



SELF-EFFICACY AS A KEY REQUIREMENT FOR TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Teacher job commitment is essential for sustaining quality teaching and improving students' outcomes, yet many teachers in Nigeria face conditions that weaken dedication to the profession, which includes heavy workloads, poor remuneration, limited resources, and weak administrative support. This paper aimed to examine teachers' self-efficacy as a key requirement for strengthening job commitment in the Nigerian education system. Guided by Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the paper explains how teachers' beliefs about their capability to teach effectively in order to influence persistence, classroom management, motivation, professional identity, and willingness to go beyond minimum job expectations. The paper highlights evidence linking high self-efficacy with greater job satisfaction, resilience, reduced burnout, improved performance, and stronger commitment, while low self-efficacy is associated with disengagement and attrition. The paper also identifies systemic barriers that undermine self-efficacy and commitment in Nigeria, such as inadequate infrastructure, unsafe school environments, inconsistent professional development, policy instability, and psychosocial stress. Finally, it proposes practical strategies for improving teacher self-efficacy and commitment, including continuous training, mentoring, supportive school leadership, stress-reduction initiatives, collaborative school culture, fair administrative practices, and improved working conditions. Conclusively, strengthening teacher self-efficacy is presented as a realistic pathway for enhancing commitment and advancing educational outcomes in Nigeria.

Keywords: Teachers, Job Commitment, Self-efficacy, Bandura's Self-efficacy Theory, Profession

Introduction

Teaching is not merely a professional obligation; it represents a sustained commitment that fundamentally shapes the quality of learning experiences within schools. The degree to which teachers demonstrate punctuality, dedication, and active engagement in their professional duties reflects their level of job commitment, with important implications for students' academic achievement and social development. In educational systems increasingly characterised by heightened expectations, limited resources, and systemic constraints, understanding why some teachers remain highly committed while others become disengaged has become a critical concern for policymakers, administrators, and educational stakeholders. Teacher job commitment is commonly described as emotional attachment to the profession, a willingness to invest effort



beyond minimum role expectations, and loyalty to institutional goals (Senimetu & Adegoke, 2021). In educational research, it is further conceptualised as a multidimensional construct involving teachers' emotional attachment to teaching and students, allegiance to school goals, and dedication to the teaching profession (Senimetu & Adegoke, 2021). However, recent years have witnessed increasing behaviours and attitudes that suggest a decline in teachers' job commitment, pointing to deeper systemic challenges within the profession.

Some teachers, for example, admit to leaving immediately after the school bell and avoiding extra-curricular responsibilities or additional academic support for students (Akinwale & Okotoni, 2019). Others report remaining in teaching largely out of necessity rather than professional fulfilment (Akinwale & Okotoni, 2019). Social media narratives further reinforce these concerns, with teachers describing excessive workloads, inadequate remuneration, and weak administrative support (Nnah & George, 2025). Reports of overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional resources, and escalating behavioural challenges contribute to frustration, helplessness, and resentment, shifting perceptions of teaching from a calling to a means of survival (Nnah & George, 2025). Therefore, understanding the factors that shape teachers' job commitment is of utmost importance. Commitment is continuously influenced by leadership effectiveness, workplace climate, interpersonal relationships, and individual psychological capacities. Among these influences, teachers' self-efficacy consistently emerges as a key determinant of how teachers interpret their roles, respond to work demands, and sustain dedication to professional responsibilities.

According to Hussain et al. (2022), teachers' self-efficacy is defined as their belief in their capacity to organise, execute, and sustain the actions required to achieve desired educational outcomes, including effective classroom management and the resolution of instructional challenges. In a similar vein, Sheridan et al. (2025) and Bernadian and Mu'arifah (2024) conceptualise teachers' self-efficacy as educators' confidence in their professional competence, particularly in challenging situations, and emphasise its significant influence on how teachers perceive and enact their professional responsibilities. This paper focuses on self-efficacy as a key requirement for teachers' job commitment in Nigeria.

