

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TO WORK IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE

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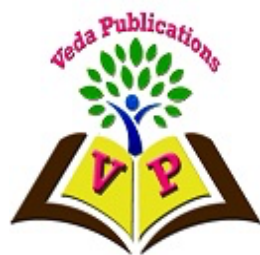
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Abstract



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This study investigates teachers' attitudes towards work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, emphasizing their critical role in shaping student outcomes. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure, 2,001 teachers were surveyed, and data were collected through a self-developed questionnaire titled "Public Senior Secondary School Teachers' Attitude to Work in Lagos State Questionnaire." Gender distribution showed 52.5% male and 47.5% female participants. Results reveal a balanced spectrum of positive and negative attitudes, with an overall weighted mean of 2.94. Positive attitudes include a high sense of accomplishment from student success (mean: 3.46) and moderate commitment to innovative teaching (mean: 2.86). Negative attitudes, such as feeling overwhelmed by workload (mean: 3.28), highlight significant challenges. Gender analysis reveals statistically significant differences, with male teachers showing slightly higher positive attitudes (mean: 3.80) than females (mean: 3.71). Interviews with principals underscore teachers' dedication and passion but acknowledge systemic challenges like workload pressures and unrealistic expectations. Recommendations include implementing teacher well-being programs, competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, and gender-sensitive initiatives to foster equity and resilience. This research provides valuable insights into teacher attitudes, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to enhance well-being and teaching effectiveness in Lagos State.

Keywords: *Attitude to Work, Public Senior Secondary Schools, Positive Attitudes, Negative attitudes*

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Introduction

The role of teachers is pivotal to shaping the future of students, and their attitudes towards work significantly impact on their effectiveness which consequently affect student outcomes. In a dynamic and densely populated state like Lagos, where public senior secondary schools are integral to the educational system, understanding teachers' attitudes towards their profession is crucial. This paper explores the positive and negative attitude of teachers to work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Positive attitudes among teachers are often characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to student success (Shu, 2022). Teachers who exhibit these traits are typically more engaged in their roles, invest extra time and effort into their work, and exhibit a strong sense of responsibility towards their students. This can translate into a more dynamic and supportive classroom environment, where students are more likely to be motivated and achieve better educational outcomes. Positive attitudes are also associated with professional growth and job satisfaction, which can contribute to reduced turnover rates and a more stable teaching force.

Conversely, negative attitudes towards work among teachers can manifest disengagement, dissatisfaction, and a lack of motivation. (Otero-López, Castro, Villardefrancos, & Santiago, 2009). Teachers with negative attitudes may experience burnouts, exhibit lower levels of enthusiasm, and demonstrate reduced effectiveness in their teaching practices. This can adversely affect student engagement and academic performance, as well as contribute to higher levels of absenteeism and turnover.

The findings from this paper are valuable for educational administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders who are invested in improving the quality of education in Lagos State. By fostering a better understanding of teachers' perspectives, it is possible to create more supportive work environments that encourage the right attitude, dedication and excellence in teaching.

Literature Review

A teacher is someone who translates educational objectives specified in the National Policy on Education, into knowledge and skills and transfers them to students in the classroom. This means that the teacher is the pilot of the curriculum. Teachers occupy a very important

position in the educational system of any country because it is upon their number, quality, and devotion to study that the system depends. Teachers have many roles to play in achieving effective teaching and learning in our school. They are expected to be representatives of the community as well as academic specialists.

An attitude is a mindset that affects how a person thinks and acts. Attitude can influence a person's performance, either positively or negatively (Abdullah., & AL-Abrow, 2023). Attitude is associated with the mental readiness of teachers towards learners in a classroom setting in order to enhance the effective teaching-learning process. It is a tendency to react in a certain way to a designated class of stimuli. According to a scholar, an attitude is a mental and neural set of readiness, exerting a directive dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Zhovtianska, 2023). Thus, teachers' attitude to work refers to the overall disposition, mindset, and approach that teachers bring to their professional responsibilities and obligations within the teaching profession (Mabade, & Ngoben, 2024). This encompasses a broad range of aspects, including their enthusiasm for teaching, commitment to students' learning and development, approach to classroom management, communication with students and parents, willingness to adapt to educational innovations, and overall job satisfaction. It is important to note that teachers need to have a positive attitude towards work, a passion to inspire, and an urge to help. For instance, a negative attitude towards one's job may likely result in negative performance.

