

Occupational Incentives and Teacher Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between occupational incentives and teacher retention in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study formulated four objectives, research questions and hypotheses. The research design was ex-post facto. The population of the study comprised 10,614 teachers and multi-stage sampling method was used to select 784 teachers as sample. Data were gathered using two instruments titled: "Occupational Incentives Questionnaire (OIQ) and Teacher Retention Questionnaire (TRQ)". Pearson correlation statistic was used to analyse data and test the hypotheses while internal consistency was determined using Cronbach Alpha coefficient which gave reliability of 0.83 and 0.93 respectively. The findings revealed that significant relationship existed between job security, remuneration, promotion, welfare and teacher retention in private secondary schools. Recommendation based on the findings is that Private School Management in line with the government policy on emoluments should review teachers' salaries, promotion and other fringe benefits.

Key Words: Occupational incentive, retention, secondary school, Nigeria

Introduction

Teachers are the most fundamental and crucial resources in education system at any level, this is because the strength of an educational system largely depends upon the quality and quantity of its teachers. Furthermore, no educational goal for any nation's development can ever be achieved without an adequately trained and motivated teaching staff. Consequently, for teachers to give optimum productivity, their satisfaction is of utmost importance.

Motivation is a mechanism through which the teacher can be loyal to the schools. Teachers are the creators or facilitators of knowledge and skills for future leaders and only motivated teachers would perform well and produce good results by delivering quality instructions and imparting relevant skills to students. They will not only produce good quality leaders but also will contribute to the sustainable development of any country. Thus, there is truly a need indeed to keep teachers satisfied with their jobs and careers.

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Every school, whether public or private, strives to recruit a pool of qualified and committed teaching staff that can deliver quality education to its students and in turn produce students of high quality. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to retain the talented teaching staff. When the qualified teachers for any reason have intentions of leaving the school system or teaching field, it would portend a negative impact on students and the institution's overall performance as well. Thus, it is essential to retain highly qualified teachers in the school system on continuous basis for quality education delivery. In many secondary schools in Nigeria, the working and living conditions of many teachers are very poor, especially those in the rural areas, irrespective of the fact that they are arguably the most important group of professionals in the development of the nation. Teachers at times have to work under the most unsafe and unhealthy conditions, which has negative consequences on the academic success of students and the level of motivation of the teachers themselves. The remunerations for teachers are also relatively very low when compared with their contemporaries who worked in other private or federal sectors. This has in a way translated into teachers' low morale in the country, which in turn has culminated into students' poor academic performance in external examinations. Being intrinsically and extrinsically motivated increases job satisfaction (Nadim, Chaudhry, Kalyar, & Riaz, 2012). The teachers can be retained successfully only if they are satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction could lead to their improved performance and retention as well.

Employee retention is one of the most critical issues facing organizational managers as a result of the shortage of skilled manpower, economic growth and high employee turnover (Michael, 2008). It is imperative for organizations through the employment process, to attract quality employees to the organization. However, it is more important for managers to devise strategies with which to retain the talented employees in the service of their organizations in order for employees to benefit from the investment already made in them. Retention is about how an organization manages its workforce or more specifically its relationship with its workforce. It is also an action of holding something in position or containing it hence employee retention may be explained as a state or a condition of attracting and enabling people to work and stay with their organizations. Retention is conceptualized in terms of teachers staying and teachers leaving. The main purpose of retention is to prevent competent employees from leaving the school organization as this could have adverse effects on productivity and service delivery. There are many factors that may influence teacher retention, which may include a good working environment, attractive remuneration, good relationship practices, prospects for employee development and promotion, teamwork, organizational culture and many more. Thus, teachers' retention helps to avoid disruption of schooling especially when teachers leave the profession during the academic year or whilst engaged in critical projects in school. It is evident that retention helps to ensure continuity and to avoid teachers' shortage in a given country (Borsuk, 2001; Chiboiwa,

Samuel, & Chipunza 2010).

