

The Effect of Demographic Variables on Teachers Decision to Quit or Stay on the Teaching Profession

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Abstract

Demographic variables as predicate of public secondary school teachers' decision to quit or study in the teaching profession using Akwa Ibom, Nigeria as a case study was the central focus of this study. In this study two demographic variables were considered namely gender and academic qualification. The study utilized a sample size of 50 teachers randomly sampled from five public secondary schools and the ex-post-facto design. The data was collected using the "Demographic variable and Teachers" Decision to Quit or Stay in Teaching Profession Questionnaire (DVTDQSTPQ). The data was analyzed with an independent t-test and the result at 0.05 level of significance showed that gender and academic qualification had no significant influence on teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession.

Keywords: Demographic, Teaching, Profession, Learning and Teaching

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade the concept of demography has received considerable attention in the literature of teaching. Although there is no unified universal definition of demography. Thus, the term demography has been defined by various people from different points of view. The National Geographic (2021) and the United Nations (UN) Demographic Dictionary (1999) described demography as the scientific study of human population primarily with respect to size, their structure and their development. In the same vein, Murdock (2019) and Hodgkinson (1998) referred to demography as "the study of human population, their size, composition and distribution across place and the process through which population change; births, death and migration are big trees of demography, jointly producing population stability or change. Demographics are the physical characteristics of a population such as age, sex, marital status, family size, education, geographic location and occupation." Consequently, demographics characterize the size and physiognomies of the constantly changing population of human beings (Chesnais, 1999; Salvati, 2017).

Teaching as a human service profession has several demographic variables which instigate most teachers to decide to quit or stay in the profession. These variables include age, gender, religion, qualification, marital status, years of experience to mention but a few. When the demands of workplace places over-bearing burden on individuals in that space, quitting could be the resultant outcome (Dhamija, Gupta & Bag, 2019, Tsutumi et al, 2009).

Notwithstanding, this research examined specifically gender and academic qualification of teachers critically as demographic variables on teachers' decision to quit or stay on teaching. Conservatively, according to studies “17% of new teachers leaving after their first year and 10% of veteran teachers (with 10 or more years of experience) leaving the profession annually, significant numbers of classroom teachers are exiting the profession each year and seeking new career paths” (Blatt, 2016 and Hill, 2019) and that in part could be as a result of many school leaders taking undue advantage of teachers. Despite the onerous functions of teachers in classroom spaces, most administrators tend to assign additional works to them to the tipping point (Jacobs & Teise, 2019).

Plethora studies have indicated the significance of gender as determinant on teachers' decision to quit or stay on in the teaching profession. Mondal (2011), found male teachers having more psychological and physical stress than female teachers as a result of the demands of the profession- work role (such as excessive workload, administrative work, large class size, role ambiguity and conflict (e.g. there is sometimes conflicting demands of school management on the male teachers). Insecurity and financial considerations were found to be two issues that bothers male, probably, because of the positional space a man occupies within the family structure in most communities. Other issues raised in the study are “poor working conditions, little recognition, low remuneration, lack of involvement in decision-making on matters that affect the school, students' recalcitrance as well as the many emotional demands of teaching on them while female teachers expressed concern about the intrinsic facet of their jobs” (Rosenblatt et al., 1999).

On the contrary, Brember (2002) stated that both male and female teachers are faced with great challenges of teaching. He noted that these challenges have led to a poor self-perception, deleterious experiences, low morale, and a toll on them because of the frustrations witnessed thereby resulting into a struggle to espouse a value system that is unique to the teaching profession. Chan and Hui, (1995), on the other hand, opined that female teachers tend to complain of stress placed on them on the job more than males but they (females) are easily adjustable and tolerant due to their feminine nature.