Understanding Teachers Job Commitment

Mokhtar et al. (2023) describe job commitment in teachers as a multifaceted concept that encompasses the emotional, intellectual, and professional dedication that teachers invest in their work. It goes beyond the basic act of teaching, encapsulating a deep sense of responsibility and passion for fostering student development and contributing to the success of the educational institution. Türk and Korkmaz (2022) opine that a highly committed teacher is not only dedicated to delivering lessons but also to making a positive impact on students' lives. They further noted that such commitment manifests in teachers' willingness to go the extra mile, including spending additional time preparing lessons, supporting struggling students, and engaging in professional development. The importance of job commitment in teaching cannot be overstated. Werang et al. (2024) assert that job commitment directly influences the quality of education provided and the broader success of the educational system. In a similar vein, Yıldız (2024) observed that committed teachers are more effective because they are deeply invested in their students' outcomes rather than merely fulfilling basic job requirements. This emotional attachment drives them to develop innovative and engaging teaching strategies that foster a love of learning. Türk and Korkmaz (2022) further emphasize that such teachers create supportive classroom environments where students feel valued, motivated, and encouraged to succeed, ultimately contributing to improved academic performance and a positive school culture.

Clarifying Teachers Self-efficacy

Hussain et al. (2022) described teachers' self-efficacy as a teacher's belief in their ability to influence student outcomes, particularly in terms of teaching and learning. It is a critical psychological concept that significantly impacts a teacher's approach to their work, how they handle challenges, and their persistence



in the face of adversity. This belief is rooted in Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is not a measure of one's skills or knowledge but rather a belief in one's capacity to perform specific tasks (Namono et al., 2025). For teachers, it relates to their confidence in their ability to facilitate student learning, manage classrooms effectively, and overcome the challenges they encounter in their professional environment.

Zheng et al. (2024) stated that teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to embrace innovative teaching strategies, persevere in the face of difficulties, and stay motivated to improve their professional skills. In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy may struggle with classroom management, experience higher stress levels, and may be more inclined to abandon efforts that seem difficult or unproductive (Zheng et al., 2024). Self-efficacy is not a fixed trait; it fluctuates based on personal experiences, feedback, and the teaching environment, meaning it can change over time (Narayanan et al., 2023). Also, Oluwalola and Ogbudinkpa (2022), agreed that teachers' self-efficacy directly affects their students' academic performance. High self-efficacy encourages teachers to set high expectations, create challenging yet achievable learning goals, and provide timely feedback, all of which enhance student motivation and academic success. Teachers who feel confident in their ability to teach are more likely to build positive relationships with students, offer encouragement, and create an environment where students are motivated to reach their full potential.

Theoretical Framework: Self-efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, explains that people's behaviour is strongly influenced by their belief in their ability to organise and carry out the actions required to achieve specific goals (Bhati & Sethy, 2022). In other words, self-efficacy is the confidence an individual has that "I can do this task successfully." Bandura argues that this belief affects how people think, feel, and act: it shapes the goals they set, the effort they invest, how long they persist when difficulties arise, and how quickly they recover after failure (Bhati & Sethy, 2022). Bhati and Sethy, (2022), also explains that self-efficacy is built from four main sources such as mastery experiences (past successes), vicarious experiences (learning by observing others), social persuasion (encouragement and feedback), and physiological or emotional states (stress, anxiety, fatigue, or confidence).

Using this lens, the paper positions teachers' job commitment in Nigeria as an outcome that can be strengthened when teachers believe they are capable of performing effectively in their roles. Teachers with strong self-efficacy are more likely to prepare thoroughly, manage classrooms confidently, try new strategies, persist with struggling learners, and remain engaged even when conditions are challenging. This is because they expect their effort to lead to positive results, they tend to show higher dedication, consistency, and intention to stay in the profession, which are key expressions of job commitment. On the other hand, teachers with low self-efficacy may interpret setbacks as proof they cannot cope, leading to reduced effort, emotional strain, withdrawal, and weaker commitment.