Private schools in Nigeria emerged from the deregulation of education system, in 1999 when private investment through ownership was legalized. In Akwa Ibom State, private schools are operating in highly competitive environment locally and globally and this calls for management styles that would enhance staff retention in order to gain competitive advantage. There are major issues facing these private institutions and it has created disillusionment among the staff due to heavy workload and poor remuneration. The situation is compounded by poor working environment and lack of welfare packages that is given to the teachers in the public and private sectors. Brain drain of qualified teachers has been recorded in many of the private schools, while some are on the verge of losing the already few staff and hence raising human resource capacity concerns. Demaki (2012), while stressing on the benefits of promotion to workers, reiterated that it is positively related to job satisfaction because pay and promotion have social prestige which is tied up with occupational level. He continued to state that the more pay and promotion are increased, the more they have the capacity to fulfill an increasing number of needs.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The study was premised on Hierarchy of Needs theory by Abraham Maslow (1943) and Equity theory by Adam Smith (1965). Maslow (1943) propounded a theory that affirmed people are motivated to achieve certain needs and some needs take precedence over others. The theory supposed that human needs could be arranged in a hierarchy based on the priority with which each emerged as a determinant of behavior. The hierarchy ranges from the physiological needs, through safety needs, love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs at the highest level. The assumptions of the theory are that: human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs; needs are organized in a hierarchy of potency in which more basic needs must be more or less met (rather than all or none) prior to higher needs; the order of needs is not rigid but instead may be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences and most behavior is multi-motivated, that is, simultaneously determined by more than one basic need. When the physiological needs are unsatisfied, no other needs will serve as a basis for motivation but once a need has been satisfied, it is no longer a motivator and the higher need becomes the motivator. In the school system, the salary a teacher earns enables him/her to satisfy physiological needs, but if they are unfulfilled then it could result to dissatisfaction, which affects productivity and quality performance in the work place. Safety needs include that for security, protection from physical or psychological harm, economic disaster and the unexpected. It also includes the desire for stability and absence from pain and illness. These needs are often met in educational institutions by granting teachers such programs as fringe benefits, promotion, retirement or pension schemes, insurance benefits, welfare benefits, free medical and health

services, job security and safe- working conditions. The theory of hierarchy of need is shown at Figure 1.

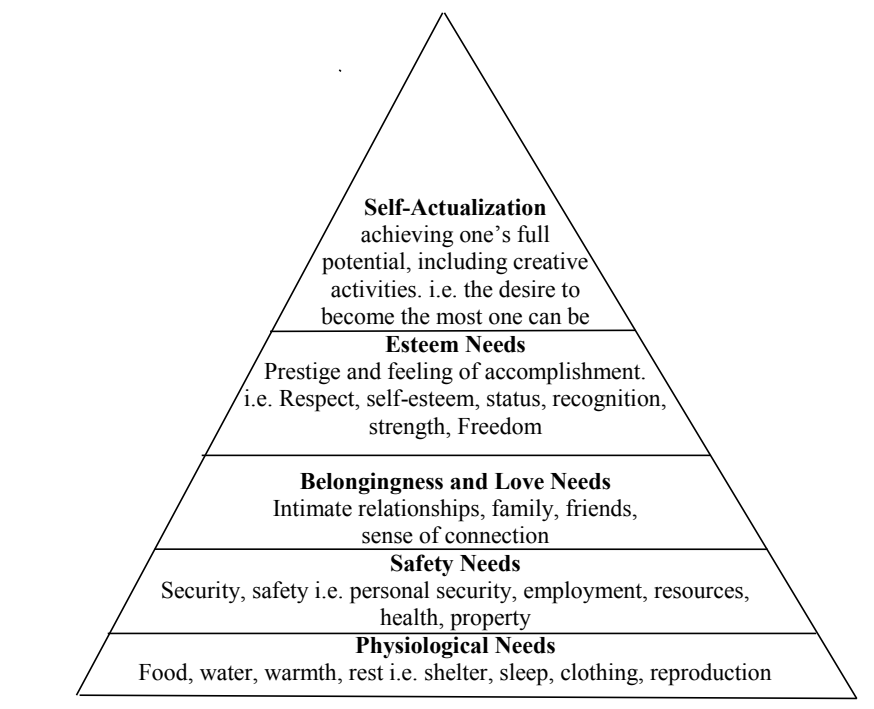


Figure 1: Adapted from: Maslow (1943). A theory of Human Motivation, *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396

The relevance of the theory to this study is to guide the understanding of teachers' physiological needs that may include pay, benefits, health and medical facility, accommodation and transportation, and comfortable working environment. A teacher's security needs are similar to any other employee who is concerned about his/her job security, fair treatment, protection against threats and many more. Affiliation needs of a teacher could be the disposition of institution's head towards him/her, participation in departmental decisions, acceptance from colleagues and co-workers etc. whereas esteem needs of teachers may include the need for recognition from the departmental head, colleagues, subordinate, and students.

