

SCHOOL CULTURAL NORMS AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' TASK COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined school cultural norms as correlates of teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was a correlational research design. The population of the study consist 8,187 teachers comprising 1,500 males and 6,687 females in 269 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 819 teachers was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedures comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. Three researcher-structured instruments were used for data collection: School Cultural Norms Questionnaire (SCNQ) and Teachers' Task Commitment Questionnaire (TTCQ). The study instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha statistical tool and the average coefficients were established at 0.81 for SCNQ and 0.85 for TTCQ. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that collegiality and open honest communication exhibit high positive and significant relationship with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that school cultural norms exhibit a positive and significant correlation with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that principals should create a culture of collegiality between them and their staff as this could encourage staff to care for the well-being of others, facilitate the removal of interpersonal bias among staff, make principals accessible to staff and help staff to work collectively towards achieving school objectives and goals with ease

Keywords: School cultural norms, teachers' task commitment

Introduction

Task commitment can be seen as the process through which people become willing to give their loyalty and energy to a particular social system. Manafa and Adinna (2023) opted that teachers perform their task in such a way that will determine whether they will leave or remain in the teaching profession or not. In the words of Onyekwelu (2024), teachers' commitment to their job is a state that characterizes a teacher's relationship with his or her profession, and has implications for the decision to remain involved with it. Ohamobi et al. (2024) asserted that commitment is the force that binds an individual to a course of action. This force is the state of mind, which can be seen in an individual in form of devotion, loyalty, attachment, affliction and affection. Teachers' commitment also includes factors such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance for fallibility. Onyekwelu and Adinna (2022) noted that teachers' commitment is of importance as it is associated with greater job effort and involvement, that is, committed employees are less likely to leave their position and display other withdrawal behaviour such as absenteeism. As Ikedimma and Okorji (2023) noted, the strength of any profession depends upon the degree of commitment of its members. In other words, Okaforcha and Ifediorah Okeke (2025) noted that, if a teacher has high level of commitment to school, to the teaching profession and to teaching and learning, it will definitely affect the commitment to goals and objectives set for the school or for students.

Teachers' commitment can also be seen as the level of allegiance teachers feels for their school task. Teachers' task commitment refers to teachers' emotional attachment or bond to their job and the school. Okaforcha (2021) noted teachers' job commitment expresses the teachers' motivational orientation to the job in which they are engaged. Teachers who are committed to their job feel passionate about their duties and strive to excel in them. Obi and Ekwe (2024) referred to teachers' job commitment as a physical, psychological and mental attachment to the demands of one's job. Adinna et al. (2024) submitted that teachers' commitment is the commitment that gets the job done. To them, commitment is more powerful than our best intentions, willpower or circumstances. Okaforcha et al. (2024) stated teachers' job commitment is the state of being loyal and devoted in executing instructional responsibilities in the school. High level of teachers' job commitment is essential for school success. Okpara et al. (2025) opined that teachers' job commitment is seen as the unlimited involvement, passion, enthusiastic and devotion of the teachers towards their jobs. That is, their willingness to carryout job functions, promptness in delivery of various job components to a level of satisfaction, dedication to duty, and desire for the academic growth of students.

Teachers' task commitment is one of the most essential elements that could facilitate the effective teaching required to enhance the academic achievement of students in schools. As such, teachers with high level of commitment could make a difference to teaching and learning in the school

