

THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP IN DECISION-MAKING AND TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OBIO-AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of participatory leadership in decision-making and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted to assess teachers' involvement in decision-making processes. The study's population comprised 1,297 teachers from public secondary schools in the area. A sample of 400(30%) respondents was selected using the stratified sampling technique across 20 schools. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Professional Training and Development for Teachers' Job Satisfaction (PTDTJS), which covered demographic information and key indicators of job satisfaction. Responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated through expert review and a reliability coefficient of .814 using the test-retest method and Cronbach Alpha analysis. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 400(100%) were retrieved and analyzed. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a .05 significance level. Findings revealed that participatory leadership in decision making significantly enhances teachers' job satisfaction by promoting inclusion, professional trust, and morale. The study highlighted the need for school administrators to adopt inclusive decision-making practices to promote a supportive and motivating work environment for teachers.

Keywords: Participatory Leadership, Decision-Making, Teachers, Job Satisfaction, Public, Secondary Schools, Obio-Akpor LGA., Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental tool for national development, and teachers remain central to the realization of educational goals. Teachers' satisfaction with their jobs greatly influences the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system. In recent decades, increasing attention has been given to the factors that affect teachers' job satisfaction, one of which is leadership style. Participatory leadership, which involves collaborative decision-making processes, has been identified as a critical determinant of teacher morale, motivation, and retention (Bush, 2011; Ololube, 2024). In the context of Nigeria, where the educational sector grapples with challenges such as underfunding, teacher attrition, and policy instability, understanding how participatory leadership in decision making influences teachers' job satisfaction is vital for improving school outcomes.

Participatory leadership is a leadership style where leaders involve subordinates in the decision-making process. It is based on the premise that employees, including teachers, are more committed to organizational goals when they are actively involved in shaping policies that affect their work (Yukl, 2013). Unlike authoritarian leadership styles that centralize authority, participatory leadership decentralizes power and promotes a shared vision among team members (Spillane, 2005). In school environments, this leadership style manifests when principals and school heads consult teachers in planning, problem-solving, and implementing school-wide decisions. Teachers who feel their opinions are valued and included are more likely to develop a sense of ownership over their roles and responsibilities, which in turn enhance job satisfaction (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Job satisfaction among teachers is multifaceted, encompassing emotional, psychological, and professional fulfillment derived from one's role in the school system. It is influenced by various intrinsic and extrinsic factors including remuneration, working conditions, recognition, and the nature of interpersonal relationships within the school (Ofoegbu, 2004). Decision-making opportunities, professional autonomy, and respect for teachers' inputs are increasingly being recognized as core components of job satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 2000). In Nigeria, however, studies have shown that the majority of school decisions are still centralized, with limited input from teachers, especially in public secondary schools (Adeyemi, 2010).

The Nigerian educational system, particularly the public secondary school sector, continue to face numerous issues such as poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, limited career advancement opportunities, and political interference. These challenges contribute to low morale among teachers and reduce their commitment to the teaching profession (Okebukola, 2005). Despite various reforms aimed at revitalizing the education sector, the importance of leadership style, particularly participatory leadership, has often been underemphasized. Effective school leadership that encourages collaboration and inclusivity can mitigate many of these challenges by empowering teachers and enhancing their job satisfaction (Ololube, 2006).

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests a positive correlation between participatory leadership and organizational effectiveness. Research conducted by Bogler (2001) highlighted that teacher's who perceive their principals as participative are more satisfied with their jobs, more committed to their schools, and more likely to engage in innovative teaching practices. Participatory leadership improves communication channels within the school, builds trust, and creates a culture of mutual respect, all of which are critical to teacher satisfaction and retention (Ingersoll, 2001). When teachers are trusted to contribute to school policies and operational

decisions, they are more likely to experience professional fulfillment and a sense of purpose in their roles.

