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## WORK ENVIRONMENT AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study determined work environment as predictors of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 15,321 teachers in the 296 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for this study consisted of 767 teachers drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. Two sets of instruments titled "Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ)" and "Teachers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (TJEQ)" were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one from the Department of Educational Foundations in Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Cronbach alpha method was used for a test of internal consistency of the instruments which yielded overall coefficients of 0.82 for WEQ and 0.81 for TJEQ respectively. The researcher, together with five research assistants, collected data for the study using the direct approach method and 98% return was recorded. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that physical and psychosocial work environments are strong and significant predictors of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that principals should partner with education stakeholder and non-governmental

organizations to get financial and material supports to enrich physical work environment for improving teachers' job engagement.

**KEYWORDS:** Work Environment, Teachers, Job Engagement, Physical, Psychosocial, schools

## INTRODUCTION

The progress of mankind is associated with education, a powerful catalyst for acquiring sound knowledge and valuable skills. It is also how individuals could be exposed to health habits and social norms to discern right from wrong and behave responsibly. Through education, a nation can also produce well-informed and skillful citizens who engage in meaningful activities that contribute to the development of the society. Education occurs at various levels in Nigeria, but secondary education is the intermediate stage between basic and tertiary institutions.

Secondary education offers a learning opportunity after basic education to prepare students for work life or further studies in tertiary institutions. Akhibi and Omenyi (2024) noted that secondary education provides opportunities for pupils to acquire additional knowledge, skills and traits beyond what is offered at the basic school level. Secondary education allows students to receive general, technical and vocational training. Specialized training offered to secondary school students helps them acquire more specific skills and knowledge that guide their decisions on career paths. The affairs of a secondary school are managed by the principal.

A principal is the chief administrator and manager who controls the use of the available resources to attain predetermined secondary education goals. It is the principal's duty to control the use of funds, time and facilities by staff members to implement curricular and co-curricular activities of a secondary school. According to Okorji and Nwodo (2024), a principal is the executive officer in charge of planning and overseeing the daily operation of activities and programmes of a secondary school. As the manager, the principal engages in daily decision-making while running the affairs of a secondary school to improve teachers' job engagement.

Teachers' job engagement is the devotion and commitment to work obligations in learning institutions. Teachers' job engagement is defined by Deeble and Oluwuo (2023), as the

willingness of the teaching staff to invest their time and energy to contribute optimally towards the achievement of the educational goals. Teachers' job engagement demonstrates enthusiasm and dedication in carrying out official tasks in secondary schools. Thompson and Unachukwu (2022) opined that teachers' job engagement is the extent to which teaching staff feel passionate and enthusiastic about their jobs and how committed and motivated they are to put in extra effort for the school organization. It is the willingness of teachers to put their energy and efforts into performing their roles and responsibilities in secondary schools.

Teachers' job engagement could be displayed through their behaviour and involvement in various activities in secondary schools. Aboh and Asiyai (2023) asserted that teachers' job engagement is demonstrated through coming to school regularly, making early preparation for teaching in class, completion of their syllabus on time, consultation of their colleagues in solving of their class problems, fulfilment of their assigned activities on time, maintenance of discipline in their class, motivation of students to take part in co-curricular activities, attendance of their class on time, regular preparation of lesson plan and showing of great concern for all learners. Teachers' job engagement is exhibited through lesson preparation, classroom management, actual lesson presentation, marking students' registers, commitment to the job assigned, active involvement in extracurricular activities, and motivating learners to achieve desirable academic performance.

Teachers' job engagement is encouraging in some aspects of their work, but below expectations in some areas of their responsibilities in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Ekwe, Onyia and Ugwu (2023) noted that teachers plan the scheme of work, formulate a timetable, enforce rules, teach, and supervise students in public secondary schools in Enugu State. On the contrary, it appears that there are laxities in the job engagement of teachers as they tend to be absent from work, exhibit lateness to school, use outdated lesson notes, and fail to cover the termly scheme of work in public secondary schools in Enugu State. To buttress this, Onubuleze (2023) noted that teachers often exhibit truant behavior, frequent absenteeism, tardiness, inadequate lesson planning and failure to engage in other unethical conduct related to their profession in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It rests on the shoulders of the principals to improve the job engagement of teachers through shaping the work environment.

Work environment is the surroundings of an organization where daily activities take place to attain common goals. It is the physical conditions, processes, and procedures of performing a

job in schools. Work environment is described by Ermawati, Purnomo and Harsasi (2024) as the social, psychological, and material conditions surrounding the place where staff members are employed to carry out their duties. Work environment is the location and conditions where staff members carry out their daily activities. These conditions are cleanliness, temperature, ventilation and lighting in the buildings in which members of staff operate in an organization. Ossai and Okokoyo (2024) defined work environment as all existing situations such as working hours, physical aspects, legal rights, available space for comparison, organizational climate and workload that affect work in the workplace. Contextually, the work environment is the location, facilities, norms, social characteristics, rules, and communication system in which teachers carry out their official responsibilities in secondary schools.