Equity theory by Smith (1965) posited that employees seek to maintain equity between the input they bring into a job (education, time, experience, commitment and effort) and the outcome they receive from it (promotion, recognition and increased pay) against the perceived inputs and outcomes of other employees. Equity theory asserts that the main way in which a person evaluates his job is by comparing his own work experiences with those of other people. This affects his feelings and performance

in the job. For instance, teaching is lowly esteemed as a profession in Nigeria when compared with their counterparts in engineering, banking and medicine. Their promotion, remuneration and other benefits could not compare favorably with colleagues in the other sectors or professions; the situation has affected teachers' motivation and has consequently influenced negatively their work commitment, productivity and performance. In the perspective of the equity theorists, a person's feeling of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a product of his computation of the ratio of the person's job inputs (such as educational qualifications, experiences, skills, age and effort) to the outcome he gets from the job e.g. his salary, status and fringe benefits including the person's comparison whether just or unjust with others in the same cadre in other places.

The concept of employee retention emerged with regularity in 1970s and early 1980s, because prior to this period, most people entered into organizations and remained for a very long time, sometimes for the duration of their working life time. However, as job mobility and voluntary job changes begun to increase dramatically employers found themselves with the problem of employee turnover and a matching management tool known as employee retention began to be developed (Mckeown, 2012).

Retention is a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for long term (Michael, 2008). Retention of human resources refers to the attempts to ensure that employees stay in the organization and that voluntary turnover will be minimized. The main purpose of retention is to prevent competent employees from leaving the organization as this could have adverse effects on productivity and service delivery (Chiboiwa, Samuel, & Chipunza, 2010). Also, retention allows senior and line managers to attract and effectively retain critical skills and high performing employees (Michael,2008). The objective of retention policies should be to identify and retain committed employees for as long as is mutually profitable to the organization and the employee (Sutherland, 2004).

Teacher retention is a recent field in education research that focuses on how factors such as institution characteristics, government policy and teachers' demographics affect whether teachers stay in their schools, move to different schools, or leave the profession before retirement (Ingersoll, 2001). Musaaazi, (2005) reiterated that retention plan should be based on the analysis of why people work, why they leave the organization, and why they choose one employer over another, and that retention plan should address each of the areas in which lack of commitment and dissatisfaction can arise in areas such as: uncompetitive, inequitable or unfair pay systems. He further affirmed that the main incentive for retention is adequate salaries in today's competitive employment market if organizations are to employ and retain the talented staff they need. Staff retention is of interest to employers because of the cost implications of high staff turnover. Retention of employees needs to be effectively managed through strategic planning of remuneration, development, career opportunity, work environment,

flexible time, performance management and work family as areas that have an effect on retention of employees (Dibble, 2009).

Research study on academics by Amutuhaire, (2010) in Makerere University, established that remuneration and tenure influenced their retention. Kipkebut (2010) in a study on organizational commitment and job satisfaction of employees in universities in Kenya established that role conflict, promotional opportunities, age were some of the factors that influenced employee intention to quit the university. These findings reflect a mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Many researchers affirmed that job security is and has been for most workers their number one consideration. Teachers want to be assured that their jobs and income they derive will continue until retirement. Once the teacher passes the probationary stage of the job, the need for job security quickly appears to recede in importance. Teachers were found to be comfortable with jobs which had high job security/safety and job satisfaction significantly related to employee commitment and performance. Working in government owned secondary schools as against private schools, for many teachers, had more meaning due to high assurance of permanent and pensionable contracts. (Abdullah & Ramay; 2012; Akpan, 2013; Khan, Nawaz, Aleem & Hamed, 2012; Msuya, 2016; Rebore 2007; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009)