Similarly, attitude could also affect how well a teacher plans and prepares for his or her lessons. The attitude of a teacher, consciously or unconsciously, greatly affects work performance. It has been established that teachers' attitudes highly influence their interest in the work. Moreover, the personality traits of the teachers appear to be more powerful and influential than the course content or instructional strategies used in the classroom. A good classroom strategy requires full interest and support from teachers and learners (Killen, & O'Toole, 2023). *Effective teaching strategies 8e*. Cengage AU.. Teachers' attitude to work is very important and plays a significant role in helping students choose and seek their interests, set goals for themselves, and propel them in the right and proper directions of their lives. Hence, this study will consider positive and negative attitudes to work as indices to measure teachers' attitudes to work.

Positive attitude to work refers to an individual's optimistic, enthusiastic, motivation resilience and proactive approach towards their job or professional responsibilities (Ullah, Hameed, & Mahmood, 2024). It is a mindset or outlook characterised by optimism, enthusiasm, and a constructive approach to tasks and challenges in the workplace. It involves having a favorable mindset and displaying a constructive outlook while engaging in work-related tasks and interactions with colleagues, superiors, and clients. A positive teacher brings passion and optimism to the classroom, creating an engaging and supportive learning environment (Lu, 2021). They adapt to diverse student needs, offering encouragement and fostering confidence. Grounded in respect and empathy, positive teachers communicate effectively and continuously seek professional development. They approach challenges with a problem-solving mindset, infusing creativity into their teaching. Collaboration with colleagues and parents is a priority, contributing to a cohesive educational community. Ultimately, a positive teacher's attitude enhances motivation and love for learning and lays the groundwork for student success.

On the other hand, negative attitude to work refers to an individual's pessimistic, unenthusiastic, low motivation, resistance to Change and uncooperative approach towards their job or professional responsibilities (Masoka, 2021). It involves displaying a lack of interest, motivation, and engagement while performing work-related tasks. Teachers with negative attitudes towards work may struggle with ineffective communication, lacking the encouragement and support crucial for student confidence and motivation. Their reluctance to embrace continuous professional development and inflexibility in adapting teaching methods can contribute to stagnation in educational approaches. Negative teachers may engage in blame rather than seeking solutions, potentially isolating themselves from collaborative efforts within the educational community (Hargreaves, 1998). The impact of a negative attitude extends beyond personal job satisfaction, affecting the overall quality of the learning experience for students (Szromek, & Wolniak, 2020).

According to Saloviita, (2020) the attainment of school goals is dependent on teachers' attitudes towards work. A teacher has complete authority over the student within the stipulated time assigned for teaching and learning. Therefore, a teacher's attitude towards work explains his or her behavior. An attitude is informed by three components: feelings, thought, and behaviour. Teachers' attitude to work therefore enables them to disseminate

information, teach effectively, help identify differences among students, and determine their productivity (Assem, Nartey, Appiah,& Aidoo, 2023).

An observation of the work attitudes among public senior secondary school teachers in Lagos State indicates a troubling pattern that seems to lean towards the negative. This is observed in some teachers showing poor enthusiasm towards work, pessimistic outlook on their students' abilities, resistance in adopting new teaching methods, technologies, or educational reforms, preferring to stick with traditional approaches even if they are outdated or ineffective, begrudgingly participate in professional development activities, viewing them as unnecessary or unhelpful, display of inconsistent behaviour, being pleasant one moment and irritable the next, which can create confusion and anxiety among students.

Research Questions/Hypothesis

1. What is the status of teachers' attitude (positive and negative) to work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State?
2. H₀1: There will be no significant gender difference in teachers' attitude to work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Methodology

Population of the study comprised all the 311 public senior secondary school principals, 8,860 teachers in the 311 public senior secondary schools across the six educational districts in the 20 local government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria.

To determine an appropriate sample size for this research, a multi-stage sampling procedure was implemented to ensure equal representation of every local government area in the population and facilitate the generalisation of study findings.

A self-developed questionnaire was constructed as instrument for data collection for this study. The instrument, titled "Public Senior Secondary School Teachers' Attitude to Work in Lagos State Questionnaire" was carefully designed to obtain data.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Teachers

| Gender of Teachers | | |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
| Male | 1050 | 52.5 |
| Female | 951 | 47.5 |
| Total | 2001 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Work

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of teachers in this study indicating that out of a total of 2001 respondents, 1050 were male, representing 52.5% of the sampled respondents, while 951 were female, making up 47.5% of the total. This data suggests a slightly higher participation rate among male teachers compared to females. The distribution provides insight into the gender makeup of the surveyed population, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Research Question One

What is the status of teachers' attitude (positive and negative) to work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