system. Onyejekwe et al. (2025) noted that good students' academic outcome is possible with teachers being committed with their task. However, unless teachers feel they are valued and treated fairly in an organization, they may not be intellectually and emotionally committed or motivated to willingly give their best (Ohamobi et al., 2025). This implies that, before teachers can be committed to their teaching profession, they must be willing to make intense efforts for goal achievement of their school organizations which they have strong desire to remain members of the organisation. Teachers who are committed to their tasks are more enthusiastic and interested in devoting more energy and time to teach students in a manner that would improve their academic performance (Mmonwuba & Adinna, 2025). Committed teachers are always willing to contribute their ideas and efforts to the pursuit of school goals of promoting effective teaching and learning. Onyekwelu (2025) maintained that teachers with positive perception about their teaching role would be willing to accept the goals and values of their schools easily and they would be highly committed in teaching the students to enable them excel in their academic pursuits. Having committed teachers in the school system is beneficial in the sense that it would produce positive results especially in the area of high academic achievement by students. Earlier, Adinna and Onyekwelu (2021) noted that, a school that has committed teachers has the highest possibility of being successful academically because committed teachers are sometimes more productive in promoting effective and efficient teaching services in the school system. Teachers with high level of commitment view themselves as integral part of the school, what threatens the school endangers them as well, they do their best to perform their duties better, and work for the school as if it belongs to them (Ikedimma & Okorji, 2023). In contrast, teachers with low level of commitment are less faithful to the school, view themselves as outsiders and are more concerned with personal success than with the success of the school as a whole.

Contextually, teachers' task commitment referred to teachers' psychological bond to the school, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and a belief in the values of the school. For the success of any school, committed teachers are considered as the most important assets of the school. Thus, teachers' task commitment is an indicator of a teacher's loyalty, professional attachment and job pleasure. For optimal teachers' task commitment in the school, their perception of school cultural norms in the school is crucial.

Some principals seem to be bias in administrative practices which create distrust and unhealthy interpersonal relationships among others that hinder teamwork and good practices of school cultural norms that breed task commitment of teachers. Like all other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the organisational justice is principally influenced by practical experiences that emanate from their job. Thus, school cultural norms become one of the vital components in the schools that determine task commitment of teachers. Teachers are attracted to schools that have values that are perceived as being similar to their own values and this has been

shown to have an effect on variables like teachers' performance and job commitment (Akinnubi et al., 2024). It is therefore important for every school to understand their own school cultural norms so that the management can use the knowledge to wield greater control over the school.

School cultural norms are the shared values, beliefs and assumptions that exist among teachers within the school that help guide and coordinate behaviour. School norms are further defined as the traditions, beliefs, policies and norms within a school that can be shaped, enhanced and maintained through the school's principal and teachers. Within an organisational setting, school norms are perceived to be pervasive and powerful (Uke et al., 2024). For business, it has been found to be the glue that can bond employees to an organisation, and helps in achieving organisational objectives or what drives employees away.

School cultural norms are teaching and learning approaches, behaviours and relationships among or across the individuals in a school. Esiaba (2023) opined that school norms are set of values that help staff in school to understand which actions are considered acceptable and which are considered unacceptable. These are specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in the organization, control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organization. School norms are both written and unwritten rules, laws, regulations, traditions and expectations that inform the teachers and school administrators how they are expected to behave toward each other and the teaching and learning materials they use in schools. Ajuwon (2022) cited in Saphier and King identified twelve school norms that can impact positively on the performance and commitment of teachers. These include: collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, tangible support, reaching out to the knowledge bases, appreciation and recognition, caring, celebration and humour, involvement in decision-making, protection of what is important, tradition and honest open communication. In the same line, Chikendu (2023) cited in Saphier and King's twelve school norms in the school setting and selected collegiality on task commitment of teachers in school.

Contextually, school cultural norms refer to the shared values and beliefs of a school community, which are expressed through policies, practices, and interactions between staff, students and leaders. They are rules or expectations of behaviour and thought that are based on shared beliefs within a specific cultural or social group. A positive and supportive school culture can create conditions that lead to good behaviour. In this study, three of the twelve school norms identified by Saphier and King as cited Ajuwon (2022) including collegiality and honest open communication were evaluated. The choice of these norms was based on their relevance to the school setting in the study area.