Work environment encompasses physical surroundings (such as building, furniture, and machinery); social elements (communication and interaction); and work description (such as workload and hours). Many scholars classified the work environment into physical and psychosocial (Bakht et al, 2023; Madukoma and Sangosanya, 2022). This study focused on the listed classification of work environment, which grouped it into physical and psychosocial work environments.

Physical work environment refers to the facilities around teachers that affect how they carry out and complete assigned tasks. Omali and Echedom (2024) noted that the physical work environment encompasses the buildings, sanitary equipment, office, and other facilities surrounding the place of work. A healthy physical work environment could motivate teachers to work harder in secondary schools. Wiraka, Ngui and Mwanzia (2020) noted that the physical work environment contains aspects of the observable workplace environment, including an employee's working conditions, such as safe drinking water, clean air, and ergonomic layout of workstations. The aspects of physical work environment to be used in the study are buildings, furniture, cleanliness, beautification, computer system, office facilities, computers, office space, safe gadgets and water system. Psychological and social factors interact in every physical work setting, creating a psychosocial work environment.

Psychosocial work environment involves communication, motivation, interpersonal relationships, and counselling services in an organization. Osazevbaru and Agbor (2022) posited that psychosocial aspects like working conditions, role congruity, and social support from supervisors could influence staff behavior in the workplace. The psychosocial aspect of

the work environment is concerned with the respect accorded to staff, paying attention to their well-being and the encouragement they receive. Sitepu, Dalimunthe and Sembiring (2020) noted that a psychosocial work environment is reasonable or appropriate if staff members can do their work optimally, healthily, safely, and comfortably. A psychosocial work environment is good if there is effective communication, teamwork, and healthy interpersonal relationships among members of staff. A pleasant psychosocial work environment makes teachers feel comfortable and satisfied, which may contribute to their job engagement in secondary schools.

The incessant exhibition of certain undesirable behaviour by teachers casts doubts on the conducive nature of the work environment in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Onyali and Akpunonu (2024) noted that teachers are frequently excluded from decision-making processes that affect their work environment in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Some aspects of the work environment in public secondary schools in Enugu State seem unsatisfactory. As noted by Akhibi and Omenyi (2024), some public secondary schools in Enugu State appear to grapple with management challenges such as poor learning environment, lack of teamwork, ineffective communication, persistent conflicts, and poor instructional supervision. It is against this background that the researcher delved into this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers are one the crucial resources in secondary schools. They are the facilitators of teaching and learning to impark skills and knowledge that could unlock students' potential. Therefore, teachers' job engagement is paramount to effective planning and delivery of lessons to students in the classroom. However, some teachers disengaged from discharging their duties by demonstrating undesirable work behavior such as arriving late to work and leaving early, misuse of instructional time, skipping some official events, offering little inputs in staff meetings and showing disinterest in always teaching students in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Some unfavourable aspects of the work environment may affect how teachers behave in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Some public secondary schools in Enugu State are grappling with communication breakdown, persistent conflicts, poor interpersonal relationships, dilapidated infrastructure, and insufficient facilities that create an uncondusive work environment. If these undesirable behaviours of teachers are not remedied, then there is a looming danger to the quality of education delivered by students in

secondary schools in Enugu State. As a result, there could be a graduation of poorly trained students who fall short of the skills to contribute to the development of Enugu State in particular and Nigeria at large. Based on these problems, it becomes paramount to investigate work environment as predictors of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate work environment as predictors of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. Physical work environment predicts teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Psychosocial work environment predicts teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of the physical work environment on teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. What is the predictive value of psychosocial work environment on teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 alpha level:

1. Physical work environment does not significantly predict teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Psychosocial work environment does not significantly predict teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **METHODS**

A correlational research design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in Enugu State, one of the five states in South-Eastern Nigeria. The choice of Enugu State as the area of the study is justified by the efforts of the State Government to improve work environment to solve the problem of teachers' job disengagement. The population of the study comprised 15,321 teachers in the 296 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The

sample size for this study consisted of 767 teachers drawn using the proportionate stratified sampling technique.

Two sets of instruments titled “Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ)” and “Teachers’ Job Engagement Questionnaire (TJEQ)” were used for data collection. The researcher developed the instruments from a literature review and consultation with experts in the field of education. WEQ has two clusters, I and II, with 15 and 12 items on physical and psychosocial work environments. WEQ contains 27 items structured on a four-point rating of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. TJEQ has 18 items that measure the job engagement of teachers. The items of the instrument are placed on a 4-point rating of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The face validation of the instruments was determined by three experts, two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instruments were subjected to a test of internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha method. These yielded coefficient values obtained for Clusters I and II of WEQ were 0.80 and 0.83, with the overall reliability of 0.82. On the other hand, the coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained for TJEQ.