Day (2009) stated that teachers with post graduate degree in their specific subject areas in most secondary schools have less job satisfaction on job role items than the undergraduate and graduate teachers, stressing that majority of them take on administrative position in the school (e.g. as the vice principal of the school) along the line teach their core subject area on regular basis which makes the job very burdensome. In the same vein, irrespective of their high academic qualifications these teachers are exposed to a poor physical work environment, poor working conditions, coupled with poor salary structure, low bonuses and allowances which

result in frustration on the job. These make them have recurrent emotional and physical fatigue, anxiety, petulant and sometimes, depressed about teaching profession (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum & Burke, 2020; Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana & van Veen, 2018; Farber and Miller, 1981). The results from a study conducted by Olivia, Shannon & Lauren (2020) lamented about the lack of support by their school leadership and the consequent effect of this on the envisaged quality of life. This has tremendous correlation on teachers' burnout.

Furthermore, Bhadora and Singh (2010) stated that their academic qualification of teachers does not correlate with their opportunities for promotion, this has been a contentious issue in the administrative body resulting in poor professional relationships with colleagues, inadequate salary and low status of teachers amongst other professions. More so, Jepson & Forrest (2006) emphasized that the unfavourable working conditions of teachers without any regard to their high academic qualifications have contributed in making teaching jobs a misplaced priority in our society by the Nigerian government. On the other hand, Greenglass, Fiksenbaum & Burke (2020) underscored sources of burnout and teacher attrition in their research and found these "to include a combination of the individual's unmet expectations and job conditions such as low participation in decision making, high levels of role conflict, a lack of freedom and autonomy and absence of social support networks." Farmer (2020) and Nygaard (2019) opined that teachers may also experience fatigue and burnout arising from excessive show of compassion especially to the challenged learners. Thus, in our educational system today, no scholarship or educational grants are given to these secondary school teachers to upgrade/develop themselves academically even when they struggle to develop themselves no compensation is given to encourage them, these make them decide whether to quit or stay on the job. It has been observed in Nigeria, and in most countries, that the value and quality of our secondary education is fast depreciating considering the numbers of teachers in the teaching profession. This study was constructed on the premise of examining the effect of gender and academic qualification of teachers as demographic factors in teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession using Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria as a case study. The study is guided by the following hypothesis and research questions:

1. There is no significant influence of gender on teachers' decisions to quit or stay in the teaching profession.
2. There is no significant influence of academic qualification on teachers' decision to quit or stay on teaching profession

The research question raised for this study are:

1. In what way does gender influence teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession?

2. How can teachers' academic qualification influence their decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession?

The significance of this study is to instigate the government to improve teachers' welfare by improving their working conditions, salary structure, promote them promptly, give them scholarship and financial grants to improve on their academic qualifications which will also lead to their qualitative and efficient teaching. Thus, motivating them to stay on the job rather than to quit.

METHOD

This study utilized the ex-post-facto research design. This design was useful because the variables were not subjected to any manipulation. The population for this study consisted of all teachers in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria. There are 3,835 under the management of the State Secondary Education Board. A sample of 50 (fifty) respondents was selected from the population above using simple random sampling technique. Five public secondary schools were randomly selected and 10 (ten) teachers from each school were taken as respondents.

The instrument for data collection was a designed instrument known as "Demographic variable and Teachers' Decision to Quit or stay on Teaching Profession Questionnaire (DVTDQSTPQ)". The instrument was divided into two parts. The first part was called demographic Variable Questionnaire (DVQ) which comprised two sections. Each section was made up of two options, which each respondent was expected to tick one option. The second part was known as Teacher Decision to Quit or stay in teaching profession Questionnaire "TDQSQ)". This was made up of seven items to be responded to using a four-point Likert scale. The instrument (DVTDQSQ) was submitted to a specialist in measurement and evaluation in the University of Uyo for corrections. The necessary corrections, modifications and amendments were made. thereafter, the instrument was judged valid to measure what it was meant to measure. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Method. This method is useful because the options were Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (SD) and Strongly Disagree (SD). With the reliability coefficient of 0.82, the instrument was considered appropriate for the study. The instruments were administered using three research assistants. The questionnaires were retrieved on completion and used for data analysis. The data generated from the questionnaire was analyzed using independent t-test. While the research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, the null hypotheses were tested using independent t-test analysis at 00.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1, in what way does gender influence teachers' decision to quit or stay in teaching profession?

