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Career Development Opportunities, Remuneration And Teachers' Retention In High Schools In Delta State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined relationship between career development opportunities and remuneration and teachers' job retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were raised and tested. An ex-post-facto research design using correlational method was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 458 principals and 12,691 teachers in all the 458 public secondary schools in Delta State. A total sample of 853 respondents (737 teachers and 116 principals), representing 5% of teachers and 25% of principals across the Local Government Areas, was selected using a proportionate sampling technique. Two instruments were used for data collection. They were structured questionnaire titled "Career Development and Remuneration Questionnaire (CDRQ)" and "Teacher Job Retention Questionnaire (TJRQ)." The instrument's face and content validity were ensured by experts in Educational Management, and reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded coefficient values of 0.864 for the CDRQ and 0.824 for the TJRQ. A total of 853 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, out of which 794 valid responses (116 from principals and 678 from teachers) were retrieved and used for analysis. Data were analyzed using coefficient of determination for research questions and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test all hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed positive relationship between career advancement opportunities, remuneration and teacher retention. The relationship between career advancement opportunities, remuneration and teacher retention was significant at 0.05 level. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Delta State Ministry of Education and the Post Primary Education Board implement motivational policies, of continuous providing teachers opportunities for career development and attractive remuneration to enhance teacher retention in public secondary schools.

Keywords: career advancement, remuneration, retention, teachers, secondary school

Introduction

Education is the greatest instrument for the empowerment of individuals to become better citizens in their society as well as personal gains. This is because education inputs into learner's useful attributes, values, skills, competences and knowledge with which they are able to solve life problems and live a useful life. In all countries of the world, education is acknowledged as a tool for the development of nations and achievement of national goals. Thus, education contributes greatly to economic, political, social, scientific, cultural, technological and industrial development of nations. This informed the reason why the Federal Government of Nigeria, in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) sees education as an instrument par excellence for national development.

Many communities in the world today look up to schools for the nurturing of those innovative ideas which transform the technological, economic, political and social dimensions of peoples' lives towards development (UNESCO, 2005). Within the school, teachers play significant roles in nurturing right values, knowledge and skills into the learners for their all-round development socially, morally, cognitively, emotionally and spiritually. Teachers are charge with teaching and they contribute in planning for school activities, implementing school policies, counselling students, keeping records of teaching and learning, conducting co-curricular activities and expectations of higher authorities to ensure effective administration of school.

Researchers in the field of education sees teacher retention as a factor of supportive leadership, interpersonal relationship, mentoring and teacher demographics that could make teachers remain in their schools, move to different schools, or leave the profession before retirement (Chen, Chen & Li 2022; Chen & Johnson, 2021; Chen, Johnson & Smith, 2023). As averred by Mbiu (2019), retention is a deliberate effort by an organization to create a conducive environment which can engage employees for a longer period. Retention is to ensure that employees who are talented, productive and proficient do not exit from the organization in search of greener pastures.

These motivational elements act as a driving force that propels an individual to go extra miles towards the accomplishment of organizational goals and objective (Ogheneovo, & Asiyai, 2024; Asiyai, 2011). There are factors that when provided teachers and other staff could act as buffer for better engagement and performance, satisfaction and increased retention.

Career development programs are crucial for enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge while providing structured pathways for professional growth and thus buffer their job retention. These initiatives often include mentoring, on-going training workshops, leadership opportunities, and access to advanced degrees. Remuneration stands out as a significant motivator. Research indicates that competitive salaries and benefits are essential in attracting and retaining effective teachers. Remuneration is something given in exchange for services rendered. Worker's remuneration is a system of motivation that provides the basic attraction for the

workers to perform their duties efficiently and effectively (Alagwa. & Legembe, 2022) Ogheneovo & Asiyai (2024).

Statement of the Problem

In Delta State, Nigeria parents and the general have complained about the poor performance of students in external examinations. It appears that the schools are not pulling enough weights through active engagement in academic activities and attendance at classrooms to teacher students. The researcher has observed that some public secondary school teachers have abandoned the teaching for greener pastures. What could be responsible for this attitude of public secondary school teachers in Delta State towards their job?