The theory is also useful for explaining how job commitment can be improved within the Nigerian education context. If self-efficacy grows through successful teaching experiences, mentoring and modelling, supportive leadership feedback, and reduced stress, then policies and school practices that strengthen these sources should raise teachers' efficacy beliefs and, in turn, deepen their commitment. In this way, self-efficacy theory serves as a clear framework for linking teachers' confidence in their professional capability to sustained dedication and long-term commitment to teaching in Nigeria.

Self-Efficacy as a Key Requirement for Teachers' Job Commitment in Nigeria

In the Nigerian educational system, teachers often work in environments characterized by resource shortages, large class sizes, low remuneration, and limited professional support. Within these challenging contexts, self-efficacy emerges as a fundamental requirement that sustains motivation, enhances resilience, and fosters commitment to the teaching profession. Teachers with high self-efficacy display stronger belief



in their ability to influence student learning and overcome obstacles inherent in their work. This confidence translates into greater motivation and emotional investment in their roles. Udemba (2021) demonstrated that self-efficacy significantly correlates with job satisfaction and performance, both of which are vital components of job commitment. Teachers who perceive themselves as competent are more likely to experience satisfaction from their work, remain loyal to their schools, and invest more effort in achieving institutional goals. This finding aligns with the observation that self-efficacy not only enhances teachers' instructional practices but also strengthens their psychological attachment to their profession (Udemba, 2021).

Self-efficacy also plays a vital role in promoting resilience and perseverance among Nigerian teachers. Ajao et al. (2025) stated that teachers with higher self-efficacy experience lower levels of job burnout and are better equipped to cope with work-related stress. In Nigeria, where teaching conditions can be discouraging, self-efficacious teachers interpret difficulties as challenges to overcome rather than threats to avoid. This perspective fosters persistence in task execution and a proactive attitude toward problem-solving, both of which are critical to sustaining job commitment. Conversely, teachers with low self-efficacy tend to experience feelings of helplessness, which can lead to disengagement and attrition from the profession. Furthermore, self-efficacy enhances teachers' sense of professional identity and moral purpose. Teachers who believe in their effectiveness view teaching as a meaningful and impactful profession. Akinwale and Okotoni (2019), showed that high levels of teacher commitment were found to be associated with a positive sense of purpose and internal motivation, both of which are rooted in self-efficacy. Such teachers are more likely to engage actively in school development initiatives, mentor students, and contribute to a supportive learning environment. Self-efficacy, therefore, strengthens the emotional attachment and identification with one's job and organization.

Literature also suggests that self-efficacy is a catalyst for professional growth and adaptability. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more inclined to participate in professional development programs and adopt innovative teaching methods. For example, Animasaun et al. (2025) found that teacher training enhances self-efficacy, which in turn improves job performance and commitment. In the Nigerian educational system, where periodic training is often inconsistent, teachers who maintain a strong sense of efficacy tend to take personal responsibility for their own professional development, ensuring continuous improvement in instructional practices. This proactive attitude reinforces long-term dedication to the teaching profession. Additionally, self-efficacy serves as a psychological buffer against work-related stressors that typically undermine commitment. Letam (2023), showed that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between work stress and job burnout, thereby protecting teachers from the demotivating effects of stress. This finding highlights that teachers who believe in their ability to manage classroom challenges and institutional pressures maintain higher morale and engagement levels. Consequently, they are more likely to remain committed to their teaching duties and contribute positively to educational outcomes.