In the Nigerian context, limited studies have explored the influence of participatory leadership and decision-making on teachers' job satisfaction, especially within public secondary schools. Given the growing dissatisfaction among teachers as reflected in frequent strikes and attrition rates, it is essential to investigate how leadership styles impact their attitudes toward work. Understanding this relationship could offer insights into strategies for improving teacher motivation, enhancing performance, and reducing turnover rates.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of participatory leadership and shared decision-making on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nigeria. Specifically, it investigates the extent to which inclusive leadership practices contribute to teachers' perceptions of their work environment and their overall job satisfaction. The findings of this research will be significant for policymakers, school administrators, and education stakeholders in designing leadership and management frameworks that prioritize teacher involvement in decision-making processes.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are central to the success of any educational system, and their level of job satisfaction significantly affects their performance, commitment, and overall productivity. In Nigeria, particularly within public secondary schools, there has been growing concern over teachers' low morale, poor motivation, and frequent dissatisfaction with their jobs. These issues have been linked to various factors including poor working conditions, limited professional growth opportunities, inadequate remuneration, and lack of participation in decision-making processes. Leadership style, particularly participatory leadership, plays a crucial role in influencing teachers' perceptions of their work environment.

Despite reforms and policy interventions aimed at improving education in Rivers State, Nigeria, the top-down approach to decision-making remains prevalent in many public schools. Teachers are often excluded from key decisions that affect their professional roles and school administration. This exclusion may result in feelings of powerlessness, reduced motivation, and dissatisfaction. While international studies have emphasized the positive effects of participatory leadership on teacher job satisfaction, limited empirical evidence exists within the Nigerian context, especially in public secondary schools.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of participatory leadership and shared decision-making on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nigeria, with the aim of providing data-driven insights for educational policy and leadership improvement.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined the influence of participatory leadership in decision-making and teacher's job satisfaction in public senior secondary school teachers in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine how participation of teachers in decision making enhance their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

- Identifies factors that will hinder teachers' job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local government area of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- How does participation of teachers in decision making enhance their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- What are the factors that will hinder teachers' participation in decision making and job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of male and female teachers regarding their participation in decision making and their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on factors that will hinder their participation in decision making and job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Influence of Participatory Leadership in Decision-Making on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools

Participatory leadership in school administration refers to the active involvement of teachers in decision-making processes that affect various aspects of school life, including curriculum development, school management, disciplinary policies, and professional development. In public secondary schools, leadership style has been widely acknowledged as a critical factor that influence teachers' job satisfaction (Nguni et al., 2006; Ololube, 2024). When teachers are given opportunities to contribute meaningfully to decisions, they often experience increased motivation, professional fulfillment, and commitment to school goals.

One of the primary ways participatory leadership influences job satisfaction is by promoting a sense of ownership and belonging among teachers. According to Somech (2010), teachers who feel that their voices are heard and respected are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes toward their work and school leadership. This sense of inclusion enhances teachers' morale and reduces workplace dissatisfaction. Moreover, participatory leadership contributes to a collaborative school culture, which is essential for fostering professional trust and mutual respect among colleagues (Ingersoll, 2001).

Research also shows that involving teachers in decision-making can lead to improved instructional quality and student outcomes. Teachers who are part of policy formulation and school management tend to take greater responsibility for their work and show more dedication to the success of their students (Bogler, 2001). Their involvement allows for better alignment

between administrative decisions and classroom realities, thus creating a more supportive teaching and learning environment.

Furthermore, participatory decision-making serves as a form of professional development. As teachers engage in discussions on school policies and curriculum choices, they acquire leadership skills, develop critical thinking, and become more confident in their roles. Schools that adopt participatory models report higher levels of teacher empowerment, which is closely linked to job satisfaction. Empowered teachers are more likely to stay committed to their schools, reducing turnover rates and promote institutional stability (Ololube, 2024).