Table 2: Teachers' Positive Attitude to Work in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

| S/N | Item: I; | AL | S | R | N | Mean | SD |
|-----|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------|-------|
| 1 | feel a strong sense of dedication and passion for teaching. | 836 (41.8%) | 216 (10.8%) | 700 (35.0%) | 249 (12.4%) | 2.82 | 1.111 |
| 2 | find joy in interacting with my students on a daily basis. | 699 (34.9%) | 348 (17.4%) | 593 (29.6%) | 361 (18.0%) | 2.69 | 1.128 |
| 3 | am motivated to continually seek innovative teaching methods. | 703 (35.1%) | 619 (30.9%) | 379 (18.9%) | 300 (15.0%) | 2.86 | 1.059 |
| 4 | feel a sense of accomplishment when my students succeed academically. | 1260 (63.0%) | 519 (25.9%) | 98 (4.9%) | 124 (6.2%) | 3.46 | 0.847 |
| 5 | find fulfilment in fostering a positive learning environment in my classroom. | 676 (33.8%) | 600 (30.0%) | 497 (24.8%) | 228 (11.4%) | 2.86 | 1.012 |

Weighted Mean = 2.94 Moderate

Source: Field Work

KEY: AL= Always (4), S= Sometimes (3), R= Rarely (2), N= Never (1), and SD = Standard Deviation

Threshold: Mean value of ≥ 3.00 (High), 2.5-2.99 (Moderate) and < 2.50 (Low)

Table 2 presents the analysis of teachers' attitudes to work (positive) in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State. Across the various items surveyed, a consistent theme of moderate positivity emerges. Firstly, teachers express a moderate level of dedication and passion for their profession, with a mean score of 2.82. While this suggests a commendable commitment to teaching, there is room for further cultivation of enthusiasm. Similarly, the finding that teachers derive joy from interacting with students daily with a mean score of 2.69, underscores the importance of teacher-student relationships, albeit indicating potential areas for improvement in fostering more fulfilling interactions. Moreover, the survey reveals a moderate inclination towards seeking innovative teaching methods (mean: 2.86), indicative of a willingness to adapt and evolve pedagogical approaches. This openness to innovation presents an opportunity for professional development initiatives that harness and channel teachers' creativity.

However, a notable highlight is the high sense of accomplishment reported by teachers when their students succeed academically (mean: 3.46). This signifies a strong intrinsic reward system within the teaching profession, wherein teachers derive fulfilment from their students' achievements. Such a high level of satisfaction bodes well for both teacher morale and student outcomes, emphasising the symbiotic relationship between teacher motivation and student success. Furthermore, findings indicate that teachers' fulfilment in fostering a positive learning environment is moderate with a mean score of 2.86.

Overall, the weighted mean of 2.94 indicates a generally positive environment for teaching and learning in Lagos State's public senior secondary schools. While there are areas for enhancement, such as fostering greater joy in student interactions and promoting more innovative teaching practices, the evident satisfaction derived from student success serves as a cornerstone for further nurturing teacher motivation and fostering a conducive learning environment. This nuanced understanding of teachers' attitudes can inform targeted interventions aimed at enhancing teacher well-being and ultimately improving educational outcomes.

Table 3: Teachers' Negative Attitude to Work in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

| S/N | Item: I; | AL | S | R | N | Mean | SD |
|-----|--|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------|-------|
| 6 | often feel overwhelmed by the workload and responsibilities associated with teaching. | 1291 (64.5%) | 241 (12.0%) | 211 (10.5%) | 258 (12.9%) | 3.28 | 1.090 |
| 7 | find it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance in my teaching profession. | 955 (47.7%) | 311 (15.5%) | 200 (10.0%) | 535 (26.7%) | 2.84 | 1.274 |
| 8 | find it difficult to cope with changes in curriculum or teaching methodologies. | 421 (21.0%) | 536 (26.8%) | 437 (21.8%) | 607 (30.3%) | 2.39 | 1.125 |
| 9 | sometimes question the effectiveness of the education system in which I work. | 886 (44.3%) | 614 (30.7%) | 359 (17.9%) | 142 (7.1%) | 3.12 | 0.944 |
| 10 | feel stressed by the pressure to meet unrealistic expectations in my teaching role. | 978 (48.9%) | 436 (21.8%) | 319 (15.9%) | 268 (13.4%) | 3.06 | 1.087 |

Weighted Mean = 2.94 Moderate

Source: Field Work

KEY: AL= Always (4), S= Sometimes (3), R= Rarely (2), N= Never (1), and SD = Standard Deviation

Threshold: Mean value of ≥ 3.00 (High), 2.5-2.99 (Moderate) and < 2.50 (Low)

Table 3 presents the analysis of teachers' attitudes to work (negative) in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State. Across various surveyed aspects, a complex picture emerges, highlighting both moderate and high levels of negative sentiment. Primarily, teachers express a notable sense of feeling overwhelmed by their workload and responsibilities (mean: 3.28), indicating a significant burden that impacts their daily professional lives. This sentiment is compounded by the finding that a substantial proportion of teachers struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance (mean: 2.84), emphasising the need for support mechanisms to address this pervasive issue.