The researcher with five research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Enugu State used the direct data collection method. A total of 767 copies of instruments were distributed and 751 copies of questionnaires were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 98 percent return rate. The duly completed and successfully retrieved copies were used for data analysis. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, the coefficient  $r$  and the predictive value was interpreted using the correlation coefficient by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, cited in Wubante (2020), as follows

Predictive Value	Interpretation
.00- .19	Weak Prediction
.20- .39	Fair Prediction
.40- .69	Moderate Prediction
.70- .89	Strong Prediction
-.90- .1.00	Very strong Prediction

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if p-value is equal to or less ( $\leq$ ) than significant value of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected, but if p-value is greater than ( $>$ ), the significant value of .05 the null hypotheses was not rejected.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** What is the predictive value of physical work environment on teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

**Table 1: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Physical Work Environment as a Predictor of Teachers' Job Engagement**

Model	n	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
Physical Work Environment	751	.774	.599	.599	.36550	Strong

Result in Table 1 revealed that the predictive value of physical work environment on teachers' job engagement is 0.774 with a coefficient of determination of 0.599. This shows that 59.9% changes in teachers' job engagement could be attributed to physical work environment. The regression coefficient r of 0.774 indicated that physical work environment is a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State

**Hypothesis One:** Physical work environment does not significantly predict teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

**Table 2: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Physical Work Environment as a Significant Predictor of Teachers' Job Engagement**

Predictor	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P-value	Remark
Physical Work Environment	751	.774	.599	1120.684	.000	*S

\*Significant

Table 2 indicates the simple regression coefficient (r) is 0.774. while the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.599 showing that physical work environment makes 59.9% contribution to the variance in teachers' job engagement. The F (1/751) =1120.684 and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, physical work environment is a significant predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the predictive value of psychosocial work environment on teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

**Table 3: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Psychosocial Work Environment as a Predictor of Teachers' Job Engagement.**

Model	n	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
Psychosocial Work Environment	751	.780	.608	.608	.36144	Strong

Result in Table 3 revealed that the predictive value of psychosocial work environment on teachers' job engagement is 0.780 with a coefficient of determination of 0.608. This shows that psychosocial work environment can make 60.8% changes in teachers' job engagement. The regression coefficient r of 0.780 indicated that psychosocial work environment is a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State

**Hypothesis Two:** Psychosocial work environment does not significantly predict teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

**Table 4: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Psychosocial Work Environment as a Significant Predictor of Teachers' Job Engagement.**

Predictor	n	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P-value	Remark
Psychosocial Work Environment	751	.780	.608	1162.907	.000	*S

\*Significant

It is shown in Table 4 that the simple regression coefficient (r) is 0.780, while the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.608 showing that 60.8% changes in teachers' job engagement could be explained by psychosocial work environment. The F (1/751) = 1162.907 and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, psychosocial work environment is a significant predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The finding of the study revealed that physical work environment is a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The finding could be explained by the fact that good physical work environment makes teachers to be comfortable

in the workplace which contribute to the strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This is in consonance with the finding of Nweke (2025) which showed that physical work environment was a strong and significant correlation of teachers' job engagement of public secondary schools. This also supported the finding of Okafor, Nnebedum and Nwanne (2025) which indicated that physical work environment was a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement of public secondary schools. The similarity in time span, respondents and secondary schools in which the studies were conducted could explain the agreement between the findings. Well-equipped physical work environment provides opportunity for teachers to have access to necessary facilities to enhance their productivity and job engagement in in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Physical work environment promotes the well-being of teachers, reduce work stress and thereby lead to the strong prediction of their job engagement in physical work environment. It was also found that physical work environment is a significant predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This agreed with the finding of Nweke (2025) which indicated that physical work environment was a significant correlation of teachers' job engagement of public secondary schools. This also aligned with the finding of Nnebedum and Nwanne (2025) which indicated that physical work environment was a significant predictor of teachers' job engagement of public secondary schools. The cleanliness and attractiveness of physical work environment could account for the significant predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

It was found that psychosocial work environment is a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This finding could be explained by the fact that psychosocial work environment meets the social and emotional needs of teachers which lead to the strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This agreed with the finding of Okafor, Nnebedum and Nwanne (2025) which indicated that psychosocial work environment was a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement of public secondary schools. The studies were conducted in the same year using teachers as the respondents which could account for the agreement between the findings. This finding is contrary to that of Stephen, Tim and Diep (2020) which indicated that there was a moderate relationship between psychosocial work environment and work engagement of employees. The difference in geographical location, respondents and time span could be responsible for the disagreement between the findings. Good psychosocial work environment

is associated with open communication, teamwork and collegial relationship among teachers which could be responsible for the strong predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

A supportive and caring psychosocial work environment can drive strong job engagement of teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It was also discovered that psychosocial work environment is a significant predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This also concerned with the finding of Okafor, Nnebedum and Nwanne (2025) which indicated that psychosocial work environment was a significant predictor of teachers' job engagement of public secondary schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that work environment is positive and significant predictor of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Work environment create atmosphere that enables teachers to meet their physical, social, psychosocial and emotional needs which contribute to their positive job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. An ideal work environment can make teachers feel supported, valued, trusted and comfortable which they reciprocate through strong job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should partner with education stakeholder and non-governmental organizations to get financial and material supports to enrich physical work environment for improving teachers' job engagement.
2. Principals should partner with professionals to provide mentorship and training required within the schools to improve psychosocial work environment for enhancement of teachers' job engagement.

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