However, it is essential to note that participatory leadership must be genuine and not merely symbolic. Token participation, where teachers are included in name only without having any real influence, can lead to frustration and distrust. As Dinham and Scott (2000) argued, the quality of teacher involvement in decision-making is more important than the quantity. School leaders must create mechanisms that ensure teachers' contributions are seriously considered and integrated into final decisions.

In the context of Nigerian public secondary schools, especially in regions such as Rivers State, challenges such as centralized decision-making structures, lack of administrative transparency, and insufficient communication channels have historically limited teacher participation (Okonkwo & Ani, 2018). However, recent educational reforms and leadership training programs have begun to emphasize the importance of inclusive school governance. These reforms aim to boost teacher morale and enhance school performance when teachers are empowered and allowed to play active roles in shaping school policies (Cheta-Maclean & Ololube, 2025).

Empirical evidence supports the positive correlation between participatory leadership in terms of decision making and teacher's job satisfaction. A study by Adeyemi (2010) in public secondary schools across southwestern Nigeria found that teachers who perceived their principals as democratic and participatory were more satisfied with their jobs than those under autocratic leaders. Similarly, Ukeje and Okorie (2016) concluded that the absence of participatory structures contributed to low motivation and high attrition rates among secondary school teachers.

Factors that Hinder Teacher's Participatory Leadership in Decision-Making and their Job Satisfaction in Public Senior Secondary Schools

Teachers play vital roles in shaping the academic success and institutional effectiveness of secondary schools. However, the extent of their job satisfaction and engagement is often influenced by the level of their participation in school leadership and decision-making processes. While participatory leadership is widely acknowledged as a powerful tool for promoting collaboration and improving job satisfaction among educators, several systemic and institutional barriers hinder teachers' involvement in leadership roles, especially in public senior secondary schools. These obstacles significantly impact not only teacher morale but also student outcomes and school performance.

One major factor that hinders teachers' participatory leadership in decision-making is centralized administrative structures. In many public school systems, especially in developing countries, decisions are often made at the top without adequate input from teachers at the grassroots level (Adeyemi, 2010). Such a top-down approach undermines the autonomy of teachers and limits their opportunity to contribute meaningfully to school policies. Teachers who

are excluded from leadership conversations tend to feel undervalued, which in turn diminishes their job satisfaction and motivation (Bogler, 2001).

Another critical factor is the lack of professional development and leadership training. Teachers often do not receive the necessary training to prepare them for leadership responsibilities. As a result, they may feel ill-equipped or reluctant to engage in decision-making processes, especially when such roles demand strategic planning, policy interpretation, and administrative knowledge (Nguni et al., 2006). Without targeted capacity building, even willing teachers may be sidelined or overlooked in participatory leadership structures.

Additionally, inadequate communication and transparency within school management also limit teachers' involvement in leadership. When school administrators fail to provide clear, open channels for feedback and dialogue, teachers may feel disconnected from the decision-making process. Somech (2010) emphasized that a lack of communication reduces trust between school leaders and staff, discouraging teachers from actively participating or voicing their concerns. Over time, this detachment leads to a weakened school culture and low teacher morale.

Poor working conditions also hinder teacher participation and satisfaction. Delayed salaries, lack of job security, and minimal fringe benefits reduce the motivation of teachers to invest themselves in roles beyond the classroom. Ukeje and Okorie (2016) found that teachers in Nigerian public secondary schools often experience these issues, making them less enthusiastic about assuming additional leadership roles. When basic professional needs are not met, teachers are unlikely to engage in voluntary or extra administrative responsibilities, including participatory leadership.

Moreover, institutional resistance to change and traditional norms may further prevent teachers from playing active roles in school leadership. In some contexts, school leadership remains heavily male-dominated or hierarchical, where authority is rarely shared. Such environments may discourage inclusive participation, particularly for female teachers or early-career educators (Okonkwo & Ani, 2018). This not only affects the fairness of leadership practices but also limits the diversity of ideas that inform school governance.