Furthermore, while coping with changes in curriculum or teaching methodologies appears to be a less pronounced concern (mean: 2.39), indicating a relatively lower level of difficulty, other aspects such as occasional questioning of the effectiveness of the education system (mean: 3.12) and feeling stressed by unrealistic expectations (mean: 3.06) demonstrate heightened levels of dissatisfaction and strain among teachers.

The weighted mean of 2.94 for all items collectively falls within the moderate range, highlighting the nuanced nature of negative attitudes prevalent among teachers. These findings suggest a pressing need for targeted interventions to alleviate workload pressures, enhance support structures for maintaining work-life balance, and address systemic challenges within the education system.

Table 4: Level of Public Senior Secondary School Teachers' Attitude to Work (Positive and Negative) in Lagos State

| Items | Always (%) | Sometimes (%) | Rarely (%) | Never (%) | Mean |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------|
| Teachers' Positive Attitude to Work | 834.8 (41.7%) | 460.4 (23.0%) | 453.4 (22.7%) | 252.4 (12.6%) | 2.94 |
| Teachers' Negative Attitude to Work | 906.2 (45.3%) | 427.6 (21.4%) | 305.2 (15.3%) | 362 (18.1%) | 2.94 |

Overall Weighted Mean= 2.94 Moderate

Source: Field Work

KEY: AL= Always (4), S= Sometimes (3), R= Rarely (2), N= Never (1), and SD = Standard Deviation

Threshold: Mean value of ≥ 3.00 (High), 2.5-2.99 (Moderate) and < 2.50 (Low)

Table 4 presents the combined levels of positive and negative attitudes towards work among public senior secondary school teachers in Lagos State. For positive attitudes towards work, the majority of teachers reported experiencing positive sentiments either "always" or "sometimes," with 41.7% indicating that they always feel positively about their work and an additional 23.0% reporting feeling positive sometimes. Conversely, 22.7% reported rarely feeling positively, and 12.6% reported never feeling positive about their work. The overall mean score for positive attitudes towards work is 2.94, falling within the moderate range. Similarly, for negative attitudes towards work, a significant portion of teachers reported experiencing negative sentiments, with 45.3% indicating that they always feel negative about their work and 21.4% reporting feeling negative sometimes.

A smaller percentage reported rarely (15.3%) or never (18.1%) feeling negative about their work. The overall mean score for negative attitudes towards work is also 2.94, indicating a moderate level of negativity. The overall weighted mean of 2.94 for both positive and negative attitudes towards work suggests a balanced perspective among teachers, with neither overwhelmingly positive nor overwhelmingly negative sentiments prevailing. This moderate stance underscores the nuanced nature of teachers' experiences in the educational landscape of Lagos State's public senior secondary schools. It indicates areas of strength and satisfaction, as well as challenges and areas for improvement, highlighting the importance of targeted interventions to address specific concerns and enhance overall teacher well-being and effectiveness.

Content Analysis on the Response of Principals Interview

During interviews conducted with principals regarding the status of their teachers' attitudes towards work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, several themes emerged, reflecting the principals' perceptions of their teachers' experiences and behaviours in their various schools. Most of the principals acknowledged that their teachers exhibit a strong sense of dedication and passion for teaching, recognising the intrinsic motivation and commitment necessary for creating a positive learning environment. They noted that their teachers consistently demonstrate enthusiasm and passion for their profession, actively engaging with their students and fostering meaningful connections in the classroom. Principals emphasised that their teachers find joy in interacting with students on a daily basis, highlighting the importance of positive teacher-student relationships in promoting engagement and academic success. They observed that their teachers go above and beyond to create opportunities for meaningful interactions within and beyond the classroom, contributing to a supportive and inclusive school culture where both teachers and students feel valued and connected.