Research Questions

Two questions were asked and answered in this study

1. What is the relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated tested

1. There is no significant relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State.

Literature Review

Career development programs are designed to provide employees with opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies, allowing them to advance in their careers. For teachers, these programs are particularly crucial, as they play a significant role in keeping educators engaged, motivated, and committed to their roles. Teachers often face evolving challenges in education, such as changing curriculum standards, diverse student needs, and advancements in technology, all of which require continuous learning and adaptation. As such, career development helps teachers to not only stay relevant but also thrive in an ever-changing educational environment.

Recent studies highlight that professional development opportunities are a key determinant of teacher retention and job satisfaction. Jones et al. (2020) emphasize that when teachers are provided with ongoing learning opportunities, they are more likely to remain in the profession and feel fulfilled in their work. This is particularly important in the face of high turnover rates in some educational systems, where teachers may leave the profession due to stagnation, burnout, or a lack of opportunities for growth. Career development programs, therefore, serve as a preventive measure, ensuring that teachers do not feel stuck in their careers but rather see a pathway for professional growth and advancement.

Effective career development programs can take various forms, such as workshops, seminars, mentorship initiatives, and advanced training courses. These programs enable teachers to improve their instructional practices, refine their classroom management strategies, and stay up-to-date with the latest educational trends and research. For instance, workshops and seminars can introduce teachers to new pedagogical methods or provide insight into specialized areas of teaching, such as addressing the needs of students with learning disabilities. Mentorship programs, on the other hand, offer less experienced teachers the chance to learn from seasoned professionals, providing them with guidance, feedback, and support as they navigate their careers.

Garcia and Weiss (2022) assert that teachers who are given the opportunity to develop professionally tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment to their schools. When teachers feel that their school values their growth and invests in their future, they are more likely to stay engaged and motivated. This increased commitment also positively impacts student outcomes, as motivated and well-trained teachers are better equipped to deliver quality instruction, foster a positive learning environment, and meet the diverse needs of their students. Moreover, professional development not only benefits individual teachers but also enhances the collective capacity of the school, as teachers who engage in career development often share their newfound knowledge and skills with colleagues, contributing to a collaborative culture of continuous improvement.

Moreover, career development programs help teachers feel valued by their employers, significantly boosting their morale and encouraging them to remain in the teaching profession (Zhao & Lau, 2021). When educators perceive that their professional growth is prioritized, it creates a sense of appreciation and recognition, which directly impacts their job satisfaction. This feeling of being valued can counteract many of the common stressors associated with the teaching profession, such as heavy workloads, limited resources, and the emotional toll of working in challenging environments. The psychological boost that comes from career development opportunities not only fosters greater job satisfaction but also reinforces teachers' commitment to their institutions.

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In the context of public secondary schools, where teacher turnover can be particularly high due to a range of challenges—such as low pay, inadequate working conditions, and lack of support, offering continuous learning opportunities serves as an effective retention strategy. Career development programs give teachers a reason to stay, as they see potential for advancement and growth in their careers. Zhao and Lau (2021) highlight that teachers who engage in professional development are more likely to remain in their roles, as these programs mitigate the feelings of stagnation that can lead to attrition. By addressing one of the core reasons for high turnover—lack of professional growth—schools can stabilize their teaching workforce and build a more experienced, knowledgeable, and effective faculty.

Additionally, career development not only supports individual growth but also fosters collaboration among educators, further contributing to the overall quality of teaching in schools. When teachers participate in professional development activities, such as workshops or seminars, they often work together to share ideas, strategies, and insights, which strengthen collegial bonds. According to Collie et al. (2021), this collaboration among teachers is essential for creating a positive school culture, where educators feel supported and motivated to improve their teaching practices. A culture of continuous learning and teamwork among teachers enhances both the professional environment and the quality of education provided to students. Thus, career development has a ripple effect: it improves individual teacher performance, builds strong professional communities within schools, and leads to better educational outcomes for students.

