

# THE INFLUENCE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ON SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION AND COMMITMENT IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the influence of Interpersonal Communication on Secondary School Teachers' Job Satisfaction and three types of Commitments in Kogi State, Nigeria . With a survey research design, using structural questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 400 respondents from a study population of 4890 teachers in the services of Kogi State Teaching Service Commission. Data were subjected to frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Multiple regression was used for inferential analysis. Support was found for the existence of statistically significant relationships between interpersonal communication and job satisfaction. Similarly, each of the four types of relationships (Superior, Peer, Student and Parents) has statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction. Also, interpersonal communication correlates with each of the three types of commitments (normative, continuance and affective). Analysis of coefficient showed teachers interpersonal communication with peers and parents as statistically significant under normative commitment while affective and continuance were not. This study observed that participation in work setting, respects for the feelings and aspiration of one another and sharing relevant information at individuals' disposals while making trust the watchword of the relationships, communication relationship with parents are important predictors of teachers' job satisfaction and commitment.*

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Communication, Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Secondary School Teachers*

## INTRODUCTION

The influence of interpersonal communication on employees' job satisfaction and commitment has received significant research attention over the past three decades. Research evidence indicates that interpersonal interactions involving the exchange of information between employees, peers and top management staff can have significant effects on the employees' psychological job output such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, burnout and turnover intentions (Cox and Todd, 2000; Fields, 2002; Manion, 2004). As Martin,

Jandaghi, Karimi and Hamidzader (2010) rightly state, hardly can an employee work in absolute isolation without communicating with customers, peers and management on a daily basis. In a school system, teachers frequently communicate with principals, (superiors) colleagues, students and parents (Rosenholtz, 1989). The interactions enable them gain insight and knowledge about the background, experiences, attitudes and behaviours of others. This relationship may be friendly and thus affect the growth of the schools and the teachers positively, or may be hostile and as a result affect both teachers and schools negatively. Interpersonal communication, according to International Contemporary Dictionary of Mass Communication (2008) is any mode of communication, verbal or non verbal between two or more people. It further explains that it may be face-to-face or mediated (through telephone, letters or other means of communication). Magnus (2009) opines that effective interpersonal communication is essential to social interactions and the building and maintenance of all relationships. Magnus (2009) warns that poor communication can cause irreparable damage to relationships which may affect productivity, trust, respect and commitment. In the same vein, Brunette and Farr-Wharton (2004) note that effective interpersonal communication is vital to promoting employees' commitment and job satisfaction.

Job commitment is the collection of feelings and beliefs that employees have about their organization as a whole. Porter, Steers, Monday and Boulian (1974) define commitment as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Monday, Porter and Steers (1982) suggest that committed employees are more likely to go above and beyond the call of duty to help their company and are less likely to quit. The nature of commitment determines the level of performance. Expatiating the different levels of commitment, Meyer and Allen (1999) identify three types of commitment which include affective, continuance and normative.

*Affective* refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identifying with, and involvement in the organization. Factors that may facilitate the development of affective commitment include task autonomy, task significance, supervisory feedback, organizational dependability. *Continuance* refers to commitment based on the costs that the employees associate with leaving the organization. Factors that may promote development of continuance commitment include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent. The *normative* refers to the employees feelings of obligation to remain with the organization. Related antecedents for normative commitment include organizational dependability and participatory management.

Job satisfaction, according to Locke (1976) is an emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values. Agboola (1997) suggests that the wish or desire to achieve satisfaction is what motivates a worker to perform. Good

interpersonal communications is a correlate of job satisfaction and commitments. As stated by Rosenholtz (1989), interpersonal communication (relationship) with principals, colleagues, students and parents is inevitable for a teacher in the course of his professional duties. The principal (superior), for example is the most important communication link in most schools' organization. It is the primary form of communication; a breakdown has serious impact on overall performance in the school.