Collegiality or collegial relationships is a friendly relationship between people who work together or do the same job. It is the relationship between colleagues. It provides more systemic assistance

to beginning teachers in schools. Obasi (2022) noted that collegiality avoids the sink-or-swim, trial-and-error mode that novice teachers usually face during the initial stages of their career. This is because it brings experienced and beginning teachers closer together to reinforce the competence and confidence of the beginners. Chikendu (2023) stated that teachers who work together become more flexible in times of change and cope better with new demands that would normally exhaust the energy and resources of teachers working on their own. In the words of Edo and Bulopakaye (2024), collegiality has a friendly, collaborative effect and can be compared to a large family, that is, a clan, where people have a lot in common and strong bonds of loyalty. They added that collegiality is categorized as professional collegiality, social collegiality, ethical collegiality and leadership collegiality. Edo and Bulopakaye (2024) further maintained that the collaboration and cooperation in schools would be a source of motivation to sustain its practices when accompanied by recognition of good job. The practical application of collegiality which involves recognition is essential because recognition is a driving force that enhances and improves the commitment of teachers in schools.

Honest open communication is a style of communication where people can share their ideas, experiences, concerns and thoughts freely, and where feedback is accepted. Ajuwon (2022) submitted that it is based on principles of trust, honesty, openness, psychological safety and consistency. Teachers feel free to speak plainly, tactfully and directly to colleagues, parents, school principals and to the school authorities what they think and see about the school without fear of losing their esteem or damaging relationship. Effective teacher to teacher communication is essential to their success as teachers. Teachers need to regularly collaborate and have team planning sessions. Eziuzo et al. (2024) considered effective communication to underpin the knowledge, skills and dispositions school principals require to have direct and indirect influence on teachers. In the words of Obiekwe et al. (2024), honest and open communication is important for school teachers to have peers to lean on during rough times, instead of finding themselves in isolation and/or always having conflict with school authority and fellow members.

There seems to be injustice in decision-making and interpersonal relationships among principals and teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Ebiem and Ikediugwu (2023) observed that some secondary school teachers are deprived of decisions making and even when the principals allow them to give suggestions, they end up not using them. Ughamadu et al. (2024) noted that teachers are suppressed and there is little cooperation between secondary school principals and teachers in Anambra State. Continuing, Ughamadu et al. (2024) stressed that these hinder teachers from going beyond their typical job responsibilities and freely give their time and energy to succeed at the assigned job in secondary schools in Nigeria, including Anambra State. Amaefule et al. (2024) submitted that when teachers experience injustice in any aspect of their work and management's decisions, they are likely to be de-motivated and react with a negative

attitude such as absenteeism and lack of commitment to school organization. These situations made it imperative to determine organizational justice and school cultural norms as correlates of teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine school cultural norms as correlates of teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the extent collegiality relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. ascertain the extent honest open communication relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does collegiality relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does honest open communication relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Collegiality does not significantly relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Honest open communication does not significantly relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

The study was carry out in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was

a correlational research design. The population of the study consist 8,187 teachers comprising 1,500 males and 6,687 females in 269 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 819 teachers was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedures comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. Three researcher-structured instruments were used for data collection: School Cultural Norms Questionnaire (SCNQ) and Teachers' Task Commitment Questionnaire (TTCQ). The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. The face validation was done using three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, while construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26 and the results showed that construct validity was met. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha statistical tool and the average coefficients were established at 0.81 for SCNQ and 0.85 for TTCQ. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with five research assistants. Out of 819 copies of the instrument administered, 804 copies representing 98% of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent does collegiality relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between collegiality and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	r ²	Remark
Collegiality	804			
		0.733	0.702	Highly Positive
Teachers' task commitment	804			

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 1 showed that collegiality has a high positive relationship with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This revealed a high positive correlation coefficient valued at 0.733 which indicated that there is a high positive relationship existing between collegiality and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase

in the application of collegiality in the school leads to 0.733(73%) increases in teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State and vice versa. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.702 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was high. This implies that 70% of the variations in teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State were highly accounted for by the variations in collegiality.