Systemic Barriers to Teacher Self-Efficacy and Job Commitment in Nigeria

In Nigeria, teacher self-efficacy and job commitment are crucial determinants of educational effectiveness and national development. However, these constructs are often undermined by systemic barriers rooted in structural, institutional, and socio-economic deficiencies within the education system. These barriers collectively create an environment where teachers struggle to sustain belief in their professional capacity and to remain fully committed to their roles. A major systemic barrier is the inadequate provision and management of school facilities. The availability and maintenance of educational infrastructure significantly influence teachers' morale and confidence. Poorly equipped classrooms, dilapidated buildings, and insufficient teaching materials create daily frustrations that erode teachers' sense of professional efficacy. Effective management of school facilities by principals significantly correlates with teachers' job commitment, highlighting that inadequate infrastructure undermines teachers' confidence and motivation (Uchenna & Egolom, 2025). When teachers must navigate unsafe or poorly maintained environments, their capacity to deliver quality instruction and feel professionally effective diminishes.



School safety concerns also pose significant barriers to teacher self-efficacy and commitment. Physical insecurity, inadequate supervision, and the threat of violence in schools have been found to discourage teachers and diminish their emotional attachment to their jobs. According to Adebayo and Ileuma (2023), issues such as overcrowding, poor security infrastructure, and lack of psychosocial support contribute to teacher anxiety and job dissatisfaction. A school environment that feels unsafe undermines teachers' ability to maintain classroom control and personal confidence which is key elements of self-efficacy, thereby reducing their long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Another critical barrier lies in the lack of effective professional development programs. Teachers often report limited opportunities for in-service training, mentorship, or continuous professional growth. The absence of consistent and well-structured teacher development initiatives weakens instructional competence and reduces teachers' confidence in their teaching abilities (Prince, 2020). Inadequate exposure to new pedagogical techniques and classroom management strategies prevents teachers from adapting to curriculum reforms and student diversity. Consequently, teachers' self-efficacy declines as they feel ill-equipped to meet professional demands.

Moreover, educational policy instability and political interference exacerbate systemic barriers. Frequent changes in curriculum policies without adequate teacher consultation or training create uncertainty and professional frustration. Teachers find themselves compelled to implement policies they neither understand nor support, which reduces their confidence in their own competence and the system at large (Aina & Olanipekun, 2015). Political appointments in educational leadership positions, often based on patronage rather than competence, further weaken institutional trust and teachers' belief in fair reward systems, directly affecting job commitment. Lastly, psychosocial stressors such as poor work-life balance and limited emotional support amplify systemic barriers. High levels of occupational stress exacerbated by heavy workloads, inadequate resources, and poor student behavior management reduce teachers' confidence and increase burnout rates (Ajao et al., 2025). Without institutional mechanisms to address emotional well-being, teachers experience chronic fatigue and loss of purpose, diminishing both self-efficacy and professional dedication.

Strategies for Strengthening Teacher Self-Efficacy and Job Commitment in Nigeria

Strengthening teacher self-efficacy and job commitment in Nigeria requires systemic, institutional, and psychological strategies that address both internal motivation and external work conditions. In the Nigerian educational landscape, where teachers often contend with inadequate resources, unstable policies, and limited professional support, deliberate strategies to boost confidence, motivation, and professional satisfaction are essential for educational progress and teacher retention. A key strategy involves enhancing teacher professional development through continuous in-service training. Professional growth opportunities such as workshops, seminars, mentorship, and peer collaboration have been found to increase teachers' confidence and competence, thereby strengthening self-efficacy and job commitment. Nwaorgu and Nkedishu (2023) found that in-service courses, including mentorship programs and online training, significantly enhanced teachers' job commitment and instructional effectiveness. These programmes provide teachers with opportunities for reflective practice, collaboration, and mastery of new skills, which in turn reinforce their belief in their teaching ability, a core aspect of self-efficacy. Regular, well-structured training programs should therefore be institutionalized within the Nigerian education system to maintain teacher competence and commitment.