According to Lee (2001), the quality of the superior-subordinate relationship is of crucial importance to the employees as well as the organization because subordinates see their immediate superiors as the most preferred source of information. Because of the important roles so played by a superior as source of vital information to teachers, the superior must possess certain communication skills. Robinson (2006) reviews a large number of studies and synthesizes the interpersonal skills required of a superior that surfaces on most literature to include leadership style, motivation, handling conflicts, running meetings, building and promoting change, sending messages, listening and providing feedbacks. Jablin and Krone as cited in Bekar and Mustaffa (2007) expand superior- subordinate communication patterns beyond working interactions to include a component of social support which is defined as communication between people who lend a hand, reassure, show concern for, and give encouragement to subordinates. In the same vein, Goldhaber (1990) identifies praises, friendly, honest, trusted and can be disagreed with as qualities necessary by a superior for the establishment of high quality boss-subordinate interpersonal working relationship.

Equally important is teacher's relationship with his peers. For teachers to succeed in their work, they need to cooperate with one others. Rosenholtz (1989) observes that regular exchange of ideas among teachers heightens learning opportunities, increases the number of knowledge exchangers within schools, augments teachers' instructional repertoires as they confront instructional decisions, thereby increasing their confidence as well. Gibson and Gibbs (2005) also view that supportive communication from co-workers predict job satisfaction among teachers by reducing the level of role ambiguity. Similarly, Caleb (2000) in a study of Turkish teachers' level of commitment to their schools, workgroups and occupation, finds that there is a direct relationship between teachers' organizational commitment and their working group (peer).

The relationship between a teacher and his student may affect his perception of the work environment. According to Rosenholtz (1989) most people who choose to teach often explain their decisions to venture into the profession by citing the importance of working with children and helping them to learn. To realize this goal, both teachers and students must cooperate with one another so as to create an enabling teaching and learning environment. Bennet (2002) point out that students' misbehaviour place varying degrees of a burden on

teachers' efforts to improve because they force them to spend their time mediating on classroom disputes rather than developing their instructional skills. Oyesola (2000) supports this view in a paper on school discipline when he notes that teachers lose inspiration and enthusiasm in front of disorderly students.

Also of importance to teachers' job satisfaction and commitment is their relationship with parents. The education of a child is a joint responsibility of teachers and parents. Yunusa (1993) expands this responsibility to include government at all levels, religious organizations, communities and individuals. If education is a joint venture of all stakeholders, it follows that teachers and parents must necessarily interact with one another in order to facilitate the attainment of educational objectives, which informed the formation of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (Jaiyeoba and Ukandu, 1998). A study by an American Statistical Organization, NCES (1997) finds that teachers in any school setting that receive a great deal of parental support are likely to be more satisfied than teachers that lack such support. Consequently, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

- 1). To what extent does teachers' interpersonal communication within the school system influence their job satisfaction?
- 2). To what extent does teachers' interpersonal communication within the school system influence their affective, normative and continuance commitments?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study with questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The population consisted of all practising teachers in the service of Kogi State Teaching Service Commission, an arm of the Ministry of Education. Of the 4890 teachers on the payroll of the commission at the time of the study, 400 samples, representing 10% of the population, were randomly drawn through stratified sampling technique to represent each of the three senatorial districts of Kogi State. Two types of analyses were employed in the study. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency count, percentage and standard deviation. In scoring the scale, positively stated items were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 for strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. A cut-off or decision point of 2.5 (62.5%) and above was regarded as supportive and where lower was regarded as defensive. This is because a 4 point scale rated at 4, 3, 2 and 1 was used. Regression analysis was also employed in determining the extent to which the independent variables impact on the dependent variables. All inferential analyses were interpreted at both 0.05 and 0.01 alpha level of significance.

The questionnaire items were adaptations of commitment scale (affective, normative and continuance) used for measuring job satisfaction in

the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan by Meyer and Allen (1991) and interpersonal relationship scale by Hackman and Oldman (1975). The instrument was adjusted and validated by research experts before it was tested for reliability using Person Product Movement correlation formula; the reliability value was 0.75. Job satisfaction was measured by a 6-item scale with scores ranging from 6-24 points. Five facets of job satisfaction such as satisfaction with work, supervision, peers, information adequacy and professional growth were measured.