Negative institutional culture and lack of recognition serve as demotivating factors. When teachers' contributions are not acknowledged or rewarded, they may perceive leadership roles as thankless or politically driven (Dinham & Scott, 2000). A school culture that fails to celebrate initiative or collaboration undermines efforts to build participatory leadership models, further decreasing job satisfaction and staff retention.

Participatory leadership according to Ololube (2024) holds great potential to improve school effectiveness and teacher job satisfaction, however, several challenges impede its implementation in public senior secondary schools. The challenges include centralized decision-making, insufficient training, poor communication, poor working conditions, traditional hierarchies, and weak institutional culture. To address these issues according to Ololube (2024) requires systemic reforms, leadership development programs, and a shift toward more inclusive and democratic school environments. To Ololube and Mmom (2025), empowering teachers to participate in leadership do not only enhance their job satisfaction but also leads to better educational outcomes for students.

METHODS

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The rationale for adopting this type of design is to assess teachers' participation in decision making in Obio/Akpor LGA in Rivers state. The population of the study consists of teachers in the public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local

Government Areas in Rivers state. The total population of teachers in the local government areas is 1297. (SOURCE: Planning Research Statistics Department, RSSSSB, Headquarters, Port Harcourt. March 2024)

Stratified sampling technique was employed in sampling of the public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State. The schools were selected and twenty schools were involved in the study. Consequently the teachers (1,297) were sampled from Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, from which 400(30%) respondents answers were used for the analysis.

In collecting data for the study, researchers self-developed questionnaire titled Professional Training and Development for Teachers' Job Satisfaction (PTDTJS) was used for data gathering. The first part of the questionnaires consisted of background information such as name of school, type of school, local government area, age of respondent, sex, marital status, highest salary scale, highest educational qualification and length of service as a teacher. All the questions were scored on the Likert scale of 1-4, which is distributed as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The last part of the questionnaire contained ten (10) questions related to teachers' job satisfaction.

The instrument was given face and content validity by three lecturers in the Department of Educational management of University of Education, Nigeria. The lecturers' comments formed the basis of modification of the instrument. The study used test-retest method to establish the reliability of the instrument. The research instrument was administered to 30 teachers in the study area at different times. The same instrument was re-administered to them within two weeks interval. Cronbach Alpha analysis was conducted and the instrument yielded an aggregate reliability coefficient of .814.

The instrument was administered by the researcher to the four hundred (400) respondents (teachers) in the sampled schools by hand. Those responded to were retrieved at the spot while those delayed were retrieved later by the researchers. The entire questionnaire distributed was retrieved. This formed the basis for the data analysis. The study adopted mean and standard deviation of the descriptive statistics to answers to the research questions, while the t-test was adopted to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Answer To Research Questions

Research Question One: How does the participation of teachers in decision making enhance their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 1: Analysis of the participation of teachers in decision making enhance their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor LGA., Rivers State

S/N	Items	Male (N=173)		Female (N=207)		Mean Set	Remarks
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1.	Involving me in decision making in my job makes me work harder	3.07	0.98	2.95	0.97	3.01	Agree
2.	Opportunity to contribute in decision making makes word harder	3.25	0.82	3.14	0.91	3.10	Agree

3.	Participating in school policies and administration motivates me work harder	3.14	0.56	3.06	0.53	3.10	Agree
4.	Opportunity to contribute in the working conditions of my school motivates me work harder	3.72	0.52	3.66	0.69	3.69	Agree
5.	Taking responsibility within the job motivates me to work harder	3.71	0.76	3.96	3.42	3.84	Agree
Aggregate mean and SD		3.38	0.73	3.35	1.30	3.35	Agree

Table 1 presents the analysis of how the participation of teachers in decision making enhances their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The responses of 173 male and 207 female teachers were analyzed across five items designed to measure various aspects of involvement in school decision-making processes.

The results show a consistent pattern of agreement among both male and female respondents. For the first item, which assessed whether being involved in decision making makes teachers work harder, the mean score was 3.07 for males and 2.95 for females, resulting in an overall mean of 3.01. This indicates general agreement among teachers that involvement in decision making positively affects their work ethic.