Table 1. Mean and Standard deviation for the influence of gender on teachers' decision to quit or stay on teaching profession.

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Item Mean
Male Teachers	20	12.55	1.07	1.79
Female Teachers	30	12.77	1.09	1.82

As observed in Table 1, the values of mean, standard deviation and item mean for both male and female teachers are within the same range. This implies that there is no significant difference in the decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession with respect to gender.

Research question 2, how can teachers' academic qualification influence teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation for the influence of academic qualification on teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Item Mean
With Teaching qualification	30	11.70	1.93	1.67
Without Teaching qualification	20	11.90	0.79	1.70

As shown in Table 2, the values of mean, standard deviation and item mean for qualified and unqualified teachers are almost the same. This means that they do not differ in their decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 1, here is no significant influence of gender on teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession.

Table 3. Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession

Variables	N	X	SD	S ²	t-cal
Male	20	12.55	1.09	1.21	0.701
Female	30	12.77	1.07	1.15	

Not significant at 0.05 level; df = 48; t_{crit} = 2.01

Table 3 presents the obtained t-value as (0.701). The value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (2.01) at 0.05 alpha level, with 48 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (0.701) was lower than the critical t-value (2.01). Hence, the result was not significant. This caused the null hypothesis 1 to be retained meaning that male and female teachers do not differ in their decision to quit or stay in teaching profession.

Hypothesis 2, there is no significant influence of academic qualification on teachers' decision to stay or quit the teaching profession.

Table 4. Independent t-test analysis of the influence of academic qualification on teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession

Variables	N	X	SD	S ²	t-cal
Qualifies teachers	30	11.7	1.93	3.74	0.513
Unqualified teachers	20	11.9	0.79	0.62	

Not significant at 0.05 level; df = 48; tcrit = 2.01

Table 4, presents the obtained t-value as (0.513), the value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (2.01) at 0.05 alpha level; with 48 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (0.513) was lower than the critical t-value (2.01). Hence, the result was not significant. This implies that academic qualification of teachers does not influence their decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession.

Gender and teachers' decision to quit or stay in teaching profession in Akwa Ibom State. The result of the analysis presented in Table 3 showed that there was no significant influence of gender on teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This is so because the calculated t-value (0.701) was lower than the critical t-value (2.01) at 0.05 alpha level with 48 degree of freedom. This result is consistent with Brember's (2002) submission that both male and female teachers are faced with plethora of challenges in classroom situations. These experience are laced with poor self-esteem, and generally unpleasant attitudinal dispositions.

Academic qualification and teachers' decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession. In Table 4, the result obtained showed negative significance due to the fact that the calculated t-value (2.01) at 0.05 alpha level, with 48 degree of freedom. This result implies that teachers with teaching qualification and those without teaching qualification do not differ in their decision to quit or staff in the teaching profession. This result is supported by Forrest (2006) opined that the unfavourable working conditions of teachers without any regard to their high academic qualification have contributed in making teaching job a misplaced priority in our society by the Nigerian government. Equally, the result is in consonance with Farmer (2020) and Nygaard (2019) summation of teachers principally experiencing compassion fatigue and burnout from relentlessly working with challenged students and with unsupportive parents and administrators, thereby enhancing an educational workplace that toxic, stressful and embedded with a culture that encourages teachers' attrition.

CONCLUSION

The decision to quit or stay in the teaching profession by any teacher was not determined by gender or academic qualification but by the level of satisfaction in the job. On the basis of the findings of this study, the government should try as much as possible to improve teachers'

welfare by reviewing their salary structure positively, promoting them promptly and giving them free medical care which will serve as a motivating factor on the job. Scholarships and financial grants should also be given to teachers by the government which will help them to improve on their academic qualifications thereby enhancing their effective and qualitative job performance. Government should also improve the school environment such as renovating the schools, providing good furniture for teachers and students and making available all the necessary instructional materials which will make the teaching – learning process meaningful.

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