS typically involves the use of a computer or tablet located at the school entrance, where visitors are required to check in. The visitor is asked to provide their name, date of birth, reason for visit, and other relevant information. The system then uses this information to verify the visitor's identity and to check if they have any prior criminal records or other security concerns.

Once the visitor has been cleared, they are issued with a temporary pass, which may be in the form of a printed badge or a digital pass displayed on their phone. The pass identifies the visitor and provides the school with a record of their visit. This helps to keep track of who is on the school premises at any given time and to ensure that only authorized visitors have access to the school. In addition to enhancing school safety, VMS provides schools with a range of other benefits. For example, it streamlines the check-in process for visitors, reducing the amount of time and effort required for school staff to manage visitor access. VMS also provides schools with valuable data and insights into visitor activity, which can be used to identify areas for improvement and to optimize the visitor management process.

Another important benefit of VMS is that it can help to minimize the risk of fraud, theft, and other security breaches. By verifying the identity of visitors, VMS can reduce the risk of unauthorized access to the school, and can help to ensure that visitors are not able to bring in dangerous or prohibited items. In essence, Visitor Management System is an essential component of school safety, providing schools with a means of controlling and monitoring visitor access, while also enhancing overall security and reducing the risk of security breaches. With the increasing need for secure schools, the implementation of VMS is becoming increasingly important and is seen as a key component of school safety and security management.

Problems Causing Poor School Safety in Nigerian Secondary Schools

School safety is a critical issue that affects not only the students, but also the teachers, staff, and the entire community. In Nigeria, the issue of poor school safety has become increasingly prevalent, with reports of violence, theft, and other forms of criminal activities taking place in secondary schools. In this essay, we will examine some of the factors that contribute to poor school safety in Nigerian secondary schools.

1. **Overcrowding:** Overcrowding in schools can lead to poor school safety, as students are packed into classrooms, creating a challenging and potentially dangerous environment. Overcrowded schools are also more susceptible to the spread of disease, making students and staff more vulnerable to illness.

2. **Inadequate security measures:** Schools in Nigeria often lack proper security measures, such as metal detectors, cameras, and trained security personnel. This lack of security makes it easier for criminals to enter the school and commit acts of violence or theft.

3. **Poverty:** Poverty is a major contributor to poor school safety in Nigeria. Many students come from families that are struggling to make ends meet, which can result in them engaging in criminal activities to earn money. These students may also be more likely to be involved in gang-related activities, which can further contribute to school safety issues.

4. **Drug and substance abuse:** Substance abuse, including the use of drugs and alcohol, is a growing problem among students in Nigeria. Substance abuse can lead to violence and other criminal activities, putting other students and staff at risk.

5. **Inadequate teacher training:** Teachers play a critical role in maintaining school safety, but many teachers in Nigeria are not trained on how to handle school safety issues. This lack of training can result in teachers being unable to respond effectively when safety incidents occur.

6. **Corruption:** Corruption is a major problem in Nigeria, and it can contribute to poor school safety by making it easier for criminals to access schools and engage in criminal activities. Corruption can also make it more difficult to enforce school safety regulations, as officials may be more concerned with personal gain than with ensuring school safety.

7. **Political instability:** Political instability can also contribute to poor school safety, as it can create an environment of uncertainty and fear. This instability can result in increased criminal activities, as well as a general lack of security in schools.

School Safety Factors: A Necessary Condition for Job Commitment of Secondary School Teachers in Nigeria

School safety is a crucial aspect of education and a necessary condition for job commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. Teachers play a vital role in the education system and their job satisfaction and commitment are essential for the success of students and the school. Thus, ensuring their safety in the school environment is essential for their job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment.

In Nigeria, the security situation in schools has been a cause for concern in recent years. Incidents of violence, theft, and vandalism are common, and teachers are often the victims.

This creates a hostile work environment that negatively impacts the morale and job satisfaction of teachers. As a result, many teachers become disillusioned and disheartened, and may even choose to leave their jobs, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers.

Moreover, safety is also a major concern for teachers when it comes to student behavior. In some schools, students can become disruptive and violent, making it difficult for teachers to maintain order and provide a safe learning environment. This can be particularly challenging in overcrowded schools, where resources are limited, and teachers are overburdened. This can result in increased stress and burnout, further reducing the job satisfaction and commitment of teachers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, ensuring school safety is crucial for the job satisfaction, motivation, and most importantly, commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. By addressing the challenges faced by teachers, including, security, the government can create a safer and more supportive working environment for teachers, leading to better outcomes for students and the education system as a whole.

WAYOUT

In order to address these challenges, several measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of teachers in Nigerian schools. These include:

1. Adequate security measures: The government should invest in security measures such as CCTV cameras, security personnel, and alarms to improve the safety of teachers and students in schools.

2. Students' behavior management: Schools should implement policies to address student behavior, such as peer mediation programs, counseling services, and student-teacher mentorship programs. These measures will help to reduce the incidence of violence and improve the learning environment for students and teachers.

3. Teacher support and professional development: Teachers need support and resources to help them manage challenging student behavior, such as workshops and training programs. They also need opportunities for professional development to enhance their skills and competencies, making them better equipped to handle the challenges of teaching.

4. Collaboration between teachers, students, and families: Teachers, students, and families should work together to create a safe and supportive learning environment. Teachers should be encouraged to communicate with students and their families about their concerns and to involve them in creating solutions.

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