Remuneration can be described as the payment an employee receives for doing his/her job. This payment comes in money form. Attractive remuneration packages are one of the very important factors of retention because it fulfills the financial and material desires (Shoaib, Noor, Tirmizi, & Bashir, 2009). In the same perspective, Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien and Rivkin, (2006), and Boyd, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff (2007) affirmed that salary is a source of remuneration that is perceived as very crucial to working people, adequate reward can define one's willingness to stay in a profession, while poor remuneration could be a factor that encourages a worker as well as the intention to quit his/her current career. It cannot be denied that monetary rewards are indeed among the factors that could be useful in reducing teacher attrition in schools. Ubom (2002), opined that job satisfaction induces greater commitment to teaching. He added that lack of job satisfaction as a result of poor salary package and other conditions of service reduced employees' commitment to work and contributions to the effectiveness of organization. It has been observed that the teaching profession, especially in the private schools, is devoid of satisfaction. Hence, many who find themselves in the teaching field are there by necessity rather than by design. He explained further that teachers place premium on variables such as salary, time and mode of payment of salaries, fringe benefits, promotional prospects of teaching and work environment as determinants of job satisfaction, which in turn could affect their productivity.

Promotion is an upward mobility of an employee which changes his present position to one that makes him assume greater responsibility. Apart from bringing him more money, promotion has a higher motivating effect and it serves as a mark of recognition

of individual performance. Hence promotion can be seen as feedback that the workers have performed well. Promotion offers opportunities for growth and is also one of the Herzberg motivators which can be used to enhance retention. However, despite the fact that it is stated in article 77 section 9 of National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) that promotion opportunities will be created at every educational level to allow for professional growth at each level, teachers' promotion has not been implemented accordingly. Teachers who feel stagnant in their positions generally are not motivated, and when this occurs, they are demoralized, frustrated and dissatisfied with their jobs. Consequently, they will not stay on in an unfulfilling position and may look elsewhere for satisfaction. This dissatisfaction can also be manifested in partial commitment to work, early retirement and resignation.

Promotion is beneficial to teachers because it is related to an increase in salary, taking up more responsibilities and boosting their social status. Thus, teachers now have higher purchasing power, as they are given the opportunity to use their initiatives and improve their competencies; with such elevation, they experience a high level of contentment with their jobs. Demaki (2012) affirmed the benefits of promotion to workers. It is positively related to job satisfaction because pay and promotion have social prestige which is tied up with occupational level. In addition, the more they are elevated, (that is, pay rise and promotion) the more they have the capacity to fulfill an increasing number of needs thus motivating the worker not to leave. Staff promotion helps to boost the morale of teachers and motivates them to work thereby increasing productivity and efficiency and also enhancing job retention.

In the empirical studies by Adewunmi (2001), Ilunor (2010), Ikenyiri and Ihua-Maduenyi (2011), Bosompem, Kwarteng and Mensah (2012), and Obineli (2013) reviewed, some of the researchers studied assessment of needs satisfiers as a motivation for teachers' job satisfaction and effectiveness, they found that there was no significant difference between teacher's gender and teaching experience in their perception of salary and promotion as a factor affecting job satisfaction. In addition, promotion in the service does not lead to motivation of the teachers to give their best, because promotion may not result to any significant improvement in work conditions. However, some researchers found that teachers' welfare packages, such as free medical services, official accommodation, transport services, vehicle loans and supervision, work conditions, recognition, teacher training, involvement in goal setting and background characteristics do influence motivation, job satisfaction and teacher effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

In Akwa Ibom State, trained teachers are graduated yearly, but schools continue to experience a low level of teacher retention particularly in the private schools. This has raised a lot of concern among parents, students, school administrators and the government. The poor level of teacher retention, especially in the private schools, has

direct and indirect effects on the students' overall performance. It takes some time to get good replacements in the school which loses experienced teachers. High staff exit has been identified as the cause of the perceived downturn in school academic performance in recent times. In Akwa Ibom State, there are many issues which raise questions regarding whether the factors affecting teacher retention in private schools are different from those in the private schools of other states. It has been observed that some teachers in private secondary schools showed their lack of motivation in carrying out assigned tasks by being absent from school on weak excuses to run private businesses. The unwholesome attitude to work seems to suggest that these teachers are greatly dissatisfied with their job. The increasing level of teacher attrition has been identified as one of the most foreseeable but unsolvable problems facing the education system in private schools. This situation has prompted the researchers to set out to ascertain the relationship between occupational incentives and teachers' retention in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The study focuses on the relationship between job security, remuneration, promotion and welfare teachers' retention.