Transformational leadership and supportive organizational climates are also vital for enhancing teacher self-efficacy and job commitment. Transformational school leaders inspire teachers by fostering trust, recognizing effort, and encouraging innovation. Setyaningsih and Sunaryo (2021), have shown that transformational leadership, coupled with self-efficacy and job satisfaction, strongly predicts teacher commitment. Leaders who mentor teachers, involve them in decision-making, and provide constructive feedback contribute to a supportive climate that enhances teachers' sense of agency and dedication to their profession. In Nigeria, where bureaucratic school leadership often dampens teacher morale, training principals in transformational and participatory leadership styles can serve as a crucial reform. Reducing



occupational stress and promoting emotional well-being also contribute significantly to strengthening self-efficacy and commitment. Nigerian teachers often face stressors such as large class sizes, workload pressure, and limited institutional support, all of which diminish efficacy and productivity. Teachers cope with occupational stress through social support, exercise, and relaxation; however, systemic efforts such as counseling services, workload balancing, and supportive supervision are needed to institutionalize these coping mechanisms (Subair et al., 2021). Implementing stress management and wellness programs within schools can help teachers maintain mental resilience and a strong sense of professional efficacy.

Furthermore, cultivating an empowering school culture and teamwork can foster sustained job commitment. Organizational culture characterized by collaboration, trust, and mutual respect has been shown to positively influence teacher motivation and dedication. Strengthening self-efficacy alongside organizational culture, work motivation, and job satisfaction leads to higher professional commitment among teachers (Permana et al., 2024). Nigerian schools can emulate this by creating collegial environments that encourage shared problem-solving and recognition of teacher contributions. Such environments not only reinforce self-efficacy but also enhance commitment. Administrative strategies also play a fundamental role in promoting teacher commitment. Effective school management practices such as fair performance appraisals, teacher participation in decision-making, open communication, and recognition of excellence have been identified as key strategies for increasing teacher dedication. Onafowo et al., (2023) emphasized that collaborative administrative practices and participatory leadership significantly boost teacher morale and loyalty. Principals who encourage professional dialogue and shared governance empower teachers, fostering both confidence and organizational identification.

Moreover, psychological empowerment through self-belief and motivation enhancement is central to sustaining teacher efficacy and commitment. Psychological capital, including self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience, can be developed through mentorship, recognition, and growth opportunities. Kurniawan et al., (2024) have shown that strengthening self-efficacy and job satisfaction leads to increased commitment. In Nigeria, where teachers often face discouragement, institutions should deliberately build teachers' psychological resources through motivational programs, peer support networks, and empowerment workshops.

Conclusion

Teachers' job commitment is vital to educational quality in Nigeria, but it is increasingly weakened by heavy workloads, limited resources, poor support systems, and policy instability. This paper shows that teachers' self-efficacy is a key factor that sustains motivation, resilience, and dedication despite difficult conditions. Guided by Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the discussion highlights that teachers with strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to persist, innovate, manage stress, and remain emotionally attached to the profession. Therefore, improving teacher commitment in Nigeria requires intentional efforts to strengthen self-efficacy through consistent professional development, supportive and participatory leadership, improved working conditions, and teacher well-being supports.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are proposed to enhance teachers' job commitment:

1. Make regular, practical in-service training mandatory (lesson planning, classroom management, assessment, inclusive education, ICT), with follow-up coaching, not one-off workshops.
2. Pair new teachers with experienced ones, and let teachers observe each other's classes and share what works.
3. Provide basic teaching materials, functional classrooms, and manageable class sizes where possible; prioritize low-cost, high-impact inputs (textbooks, lesson guides, teaching aids).
4. Equip school leaders to give constructive feedback, recognize effort, involve teachers in decisions, and create a positive school climate.



5. Introduce workload balancing, realistic timetables, counselling/referral support, and wellness programs; protect time for planning and collaboration.
6. Improve supervision, school security measures, and psychosocial support systems to reduce anxiety and strengthen teachers' sense of control.

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