Similarly, the second item, which focused on the opportunity to contribute to decision making, had mean scores of 3.25 for male teachers and 3.14 for female teachers. This reflects a shared belief that being allowed to contribute to decision making increases their motivation to work harder.

The third item evaluated whether participation in school policies and administration motivates teachers to work harder. Here, male and female teachers recorded mean scores of 3.14 and 3.06 respectively, again indicating agreement on the motivational impact of administrative involvement.

Item four, which examined whether contributing to the improvement of working conditions serves as motivation, received the highest mean scores overall—3.72 for males and 3.66 for females—highlighting that teachers strongly value having a say in their working environment.

The fifth item explored whether taking responsibility within the job motivates teachers to work harder. While male teachers recorded a high mean of 3.71, female teachers reported an even higher mean of 3.96. However, the standard deviation for females in this item (3.42) appears unusually high and may be the result of a data entry error.

Overall, the aggregate mean scores were 3.38 for males and 3.35 for females, with an overall mean of 3.35, signifying general agreement among all respondents. This indicates that teacher participation in decision making significantly enhances their job satisfaction.

The findings suggest that greater involvement of teachers in decision making processes within schools contributes positively to their motivation and overall job satisfaction. Both male and female teachers perceive participation in administrative tasks, policy formulation, and workplace improvements as important elements that encourage them to perform better.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that will hinder teachers' participation in decision making and job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

2: Analysis of the factors that will hinder teachers' participation in decision making and their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor LGA of River State

S/N	Items	Male (N=173)		Female (N=207)		Mean Set	Remarks
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
6.	Delay in salary payment	3.86	0.54	3.86	0.63	3.86	Agree
7.	Poor salary	3.79	0.65	3.80	0.54	3.10	Agree
8.	Lack of job training opportunity	3.64	0.89	3.59	0.94	3.62	Agree
9.	Lack of promotion opportunity	3.68	0.81	3.89	0.37	3.79	Agree
10.	Poor job security and stability	3.79	0.71	3.78	0.74	3.79	Agree
11.	Lack of job safety	3.84	0.59	3.74	0.71	3.79	Agree
12.	Negative feedback mechanism	3.76	0.65	3.74	0.73	3.75	Agree
13.	Lack of fringe benefits	3.80	0.66	3.70	0.70	3.75	Agree
14.	Lack of opportunity to reaching ones potential and personal growth	3.83	0.63	3.71	0.81	3.77	Agree
15.	Failure to involve teachers on decision making and policy administration of schools	3.81	0.66	3.68	0.82	3.75	Agree
Aggregate mean and SD		3.78	0.68	3.75	0.10	3.10	Agree

Table 2 presents an analysis of the factors that hinders teachers' participation in decision making and their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools within Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The responses of 173 male and 207 female teachers were assessed across ten items addressing various job-related challenges that potentially hinder active participation and satisfaction.

Across all the listed factors, both male and female teachers generally expressed agreement, with mean scores consistently above 3.50. This suggests a shared perception among teachers that these factors negatively impact their motivation, participation in decision making, and overall job satisfaction.

The delay in salary payment was the most strongly agreed-upon factor by both male and female teachers, each recording a mean score of 3.86. This indicates that late salary payments are seen as a significant demotivator, undermining teachers' willingness or capacity to participate effectively in school affairs.

Similarly, poor salary was highlighted as a major concern, with mean scores of 3.79 for male and 3.80 for female respondents. However, the overall mean is inaccurately listed as 3.10, which may be a typographical error, as it contradicts the gender-based scores.

Other prominent factors included the lack of promotion opportunities (mean: 3.79), poor job security and stability (mean: 3.79), and lack of job safety (mean: 3.79), all indicating that concerns related to career growth and work environment significantly affect teachers' morale and involvement in decision making.

