



THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN ENHANCEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHERS' COMMITMENT IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

OBEHI LUCIA OSEIGA

Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Lead City University,
Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
stlucia4real@gmail.com
08068492399

SENIMETU ILEUMA

Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Lead City University,
Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
08038047958

Abstract

Teachers' commitment remains a central determinant of organisational effectiveness, particularly within the educational sector, where teachers' dedication directly influences instructional quality and student outcomes. In Nigerian secondary schools, concerns regarding declining teacher commitment, manifested in irregular attendance, minimal instructional innovation, weak classroom management, and limited collaboration have become increasingly pronounced. This paper argues that strengthening schools internally through improved institutional structures and healthier interpersonal relationships offers the most sustainable pathway to enhancing science teachers' job commitment in senior secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis. Drawing on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Organisational Support Theory, the paper argues that institutional factors, such as professional development opportunities and organisational policies, provide the structural foundation necessary to prevent dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, interpersonal relationships, particularly those with colleagues and through collaboration, serve as intrinsic motivators that deepen teachers' emotional attachment to their schools. A synthesis of empirical studies consistently demonstrates significant positive relationships between professional development, organisational climate, collegiality, collaboration, and teacher commitment. This paper concludes that meaningful reform in science education must move beyond external interventions and instead prioritise strengthening institutional and relational dynamics within schools. Sustainable improvement in teacher punctuality and proactiveness requires environments characterised by fairness, support, shared responsibility, and professional growth.

Keywords: Commitment, Institutional Factors, Interpersonal Factor, Professional Development, Organisational Support

Introduction

Science education occupies a strategic position in national development. In Nigeria, subjects such as Biology, Chemistry, and Physics serve as foundational disciplines for technological innovation, industrial advancement, healthcare development, and scientific research. However, the effectiveness of science education depends significantly on the commitment of science teachers. No curriculum reform, laboratory investment, or policy innovation can yield meaningful results without teachers who are punctual, proactive, and emotionally invested in their professional responsibilities (Emiru & Berhanu, 2025). Teacher job commitment reflects the willingness of teachers to devote sustained effort toward lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment practices, and participation in school-wide academic initiatives (Enwezor & Odimegwu, 2025). Yet in many Nigerian secondary schools, teacher commitment appears increasingly fragile. Observable patterns such as late



arrival, early departure, incomplete lesson plans, perfunctory teaching, minimal collaboration, and disengagement from extracurricular activities indicate a weakening psychological bond between teachers and their institutions (Usman et al., 2024).

According to Nwanneka et al., (2024), despite ongoing government interventions aimed at improving science education in Nigeria, observable patterns suggest that science teachers' job commitment in senior secondary schools within Ibadan Metropolis remains suboptimal. Reports indicate irregular class attendance, inadequate preparation for practical sessions, limited adoption of innovative instructional strategies, and reduced participation in co-curricular science programmes. The consequences of declining job commitment are profound. Students experience instructional gaps, diminished motivation, inconsistent feedback, and weakened classroom discipline. Over time, these effects contribute to poor academic performance, increased teacher turnover, and erosion of public trust in the educational system. These realities underscore the urgent need to identify the internal mechanisms capable of strengthening teachers' commitment. Sariakin et al. (2025) noted that science teachers often operate in environments characterised by inadequate laboratory resources, inconsistent administrative practices, heavy workloads, and limited professional development opportunities. While remuneration and macroeconomic conditions influence teacher morale, internal school-level dynamics may exert a more immediate and sustained impact on daily work behaviors such as punctuality and proactiveness.

Existing literature has examined motivational factors, organisational culture, professional development, and interpersonal communication in various contexts. However, there remains a need to conceptualise their influences within an argument that prioritises internal institutional and relational strengthening as the core pathway to enhancing science teachers' job commitment in Ibadan. This paper therefore argues that meaningful improvement in science teachers' job commitment requires strengthening institutional frameworks and fostering positive interpersonal relationships within schools.

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a dual explanation of job commitment. Hygiene factors (e.g., policies, working conditions, administrative practices) prevent dissatisfaction but do not inherently motivate. Motivator factors (e.g., recognition, growth, collaboration) generate intrinsic satisfaction and deeper commitment (Peramatzis & Galanakis, 2022). Institutional factors such as professional development and organisational policies function primarily as hygiene factors. Their absence generates dissatisfaction, while their presence stabilises the work environment. Conversely, colleague relations and collaboration align with motivator factors. They foster belongingness, shared achievement, and professional growth, thereby stimulating intrinsic commitment (Mahmood & Tajuddin, 2024). Thus, sustained teacher job commitment emerges from the combination of structural adequacy and relational enrichment

Organisational Support Theory

Organisational Support Theory (OST) posits that employees reciprocate perceived institutional support with increased commitment (Kravariti et al., 2023). When teachers perceive fairness in policies, access to development opportunities, and a supportive relational climate, they feel valued and respond with greater dedication. Punctuality and proactiveness become behavioral reciprocations of perceived support (Paillé et al., 2023). Conversely, perceived neglect leads to withdrawal behaviours.