Moreover, principals reported that their teachers are motivated to continually seek innovative teaching methods, demonstrating a commitment to enhancing their pedagogical practices. They noted that their teachers are proactive in exploring new methodologies and technologies to improve student learning outcomes, indicating a strong dedication to professional growth and development. However, principals also acknowledged the challenges faced by their teachers, including the significant workload and responsibilities associated

with their profession. They noted that their teachers sometimes feel overwhelmed by the demands of their roles and struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Despite these challenges, principals expressed confidence in their teachers' resilience and dedication, highlighting their commitment to supporting teachers and alleviating stressors.

Furthermore, principals addressed their teachers' concerns regarding the effectiveness of the education system and the pressure to meet unrealistic expectations. They recognised that their teachers may question certain aspects of the educational system and feel stressed by external pressures. However, principals emphasised that their teachers consistently demonstrate a positive attitude towards their work, showing dedication, resilience, and a commitment to their profession. In summary, principals' reports during the interviews suggest that teachers in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State exhibit positive attitudes towards work. Despite facing challenges, their teachers demonstrate dedication, passion, and a commitment to continuous improvement in their profession. This positive perception underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment that prioritises teacher well-being and promotes positive attitudes towards work.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀1: There will be no significant gender difference in teachers' attitude to work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Table 5: One-Sample Statistics on Significant Gender Difference in Teachers' Attitude to Work in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

| One-Sample Statistics | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|----------------|-----------|-------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Mean | Error |
| Male Teachers' Attitude to Work | 1050 | 3.80 | .403 | .012 | |
| Female Teachers' Attitude to Work | 951 | 3.71 | .454 | .015 | |

One-Sample Test

| | | Test Value = 0 | | Sig. (2- tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|------|---------------------|--------------------|--|-------|
| | | t | df | | | Lower | Upper |
| Male Teachers' | Attitude to Work | 305.221 | 1049 | .000 | 3.796 | 3.77 | 3.82 |
| Female Teachers' | Attitude to Work | 252.275 | 950 | .000 | 3.711 | 3.68 | 3.74 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 provides insightful statistics and tests examining the gender disparity in teachers' attitude towards work in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State. In the data presented, male teachers, constituting a sample size of 1050, exhibit an average attitude to work score of 3.80, with a standard deviation of 0.403. Conversely, female teachers, represented by a sample size of 951, have a slightly lower mean attitude to work score of 3.71, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.454. These figures offer a comparative snapshot of the attitudes towards work between male and female teachers in the sampled schools.

Upon conducting one-sample tests against a theoretical mean of 0, it becomes evident that both male and female teachers display significantly positive attitudes towards work, as indicated by the highly significant p-values of .000 for both groups. For male teachers, the calculated t-value of 305.221 with 1049 degrees of freedom reveals a mean difference of 3.796, suggesting that their observed attitude to work score exceeds the test value by a considerable margin. Similarly, female teachers exhibit a notable mean difference of 3.711, with a calculated t-value of 252.275 and 950 degrees of freedom.

Furthermore, the 95% confidence intervals of the mean differences provide additional context, showing that both male and female teachers' attitude to work scores comfortably exceed the theoretical mean of 0, with minimal overlap between the confidence intervals. This reinforces the conclusion that teachers of both genders demonstrate positive attitudes towards work within the sampled schools.

However, despite the overall positivity in attitudes towards work among teachers, the analysis reveals a statistically significant gender difference. Male teachers, on average, report

slightly higher attitudes towards work compared to their female counterparts. This nuanced insight underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in understanding the professional experiences and perceptions of teachers within educational settings.

Recommendations

1. Educational Stakeholders should implement a comprehensive teacher well-being programme that includes regular mental health check-ins, stress management workshops, and peer support networks to address both positive and negative attitudes among teachers, fostering a healthier and more resilient teaching community.
2. The government should provide competitive salaries, recognise teachers' achievements, and improve work conditions in order to enhance job satisfaction and positive attitudes among the teachers.
3. There should be regular training and professional development opportunities which can help teachers stay motivated and competent in their roles.
4. Implementation of gender-sensitive professional development programmes and mentorship initiatives that address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by male and female teachers, promoting equity in career advancement, job satisfaction, and work-life balance to foster a more inclusive teaching environment should be encouraged.

Conclusion

Through a comprehensive exploration of public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, this research sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics at play within the teaching community. At the heart of this investigation lies an examination of the attitudes exhibited by teachers, revealing a nuanced spectrum of both positive and negative sentiments. Despite challenges, a prevailing ethos of dedication and resilience underscores the commitment demonstrated by teachers, as observed by principals. However, this dedication exists alongside reported negative attitudes, indicating a complex landscape ripe for improvement.

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