**Affective commitment:** The 4-item scale examined teachers' desire to remain with the employer for period of career, involvement in organizational problem, willingness to join another organization etc; score ranges from 4-16 with higher score indicating level of affective commitment.

**Continuance commitment:** A 4 - item scale with scores ranging from 4-16 examined teachers' desire to leave their employment without another option, cost of living for a new job, etc.

**Normative commitment:** A 4-item scale with scores ranging from 4-16 measured teachers' level of loyalty to employer, sense of moral obligation to organization, level of desire to leave, etc.

Teacher - Principal relationship was examined with a 6-item scale of Likert format scores ranging from 6 - 24. It probed perceptions of superior's support, extent to which he is approachable; allow upward communication, consideration for subordinate welfare, etc. Teacher - Peer Relationship was measured with a 6-item scale with scores ranging from 6 - 24. It probed the degree of trust among peers, cooperation, level of information exchange, etc. Teacher - Student Relationship was measured by a 4-item scale with scores ranging from 4 - 16. It examined influence of Students' discipline on morals, desire to continue to work among students, intentions to leave teaching, etc. Teacher - Parent Relationship was measured with a 4-item scale with scores ranging from 4 - 16. It probed teachers' relationship with parents, parental support on discipline, cooperation between home and school, etc.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics on Interpersonal Communication, Job Satisfaction and Commitment

Variables	HOS	Mean	StD	Mean % on HOS	Decision
Teacher- Principal	24	18.42	3.06	76.75	Supportive
Teacher-Peer	24	17.68	2.93	73.66	Supportive
Teacher-Student	16	12.23	2.54	76.43	Supportive
Teacher-Parent	16	11.91	2.39	74.43	Supportive
Job Satisfaction	24	16.47	2.83	68.63	Supportive
Continuance	16	9.19	2.22	57.43	Defensive
Affective	16	9.09	2.12	56.81	Defensive
Normative	16	9.57	2.52	59.81	Defensive

**Sources:** Field Survey 2009. HOS = Highest Obtainable Scores; StD = Standard Deviation

**Table 2:** Summary of Analysis of Multiple regressions of Interpersonal relationship and Job Satisfaction

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ARS	SEE	RSC	FC	d.f1	d.f 2	SFC
Job Satisfaction/Interpersonal Communication	0.307	.095	.085	2.7159	.095	10.311	4	395	0.000*

**Sources:** Field Survey 2009 Alpha Level of significance =  $P < 0.01^*$  and  $P = < 0.05^{**}$   
 ARS = Adjusted R. Square; SEE = Standard Error of the estimate; RSC = R Square Change;  
 FG = F Change; SFC = Sig F Change

Results of the regression analysis on Table 2 show a low but positive association between interpersonal relationships and job satisfaction ( $R=0.307$  and  $R^2=0.09$ ) with an observed F-value of 10.311. This implies that interpersonal communication accounts for 9% of the variance in job satisfactions. The relationship between the two variables is statistically significant at 0.01 alpha levels. Indicating that interpersonal communication predicts teachers' job satisfaction.

**Table 3:** Analysis of Coefficient of Multiple Regression

Interpersonal	beta	t-value	Significance
Superior-Subordinate (Principal-Teacher)	0.211	4.283	0.000*
Relationship With Teachers (Peers)	0.095	1.924	0.050**
Relationship with Students	0.080	1.568	0.118
Relationship with Parents	0.109	2.199	0.028**

**Sources:** Field Survey 2009 Alpha Level of significance =  $P < 0.01^*$  and  $P = < 0.05^{**}$

Similarly, analysis of the multiple regression coefficient on table 3 indicates that three of the four relationship components in the study are predictors. The findings show that Teacher-Principal, Teacher-Peer and Teacher-Parent are statistically significant. Only Teacher-Student interpersonal relationship show insignificance.