Remuneration, or compensation, is indeed one of the most fundamental motivational factors in any profession, and teaching is no exception. It encompasses not only salary but also benefits such as healthcare, pensions, bonuses, and other financial incentives that employees receive in exchange for their work. The adequacy of remuneration is a critical determinant of teachers' job satisfaction and plays a significant role in influencing their decision to remain in the profession or seek employment elsewhere. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), fair and competitive salaries in the education sector are crucial for attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. When remuneration is perceived as inadequate, it often leads to teacher dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and high turnover rates. Teachers who feel underpaid are less likely to invest in their work, which can negatively affect student outcomes and the overall quality of education. In contrast, teachers who are fairly compensated are more likely to remain committed, motivated, and engaged in their profession.

The issue of remuneration is especially relevant in public secondary schools, where budget constraints often limit salary increases and other financial incentives. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, teachers frequently express dissatisfaction with their pay, citing it as a primary reason for leaving the profession (OECD, 2019). This dissatisfaction can lead to high turnover rates, particularly in rural or underserved areas, where the pay gap may be more pronounced. Inadequate remuneration, coupled with challenging working conditions, can result in a shortage of qualified teachers, which directly impacts the quality of education provided to students. In contrast, when teachers are offered competitive remuneration packages that align with their skills, experience, and qualifications, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated to perform well. Competitive compensation also helps to raise the status of the teaching profession, making it more attractive to talented individuals who might otherwise pursue careers in more lucrative fields. As the OECD (2019) points out, countries that prioritize competitive salaries for teachers often see higher retention rates, improved teacher morale, and better student performance.

Recent studies have emphasized that when teachers perceive their remuneration as inadequate, particularly in relation to their workload or in comparison to other professions, they are more likely to experience burnout and consider leaving the profession (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). The perception of unfair or insufficient compensation can lead to frustration, disengagement, and a diminished sense of professional satisfaction. Teachers who feel that their efforts are not appropriately compensated are prone to lower morale, which directly affects their performance in the classroom and their interactions with students. The demands of teaching—such as extended hours, emotional investment, and the constant need for professional development—are not always matched by corresponding financial incentives, causing many teachers to reconsider their career paths.

Research indicates a strong correlation between career development initiatives and teacher retention, particularly in public secondary schools where turnover rates can be high (Ingersoll, 2021). According to a survey by Brady et al. (2022), teachers who feel supported in their professional growth are more likely to express loyalty to their schools and remain committed to their roles. Moreover, the relationship between career development and teacher retention is also influenced by the alignment of these programs with teachers' career aspirations and goals. The retention of qualified teachers in public secondary schools is a critical issue that affects the quality of education and student outcomes. Among various factors influencing teacher retention, remuneration stands out as a significant motivator. Research indicates that competitive salaries and benefits are essential in attracting and retaining effective teachers (Ingersoll, 2021).

This study examined career development opportunities, remuneration and teachers job retention in Delta State.

Methodology

The is an *ex-post-facto* research design study of the correlation method. Correlation research facilitates the prediction and explanation the relationship among independent and dependent variables. The study population comprised 458 principals and 12691 teachers in all the 458 public secondary schools in Delta State. The sample that was used for the study comprised 853 respondents. The breakdown of the sample is 737 teachers and 116 principals. Proportionate sampling technique was employed in the selection of the sample.