Teachers' Commitment

Enwezor and Odimegwu (2025) opined that teacher job commitment refers to the degree of dedication, enthusiasm, and responsibility that teachers demonstrate toward their professional duties. It reflects not merely an emotional attachment to the profession but a consistent behavioural expression of loyalty and accountability within the school environment. This commitment is evident in punctuality, thorough instructional preparation, proactive engagement, active participation in collaborative activities, and a sustained focus on student learning outcomes. In practical terms, job commitment in this study is



operationalised through observable behaviours that signal deeper psychological attachment to the school and its goals. Muhammad, Razak and Zulkifli (2024) expressed that punctuality is reflected in the consistent adherence to instructional schedules, timely attendance at classes and meetings, and faithful execution of school-related responsibilities. It represents a teacher's respect for institutional structures and commitment to structured learning processes. Proactiveness, on the other hand, captures initiative-taking behaviour, teachers' ability to anticipate instructional challenges, seek solutions before problems escalate, adopt innovative strategies, and actively participate in school improvement efforts. Together, punctuality and proactiveness serve as measurable indicators of a teacher's internal dedication, revealing how psychological commitment translates into concrete professional actions within the school setting.

Teachers' commitment refers to the deep psychological, emotional, and behavioural attachment that an individual develops toward their job and the responsibilities that come with it (Ebo & Oredein, 2021). It goes beyond merely showing up to complete assigned duties; rather, it reflects how much an employee internalises, values, and identifies with their work (Okemakinde, 2025). A committed teacher views their job as personally meaningful and worthy of sustained effort, which in turn influences the quality, consistency, and dedication they bring to their daily tasks. Usman et al., (2024) opined that teacher's commitment manifests in various ways, including punctuality, reliability, enthusiasm, willingness to take initiative, and the desire to contribute positively to job outcomes. When teachers are committed to their jobs, they do not perform tasks solely because they are obligated to do so, but because they genuinely care about achieving excellence and meeting expectations. Over time, this sense of commitment becomes a stable trait that guides how employees engage with their tasks, interact with colleagues, and interpret the importance of their role within the organisation. This multidimensional nature means that teachers' commitment develops through the interaction of internal motivation and external workplace conditions such as supportive leadership, recognition, opportunities for growth, and a healthy work environment. Employees who feel respected, appreciated, and empowered are more likely to cultivate strong commitment, which in turn enhances their performance and overall productivity (Adebanjo & Aiyede, 2024). Furthermore, teachers' commitment plays a crucial role in shaping work behaviour, influencing not only individual output but also wider organisational outcomes. Teachers who are committed demonstrate responsibility, ethical conduct, and consistency in meeting deadlines and organisational standards. Their behaviour positively influences workplace morale, encourages collaboration, and contributes to the overall success and stability of the organisation.

Institutional Factors

Institutional factors encompass the structural, policy, and administrative elements that shape teachers' work environments, influencing the conditions under which they can maintain sustained professional commitment (Khan et al., 2024). In this paper, these factors are conceptualised through professional development opportunities and organisational policies, which together create the structural framework that can either facilitate or constrain teachers' ability to remain dedicated, proactive, and engaged in their instructional and school-wide responsibilities.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships in schools encompass the quality of social and professional interactions among staff, including the nature of colleague relations and the extent of collaboration. These elements shape teachers' emotional attachment to their workplace, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen their professional identity, ultimately influencing how they engage with their duties and contribute to the school community (Kiuru et al., 2020).

Professional Development as a Structural Foundation for Teachers' Commitment

Empirical evidence strongly supports the link between professional development and job commitment. Studies in Anambra State demonstrate significant positive relationships between professional development and teachers' job commitment. Regression analyses revealed that professional development and appraisal practices jointly accounted for 64.8% of variance in teacher commitment. Similarly, career advancement opportunities significantly influence job commitment. International



research also shows strong predictive relationships between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and willingness to engage in professional development (Nkechi et al., 2024; Ughamadu et al., 2025; Eziuzo & Ezeanya, 2024). These findings collectively indicate that professional development is not peripheral; it is foundational. When teachers perceive growth pathways, mentorship opportunities, and skill enhancement structures, they develop stronger professional identity and attachment. Therefore, schools in Ibadan must institutionalise structured, consistent, and context-relevant professional development frameworks to stabilise and strengthen science teachers' commitment.

Organisational Policies and Commitment Stability

Research consistently demonstrates that organisational culture and norms are closely linked to teacher commitment, with clan and adhocracy cultures emerging as significant predictors of commitment levels. Elements such as teacher recognition and involvement in decision-making further strengthen this relationship, while organisational climate overall plays a crucial role in shaping job commitment. Practices that convey fairness such as transparent promotion processes, participatory decision-making, and equitable workload distribution, signal institutional respect and foster trust. In contrast, their absence can lead to teacher distrust and disengagement. Consequently, meaningful institutional reform must prioritise policy transparency and the establishment of participatory governance structures to sustain and enhance teacher commitment (Okaforcha & Chinwe, 2024; Ughamadu et al., 2024; Fejoh et al., 2018).