Methodology

The research design for this study was ex-post facto research design. The population of the study comprised 10,614 teachers in the 183 registered private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size was 784 teachers representing 7.4% of the total population. The sampling technique employed was multistage sampling method. The state was stratified into zones, each zone clustered into local governments; schools were selected proportionately and simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers. Data were gathered with two instruments titled: "Occupational Incentives Questionnaire (OIQ) and Teacher Retention Questionnaire (TRQ)". The occupational incentives indices: job security, remuneration, promotion and welfare consisted of five items each while teachers' retention consisted 12 items. The responses were based on the Likert rating scale of: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The items in the instruments were subjected to face validity and clarity of language by research experts and were further subjected to predictive validity test using Pearson correlation statistic. The Pearson correlation between the item, or item with a total is given as r_{xy} and significance level of .05. The validity decision is taken by comparing the r_{xy} with the r-table value.

Table 1.

Pearson Correlations Between Occupational Incentive indices and Teacher Retention
(N=40)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Job Security	-	.412**	.431**	.369*	.452**
2. Remuneration		-	.371*	.771**	.467**
3. Promotion			-	.394*	.435**
4. Welfare				-	.482**
5. Teacher Retention					-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

In Table 1, the count value obtained for all the items, $r_{xy} > r$ table value (.349), Base on the significant value obtained of $.000 < .05$ the items are valid. Reliability of the instruments for internal consistency was measured using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient which yielded overall reliability coefficients of .83 and .93. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) statistic was used to analyze data and test the hypotheses at the significance level of .05. R-value was used to answer the research questions. The decision rule states that if the critical r-table values are less than the calculated r-statistics, reject the null hypotheses otherwise accept the null hypotheses while the interpretation of the coefficient r-statistics are interpreted as: $\pm .00$ to $\pm .29$ (very low); $\pm .30$ to $\pm .49$ (low); $\pm .50$ to $\pm .69$ (moderately high); $\pm .70$ to $\pm .79$ (high); $\pm .80$ to $\pm .99$ (very high) and ± 1.00 (perfect relationship).

Data Analysis and Results

Table 2.

Pearson Correlation Between Job Security and Teachers' Retention in Private Schools in Akwa Ibom State
(N = 784)

Variables	r	p-value
Job Security (X)		
Teachers' Retention (Y)	.605*	.000

* Moderately High Relationship and Significant at $p < .05$ alpha levels, $df = 782$

The results in Table 2 show that the relationship between job security and teachers' retention in private secondary schools is positive and moderately high and also significant. Thus, improvement in job security contributes to increase in teacher retention in private secondary schools.

Table 3.

Pearson Correlation Between Remuneration and Teachers' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

(N = 784)

Variables	r	p-value
Remuneration (X)		
Teacher Retention (Y)	.703**	.000

**High Relationship and Significant at $p < .05$ alpha levels, $df = 782$

The results in Table 3 reveal that the relationship between remuneration and teachers' retention in private secondary schools is positive and high and also significant. Thus, increase in remuneration could contribute to corresponding increase in teacher retention in private secondary schools.

Table 4.

Pearson Correlation Between Promotion and Teachers' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

(N = 784)

Variables	r	p-value
Promotion (X)		
Teacher Retention (Y)	.723**	.000

**High Relationship and Significant at $p < .05$ alpha levels, $df = 782$

The results in Table 4 indicate a positive relationship between promotion and teachers' retention in private secondary schools which high and also significant. Therefore, promotion when due could enhance teachers' retention in private secondary schools.

Table 5.

Pearson Correlation Between Welfare and Teachers' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

(N = 784)

Variables	r	p-value
Welfare (X)		
Teacher Retention (Y)	.780**	.000

**High Relationship and Significant at $p < .05$ alpha level, $df = 782$

The results in Table 5 show that positive and high relationship exist between welfare and teacher retention in private secondary schools and the relationship is also significant. Thus, improved welfare packages could encourage teacher retention in private secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings and Implications to Educational Planning

The result of the analysis and Hypothesis 1 show that there is a significant relationship between job security and teachers' retention in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This implies that the strong nature of the relationship existing between the two variables from the findings prove that job security is related to teacher retention. As for the positive nature of the relationship, the findings show that both variables change in the same direction whereby better job security is related to high teacher retention, and poor job security is related to low teacher retention. The reason for this outcome can be attributed to the teachers feeling of insecurity in their current place of work, thus leading to their feedback on their responses to the questionnaire. The findings of this study agree with the finding of Samuel and Chipunza (2009) who reported that job security has also been established to significantly influence employee retention.