Two research instruments were used in the study. The first instrument was tagged Career Development and Remuneration Questionnaire (CDRQ to be responded to by principals and teachers. It contained 10 items. The second instrument was tagged Teacher Retention Questionnaire (TRQ). It contained 14 items. The items were structured on a four-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The face and content validity of the instrument, the instrument was determined through experts in Educational Administration.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering 30 copies of the questionnaire to 10 principals and 20 teachers in schools not included in the study. The responses obtained were computed using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient, which is a measure of internal consistency. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and coefficient of determination to answer research questions 4 to 6. Pearson Product Moment statistics (Pearson r) was used to test the hypotheses, at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS: The results obtained from data analysis in answer to the research questions and testing the hypotheses are presented in tables.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

Table 1: Coefficient of Determination of Relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r	r^2	r^2 %	Remark
Career Development Programmes	794	2.89	0.58	.592	.35	35.00	Positive relationship
Teacher Retention		3.04	0.47				

Data in Table 1 shows the relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result indicates that career development programmes have a mean score of 2.89, SD = 0.58, while teacher retention has a mean score of 3.04, SD = 0.47. The computed r value of .592 shows a positive relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention.

The r^2 value of .35 revealed that career development programmes account for 35.0% of the variation in teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Research question 2: What is the relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

Table 2: Coefficient of Determination of Relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r	r ²	r ² %	Remark
Remuneration	794	2.85	0.57	.952	.906	90.6	Positive relationship
Teacher Retention		3.04	0.47				

Data in Table 2 shows the relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result indicates that remuneration has a mean score of 2.85, SD = 0.57, while teacher retention has a mean score of 3.04, SD = 0.47. The computed r value of .952 shows a strong positive relationship between remuneration and teacher retention. The r^2 value of .906 revealed that remuneration accounts for 90.6% of the variation in teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State

	Career development programmes	Teachers' Retention
career development programmes	Pearson Correlation 1	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	794
Teachers' Retention	Pearson Correlation .592**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	794

** . Significant at 0.05

Table 3 revealed the Pearson correlation coefficient between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. The table shows a significant relationship with an r value of .592 and a significance value of $p = .000$. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between career development programmes and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

Table 4: Pearson Correlation of Relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary school teachers in Delta State

		Remuneration	Teachers' Retention
Remuneration	Pearson Correlation	1	.952**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	794	794
Teachers' Retention	Pearson Correlation	.952**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	794	9746

** . Significant at 0.05

Table 4 revealed the Pearson correlation coefficient between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. The table shows a significant relationship with an r value of .952 and a significance value of $p = .000$. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Discussion

Relationship Between Career Development Programs and Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

The first findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between career development programs and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. This indicates that teachers are more likely to remain in their jobs when they have access to structured professional development opportunities such as training, workshops, mentorship, and career advancement prospects. A possible explanation for this finding is that career development enhances teachers' professional growth, job satisfaction, and sense of fulfillment, thereby reducing their likelihood of leaving their jobs. This result aligns with Ogheneovo & Asiyai (2024), which emphasized that teachers with access to motivational factors such as career development programmes, promotion and recognition tend to be more committed to their jobs. Similarly, Brady, Duffy & Johnson (2022) found that teachers who perceive clear career advancement opportunities experience greater job security and professional fulfillment, which enhances retention.

Relationship Between Remuneration and Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

The second finding of the study revealed a strong positive significant relationship between remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State. This finding suggests that teachers are more likely to stay in their jobs when they receive competitive salaries and financial incentives. A possible reason for this finding is that fair remuneration provides financial security, reduces stress, and enhances job satisfaction, leading to long-term commitment to the teaching profession. This result aligns with Ogheneovo & Asiyai (2024) who found that competitive salaries significantly influenced teacher motivation and retention. Additionally, Ekundayo (2018) highlighted that financial incentives play a crucial role in enhancing employee commitment and reducing turnover rates.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that opportunities for career advancement and remuneration are key contributors to teacher retention. In addition, there is a significant positive relationship between career development programmes, remuneration and teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State.

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

1. The Delta State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Post Primary Education Board, should implement motivational policies that ensure regular opportunities for teachers' career advancement and provision of competitive remuneration packages to enhance teacher retention in public secondary schools.
2. The Ministry of Education should prioritize the establishment of continuous career development programmes such as workshops, seminars, and in-service training opportunities to foster teachers' professional growth and increase their commitment to the teaching profession.

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