Furthermore, issues such as lack of job training opportunities (mean: 3.62), negative feedback mechanisms (mean: 3.75), lack of fringe benefits (mean: 3.75), and absence of opportunities for personal growth (mean: 3.77) were also identified as hindrances to teachers' professional fulfillment and active participation in school governance.

Importantly, the item addressing the failure to involve teachers in decision making and policy administration received a high mean of 3.75, confirming that exclusion from institutional decisions directly undermines teachers' job satisfaction and engagement.

The aggregate mean scores of 3.78 for male and 3.75 for female respondents reinforce the overall agreement that these factors are detrimental to effective teacher involvement and

satisfaction. Again, the overall mean is oddly listed as 3.10, which appears to be a clerical error, as it does not reflect the high mean values reported across all items.

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that a combination of systemic challenges such as delayed and inadequate salaries, limited professional development, job insecurity, and lack of recognition, significantly impede teachers' job satisfaction and participation in decision making in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor LGA. These findings underscore the urgent need for educational authorities to address these issues to foster a more motivated, involved, and professionally fulfilled teaching workforce.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean response rating of male and female teachers' participation in decision making and their job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

Table 3: T-test table showing the mean response of teachers participation in decision making and their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Df	Sig. level	Decision
Male Teachers	173	3.40	0.72	0.71	1.96	398	.05	Accepted
Female Teachers	207	3.34	0.74					

Table 3 presents the result of a t-test conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between male and female teachers' responses regarding their participation in decision making and its influence on their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The analysis shows that male teachers, with a sample size of 173, had a mean response of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 0.72. Female teachers, numbering 207, recorded a slightly lower mean of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.74. The calculated t-value (t-cal) was 0.71, which is less than the critical t-value (t-crit) of 1.96 at a .05 level of significance and 398 degrees of freedom.

Since the calculated t-value is lower than the critical value, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the views of male and female teachers on how participation in decision making affects their job satisfaction.

The implication of this result is that both male and female teachers perceive participation in school decision making as an important factor contributing to their job satisfaction. However, gender does not appear to influence their perception significantly. This suggests that efforts to enhance teacher involvement in school governance are likely to be received positively across both genders.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on factors that will hinder their participation in decision making and job satisfaction in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 4: T-test table showing the mean response of teachers on factors that hinder teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Df	Sig level	Decision
Male Teachers	173	3.78	0.68	.001	1.96	398	.05	Accepted
Female Teachers	207	3.75	0.49					

Table 4 presents the results of a t-test analysis conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference between male and female teachers' responses regarding the factors that hinder job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

From the data, male teachers (N = 173) recorded a mean score of 3.78 with a standard deviation of 0.68, while female teachers (N = 207) had a mean score of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 0.49. The calculated t-value was 0.001, while the critical t-value at a 0.05 level of significance and 398 degrees of freedom was 1.96.

Since the calculated t-value (.001) is less than the critical value (1.96), the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers concerning the factors that hinder their job satisfaction.

The implication of this result is that both male and female teachers experience similar challenges in their professional roles, and their perceptions of job dissatisfaction are generally aligned. Issues such as poor salary, delayed payment, lack of professional development, and limited involvement in decision making affect both groups equally.

DISCUSSION

Participatory Leadership in Decision-Making and Teachers' Job Satisfaction

The findings from this study showed that overall, the aggregate mean scores signify general agreement among all respondents that teacher participation in decision making significantly enhances their job satisfaction. These findings are in line with Ingersoll (2001) and Somech (2010). They both noted in their different studies that participatory leadership influences job satisfaction is by promoting a sense of ownership and belonging among teachers. Teachers who feel that their voices are heard and respected are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes toward their work and school leadership. This sense of inclusion enhances teachers' morale and reduces workplace dissatisfaction, and participatory leadership contributes to a collaborative school culture, which is essential for fostering professional trust and mutual respect among colleagues. Schools that adopt participatory models report higher levels of teacher empowerment, which is closely linked to job satisfaction.