The finding concerned with Hypothesis 2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between remuneration and teachers' retention in private secondary schools. This implies that the strong nature of the relationship existing between the two variables show that a change in teacher remuneration is related to a considerable change in teacher retention. As for the positive nature of the relationship, the findings show that both variables change in the same direction whereby better teacher remuneration is related to high teacher retention, and poor teacher remuneration is related to low teacher retention. The basic needs of any individual are met with money. The reason for this is that most salaries that teachers receive do not match their work loads, and the little that is paid to them is not sufficient for survival, they seek for more favorable conditions in another institution or field in order to meet their basic physiological needs. If they are not met, an individual will not feel satisfied. Moreover, the school promises to increase teachers' salary as the school grows but most people are receiving the same amount for several sessions despite the increase in enrolment of students. Thus, they leave in order to seek employment with the state, or something better, believing that their previous job had given them experience.

The results of the study agree with those of Boyd, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff (2007) who investigated the impact of variation in pay and intention of teachers to leave. The outcome of their research revealed that teaching profession generally does not provide enough financial rewards to lower teacher attrition problems. The finding of this study is in consonance with the observation of Akande (2014), who stated that there was a significant relationship between job security and job performance thereby leading to retention.

In Hypothesis 3, the finding shows that a significant relationship exist between promotion and teachers' retention in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This implies that promotion for teachers when due and not effected with the necessary benefits is related to a considerable change in teacher retention. Some teachers

explained that irregular promotion took place in their schools based on favoritism, some explained the promotion did not affect their salary and other benefits; in other words, the salary level remained the same after promotion. The result of the study is in consonance with the observation of Demaki (2012), who stressed the benefits of promotion to workers, reiterating that it is positively related to job satisfaction; because pay and promotion have social prestige, which is connected to occupational level. He continued to state that the more pay and promotion are increased, the more they have the capacity to fulfill an increasing number of needs, thus motivating the worker not leave. Staff promotion helps to boost the morale of teachers and motivates them to work, thereby increasing productivity and efficiency and also enhancing job retention. Some teachers experience stagnation and when this occurs, they are demoralized, frustrated and dissatisfied with their jobs and look elsewhere for better circumstances. This dissatisfaction can also be manifested in partial commitment to work, early retirement or resignation.

Hypothesis 4 reveals that there is a significant relationship between welfare package and teachers' retention in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This implies that welfare as additional package to teacher's salary contributes to teacher's retention in this particular school. Teachers are not granted leave. When a teacher is sick, schools do not support the medical bills yet management complain that classes are left vacant. Loans are not granted to teachers to meet certain needs. These reasons make them say that retention rate is low thus if something better comes up, they will be glad to leave as they are just keeping themselves busy. Ilunor (2010), in her study of the correlation between teacher training and welfare package with teacher effectiveness found a significant relationship between adequacy of staff welfare programs and teacher effectiveness. These are in consonance with the result of the current study.

Conclusion

In the study, it has been shown that the variables: job security, remuneration, promotion and welfare have significant relationship between job teachers' retention in private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, based on these findings, the study concluded that occupational incentives play key role in the retention intention of teachers in the private schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The School Management of private schools should take job security of their teachers seriously. Actions of principals and school management that could lead to threats of job security among teachers should be avoided. Self-development and better career advancement opportunities should be provided for teachers. This would encourage them to stay on the job and be committed to

their professional responsibilities. Thus, private school teachers' turnover could be greatly reduced.

2. The School Management should ensure that teachers' salaries are paid promptly and proportional to teachers' qualifications and other characteristics and is commensurate with colleagues' salaries in other fields/sectors to enable them concentrate on their job for effective delivery.
3. School Management should ensure that teachers' salaries and other fringe benefits are improved upon in line with the economic trends and inflations. This will help improve the teachers' status and thus highly motivate them.
4. The School Management should ensure regular and prompt promotion of teachers.
5. The School Management should motivate teachers by giving surprise packages such as soft loans, free medical care, free accommodation, which could motivate them to enhance their job retention.

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