**Table 4:** Analysis of Multiple Regression Showing relationships between Interpersonal Relationships and the 3 components of Commitment

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ARS	SEE	RSC	FC	d.f1	d.f 2	SFC
Interpersonal Affective Commitment	0.079	0.006	-0.004	2.1301	0.006	0.625	4	395	0.645
Interpersonal Normative Commitment	0.0253	0.064	0.055	2.4511	0.064	6.764	4	395	0.000*
Interpersonal Continuance Commitment	0.115	0.013	0.003	2.2204	0.013	1.317	4	395	0.264

**Sources:** Field Survey 2009 Alpha Level of significance =  $P < 0.01^*$  and  $P = < 0.05^{**}$

From the result of the multiple regression analysis on Table 4, there is a weak but positive correlation between interpersonal communication (teacher-principal, teacher-peers, teacher-students, and teacher- parents) and each of the three types of commitments; Affective, Normative, Continuance with variance of 0.006, 0.064, and 0.13 respectively. However, only relationship between interpersonal communication and normative commitment is significant while others (affective and continuance) are insignificant.

**Table 5: Analysis of Coefficient of Multiple Regressions**

Affective			Normative			Continuance			
Interpersonal Relationship	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Superior (Principal)	-0.061	-1.185	0.237	-0.047	-0.936	0.350	-0.001	-0.014	0.989
Peers	0.016	0.302	0.763	0.224	4.465	0.000*	0.089	1.722	0.086
Students	-0.030	-0.0557	0.578	-0.001	-0.013	0.989	-0.064	-1.190	0.235
Parents	0.047	0.895	0.371	-0.127	-2.517	0.012*	-0.044	-0.843	0.400

**Sources:** Field Survey 2009 Alpha Level of significance =  $P < 0.01^*$  and  $P = < 0.05^{**}$

Results of the coefficient analysis as in Table-V above indicates, two of the four types of interpersonal relationships in the study are predictors of normative commitment. These are teacher - parents and teacher - peers relationships. Both affective and continuance commitment are not predicted by interpersonal communication in the study. From the results of the multiple regression analysis, interpersonal communication is related to Secondary School Teachers' job satisfaction. The analysis shows a moderate but positive correlation between teachers' interpersonal communication and job satisfaction. Analysis of the coefficient shows that all the four types of relationship in the study (teacher - principal, teacher - peers, teacher - students and teacher - parents) correlate positively with job satisfaction.

The results further reveal that all the four types of interpersonal relationship jointly predict job satisfaction. The finding is in harmony with the result of Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe (2000) who find that relationship with supervisors and co-workers are predictors of job satisfaction, and with Gibson and Gibbs (2005) who find that supportive communication from co-workers predicts job satisfaction among teachers by reducing the level of role ambiguity. The establishment of high quality working interpersonal relationship by a superior with his subordinate such as being friendly, honest, trusted and one that can be disagreed with, will necessarily result in the latter's job satisfaction. The same holds of other participants in communication relationship (peers, students and parents). The results also show a positive correlation between interpersonal communication and each of the three types of commitment.

However, findings tend to suggest the inadequacies of interpersonal communication as the sole determinant of employees' commitment without the use of other motivational elements. From the result of the descriptive statistics, all the three types of commitments were scored below the criterion set for acceptance while job satisfaction was rated higher than the criterion. The implication of the finding is that while satisfaction with interpersonal relationships is necessary for employee's job satisfaction to be attained, organizational commitments may require other motivational elements such as satisfaction with in-service training programme, opportunity for job advancement and participation in decision making. According to Durosaro (2000), interpersonal relationship aspect of organizational life falls within the realm of "hygiene" factors which can only prevent dissatisfaction but can not

motivate. Durosaro (2000) asserts that only "motivators" such as recognition and achievement can make workers produce more, be creative and committed.

Furthermore, while interpersonal communication is related to each of the three types of commitments, only the normative component of commitment is predicted by interpersonal communication. This finding is consistent with Keller's (1997) observation which notes that normative commitment is common among professionals such as teachers, physicians, lawyers etc. as could be inferred in the findings. Teachers, like other professionals tilt towards normative commitment regardless of the quality of relationship within the work environment. It is instructive from the result of the study that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment can be enhanced if the work environment is supportive and trusting. This implies that participation in work setting, respect for the feelings and aspirations of one another and sharing relevant information at individuals' disposals while making trust the watchword of the relationships, communication relationship with parents are important predictors of teachers' job satisfaction and commitment.

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