Commitment

Empirical evidence highlights the critical role of interpersonal relationships in shaping teacher job commitment. Research shows that positive interactions with colleagues are significantly associated with overall commitment, while effective communication with both colleagues and parents predicts normative commitment. Collegial practices, in particular, demonstrate strong links to professional dedication, functioning as social capital that buffers workplace stress and reinforces teachers' professional identity. Although a study among librarians reported no significant relationship, the preponderance of evidence from educational research consistently underscores that supportive interpersonal relationships are key determinants of sustained job commitment (Chime, 2024; Orebiyi & Orebiyi, 2011; Harapan & Fitria, 2021).

Collaboration as a Catalyst for Teachers' Proactiveness

Collaborative work demonstrates a significant positive relationship with teacher commitment, with a culture of collaboration within informal subgroups serving as a strong predictor of affective commitment. Organisational climate and effective interpersonal communication further reinforce this link, shaping the professional environment in which teachers operate. By distributing expertise, reducing isolation, fostering innovation, and enhancing professional satisfaction, collaborative practices create ecosystems in which proactive teachers are more likely to emerge and sustain high levels of engagement with their (Amalia et al., 2024; Sarwar et al., 2022).

Why Schools Must Be Strengthened from Within

Science teachers' job commitment is shaped not just by individual motivation but by the broader institutional and relational context of the school. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory highlights that institutional factors such as professional development, clear policies, consistent appraisals, and adequate resources act as hygiene conditions: when poorly implemented, they create dissatisfaction and reduce punctuality and proactiveness. However, institutional adequacy alone is insufficient; motivator factors, including collegiality, collaboration, and positive interpersonal relationships, drive intrinsic engagement by fostering belonging, shared responsibility, and professional affirmation. Organisational Support Theory reinforces this by showing that teachers interpret institutional signals as indications of being valued, prompting reciprocation through greater commitment and proactive behavior. Therefore, enhancing science teachers' job commitment in Ibadan requires internal reforms that strengthen institutional structures and nurture healthy professional relationships rather than relying solely on external incentives or salary increases.



Justifying the Rationale behind this Paper

While financial incentives and career advancement are important, evidence shows that teacher commitment is strongly influenced by institutional climate and relational dynamics. Within Herzberg's framework, salary acts as a hygiene factor: it prevents dissatisfaction but does not drive proactiveness or innovation. Teachers may attend work for financial reasons yet remain disengaged if professional relationships are poor or institutional support is lacking. Studies in Rivers and Anambra States further demonstrate that professional development, collaboration, and organizational culture predict commitment independently of remuneration, highlighting that economic improvement alone is insufficient without strengthening relational and structural support.

Implications of this Paper for Educational Policy and Practice in Ibadan Metropolis

Strengthening schools from within requires policies that transform institutional structures, culture, and relationships. Continuous professional development should be institutionalised through structured, subject-specific training, mentorship programs, technology integration, and clear links to career progression, signaling long-term investment. Organisational policies must be transparent, consistent, and participatory, involving teachers in decisions about curriculum, workload, and academic programming to foster ownership. Building a collaborative culture through professional learning communities, joint lesson planning, peer observation, and interdisciplinary projects reduces isolation and enhances commitment. Positive collegial relationships and open communication, conflict resolution, respect, and public recognition serve as social capital that supports engagement and buffers stress. Finally, principals should receive leadership development in emotional intelligence, conflict management, participatory governance, and ethical accountability, as transformational leadership is central to shaping a supportive institutional climate.

Conclusion

Strengthening science teachers' job commitment in Ibadan senior secondary schools requires an internal reform focus on institutional structures and interpersonal relationships. Professional development and fair organizational policies provide the stability needed to prevent dissatisfaction, while positive colleague relations and meaningful collaboration foster intrinsic motivation, emotional attachment, and professional fulfillment. Empirical evidence from Nigeria and beyond shows that economic incentives alone are insufficient; sustainable commitment emerges when schools cultivate supportive practices and relational trust. True reform depends on daily institutional actions and interactions that communicate value, fairness, and shared purpose, creating environments where punctuality and proactiveness naturally thrive.

Suggestions

The following strategic steps are suggested:

1. The Oyo State Ministry of Education should focusing on professional development, participatory governance, and collaborative culture.
2. Inter-school science teacher networks should be established to facilitate resource sharing, mentorship, and collaborative innovation.
3. Schools should track punctuality, participation in collaborative activities, and initiative-taking behaviours as measurable indicators of job commitment.
4. Recognition for innovation, mentorship, and consistent punctuality should be formalised to reinforce motivator factors.



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