Research Question Two: To what extent does open honest communication relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between open honest communication and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	r^2	Remark
Open honest communication	804			
		0.761	0.718	Highly Positive
Teachers' task commitment	804			

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 2 showed that open honest communication has a high positive relationship with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This revealed a high positive correlation coefficient valued at 0.761 which indicated that there is a high positive relationship existing between open honest communication and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit improvement in the application of open honest communication in the school leads to 0.761(76%) improvements in teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State and vice versa. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.718 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was high. This implies that 72% of the variations in teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State were highly accounted for by the variations in open honest communication.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Collegiality does not significantly relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between collegiality and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	r ²	p-value	Remark
Collegiality	804				
		0.733	0.702	0.000	Significant
Teachers' task commitment	804				

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 3 showed the significant relationship between collegiality and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State with p-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that collegiality does not significantly relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that collegiality significantly related to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Open honest communication does not significantly relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant relationship between open honest communication and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	r ²	p-value	Remark
Open honest communication	804				
		0.761	0.718	0.000	Significant
Teachers' task commitment	804				

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 4 showed the significant relationship between open honest communication and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State with p-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than

0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that open honest communication does not significantly relate to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that open honest communication significantly related to teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings on the relationship between collegiality and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that collegiality has a high positive relationship valued at 0.733 with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that increase in collegiality will bring about 73% increases in teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State and vice versa. The study also revealed that collegiality has a significant relationship with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding is in line with the findings of Obasi (2022) who observed that there exist mutual respects among teachers and teamwork in the schools among teachers help to improve on their effectiveness. A study by Esiaba (2023) also confirmed collegial variables such as sharing ideas and expertise, mentoring each other, developing curriculum together, trust to have positive impact on the teachers' job commitment. Similarly, study by Chikendu (2023) revealed that school norms such as mutual relationship and trust had positive and significant influence on teachers' job commitment in secondary schools. In line with the findings of Hossein and Aziz (2023), they affirmed that school norms that are friendly, collaborative, strong bonds of loyalty and tradition have positive influence on teachers' job commitment. In line with the finding of this study, Edo and Bulopakaye (2024) asserted that intrinsic motivation such as trust, respect, dignity and investment in workers are collegial relationship in teaching that ensure quality and safety for maintaining the standard of professionalism.

Findings on the relationship between open honest communication and teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that open honest communication has a high positive relationship valued at 0.761 with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that improvement in open honest communication will bring about 76% improvements in teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State and vice versa. The study also revealed that open honest communication has a significant relationship with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of Uke et al. (2024) who supported that honest open communication between principals and teachers will boost job commitment in the school. They found that open communication made a healthier relationship in the schools. In the same vein, Akinnubi et al. (2024) asserted that when both principals and teachers say what is on their minds in a way that will help them adhere to set goals; it remain true to the organizational values and

acknowledge their faults. In line with the finding of the study, Obiekwe et al. (2024)'s study, it was revealed that sharing information amongst workers in a transparent and dependable way made employees openly expressed their thoughts, feelings and emotions. This is in line with the researcher's view that honest open communication in schools makes principals catch problems before they arise, keeps teachers longer, get them glued to their jobs and consequently promotes productivity. In opposite direction, Eziuzo et al. (2024) observed that aggressive communication style was negatively related to teachers' job satisfaction. This also agrees with the researcher's position that advocated for open honest communication to thrive in schools and positively impact on teachers' job commitment, principals should hold monthly or quarterly staff meetings, annual reviews, maintain informed social outings, keep weekly one-on-one meetings and always ensure clear communication channels.

Conclusion

School cultural norms play an important role in teachers' task commitment. When teachers are committed and devoted to their legitimate duties, it is very essential for an effective teaching and learning climate suitable for qualitative education. It is for this reason that school principals and the government pay increasing attention to the school cultural norms in order to boost teachers' task commitment. The study concluded that school cultural norms exhibit a positive and significant correlation with teachers' task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the results of the finding:

1. Principals should create a culture of collegiality between them and their staff as this could encourage staff to care for the well-being of others, facilitate the removal of interpersonal bias among staff, make principals accessible to staff and help staff to work collectively towards achieving school objectives and goals with ease.
2. Post Primary School Service Commission should organize annual professional development programme for principals and teachers to upgrade their patterns of communication in the school and continuously improve their knowledge about the barriers to communication, solutions to overcome these barriers, and better listening ability for improved task commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

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