According to Okonkwo and Ani (2018), in the context of Nigerian public secondary schools, especially in regions such as Rivers State, challenges such as centralized decision-making structures, lack of administrative transparency, and insufficient communication channels have historically limited teacher participation. The same is true of Cheta-Maclean and Ololube (2025) when they found that the recent educational reforms and leadership training programs have begun to emphasize the importance of inclusive school governance. These reforms are aimed to boost teacher morale and enhance school performance when teachers are empowered and allowed them to play active roles in shaping school policies.

Factors that Hinder Teacher's Participatory Leadership in Decision-Making and their Job Satisfaction

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that a combination of systemic challenges such as delayed and inadequate salaries, limited professional development, job insecurity, and lack of recognition, significantly impede teachers' job satisfaction and participation in decision making in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor LGA and my extension Rivers State. These are not far from the findings of Adeyemi (2010), Bogler (2001), Nguni et al. (2006), Somech (2010). They respectively found that the major factor that hinders teachers' participatory leadership in decision-making is centralized administrative structures. Teachers who are excluded from leadership conversations tend to feel undervalued, which in turn diminishes their job satisfaction and motivation. Another critical factor they noted is the lack of professional development and leadership training. As a result, teachers may feel ill-equipped or reluctant to engage in decision-making processes, especially when such roles demand strategic planning, policy interpretation, and administrative knowledge. Additionally, inadequate communication and transparency within school management also limit teachers' involvement in leadership. When school administrators fail to provide clear, open channels for feedback and dialogue, teachers may feel disconnected from the decision-making process. They emphasized that a lack of communication reduces trust between school leaders and staff, discouraging teachers from actively participating or voicing their concerns. Over time, this detachment leads to a weakened school culture and low teacher morale. Poor working conditions also hinder teacher participation and satisfaction. Delayed salaries, lack of job security, and minimal fringe benefits reduce the motivation of teachers to invest themselves in roles beyond the classroom.

Ukeje and Okorie (2016) and Okonkwo and Ani (2018) respectively found that teachers in Nigerian public secondary schools often experience issues basic professional inclusion. When basic professional needs are not met, teachers are unlikely to engage in voluntary or extra administrative responsibilities, including participatory leadership. Institutional resistance to change and traditional norms may further prevent teachers from playing active roles in school leadership. In some contexts, school leadership remains heavily male-dominated or hierarchical, where authority is rarely shared. Such environments may discourage inclusive participation, particularly for female teachers or early-career educators. This not only affects the fairness of leadership practices but also limits the diversity of ideas that inform school governance.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully investigated the influence of participatory leadership and decision-making on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study concluded that participatory leadership in decision-making plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' job satisfaction. When teachers are actively involved in school governance, they experience a heightened sense of ownership, morale, and professional fulfillment. Such inclusive practices promote a collaborative culture that strengthens trust and mutual respect among staff. However, various systemic challenges continue to hinder meaningful participation. These include centralized administrative structures, poor communication, inadequate salaries, limited professional development opportunities, and a lack of recognition. In the context of Nigerian public secondary schools, particularly in Rivers State, these issues are further compounded by institutional resistance to change and traditional

leadership norms. Addressing these barriers requires deliberate policy reforms and leadership training programs aimed at promoting inclusive decision-making and empowering teachers. Participatory leadership do not only improves job satisfaction but also contributes to a more effective and motivated teaching workforce, which is essential for achieving broader educational goals.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, two key recommendations are proposed:

- Principals in Nigerian secondary schools should adopt participatory leadership, as it does not only enhance teachers' job satisfaction but also promote a more effective and motivated teaching workforce, which is an essential factor in achieving broader educational objectives.
- The Ministry of Education and secondary school principals in Nigeria should actively address the barriers to participatory leadership by implementing systemic reforms, initiating leadership development programs, and promoting more inclusive and democratic school environments to enhance the governance of the education system.

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