

The Complex Influence of School Organizational Culture on Teachers' Commitment to the Teaching Profession (Pengaruh Budaya Organisasi Sekolah yang Kompleks terhadap Komitmen Guru dalam Profesi Pendidikan)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of school organizational culture on public basic school teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. A total of 300 randomly selected public basic school teachers in the Ashaiman community of Tema, Ghana completed questionnaire, comprising 44 close ended items related to four main constructs derived from the literature. The Cronbach's alpha was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient was 0.86. Data for the study was analysed using means, standard deviations and multiple regression analysis. It was found that though school organizational culture is positively perceived by teachers, it does not directly predict their commitment to the teaching profession. It does so only if it boosts the teachers' job satisfaction, and also if this satisfaction ignites teachers' commitment to the school they find themselves in. It is therefore recommended that head masters of basic schools should nurture positive and attractive school organizational culture in their schools. This will in turn bring about teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to the school. This condition will in the long run lead to the general commitment of teachers to the teaching profession.

Keywords: Commitment; job satisfaction; school organizational culture; the teaching profession; public basic school

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyiasat pengaruh budaya organisasi sekolah terhadap komitmen guru-guru sekolah awam dengan profesion keguruan. Seramai 300 orang guru sekolah yang dipilih secara rawak dalam komuniti Ashaiman di daerah Tema, Ghana dipilih untuk menjawab soal selidik yang terdiri daripada 44 item yang dibina berdasarkan empat konstruk utama yang diperolehi daripada pembaca literatur. Alfa Cronbach telah digunakan untuk menguji kebolehpercayaan instrumen tersebut. Pekali kebolehpercayaan ialah 0.86. Data kajian dianalisis dengan menggunakan min, sisihan piawai dan analisis regresi berganda. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun budaya organisasi sekolah adalah positif daripada perspektif guru, tetapi ia bukanlah faktor utama dalam menentukan komitmen guru. Budaya organisasi sekolah akan meningkatkan komitmen dan kepuasan kerja guru jika guru perkara itu dialami sendiri oleh guru. Oleh itu, adalah disyorkan bahawa pengetua/guru besar sekolah perlu memupuk budaya organisasi sekolah yang positif dan menarik di sekolah mereka. Hal ini akan membawa kepuasan kerja dan komitmen guru kepada sekolah. Untuk jangka masa panjang, budaya organisasi sekolah yang positif akan meningkatkan komitmen guru terhadap profesion keguruan.

Kata kunci: Komitmen; kepuasan kerja; sekolah budaya organisasi; profesion perguruan; sekolah asas awam

INTRODUCTION

Education as a social institution is recognised all over the world as a key to national development. Education is responsible for developing the character and outlook of individuals in the pursuit of national values and aspirations. It thus makes the individual a useful, responsible and competent member of society, hence the recognition that education, and quality education as that, is the key that unlocks the door to modernity. This explains why developing countries spend huge proportions of their incomes on the provision of education to their citizens (Ornstein & Levine 2006).

The quest for quality necessitated the introduction of several educational reforms in Ghana. In 2002, the

President set up a committee to review the reports of all previous education reform committees. The report of the committee showed lack of commitment among various segments of the education sector work force. This lack of commitment has been traced to lack of job satisfaction among the teacher corps (Darko 2009).

Indeed, there have been media reports on teachers refusing to accept posting to certain parts of the country. They are reported to be engaging in other activities at the expense of teaching. They are also reported to be habitual late comers and absentees (Darko 2009). Consequential actors in the education domain have also corroborated the media reports. They still express concern about the rate at which teachers absent themselves from school and also about the rate at which they quit some schools or

leave the teaching profession altogether (Bennell 2004). In the opinion of the authors of this paper, the failings of education could stem from the prevalent poor school climates and its consequent lack of satisfaction among teachers, leading to lack of commitment to the school, and finally the cumulating effect on commitment to the teaching profession.

In other words, a weak school organizational culture negatively influences teacher's satisfaction with their job in the school, as well as their commitment to the school and the teaching. This in the long run influence teaching and learning in the school negatively. When teachers are not satisfied with what is offered them in the school they tend to be peeved and their motivation levels will naturally be low. Teaching and learning outcomes will naturally be low too. Similarly, when teachers are not committed to the school they tend to work perfunctorily and students learning are correspondingly low.

Study leave with pay, distance education programmes and other interventions have been among measures put in place by the Ghana Education Service (GES) to eliminate or reduce the rate at which these challenges occurred. Though these interventions have achieved some success, the rate at which the challenges occur is still significant (Darko 2009).

The purpose of the study that yielded this paper was therefore to find out how public basic school teachers perceive the organizational culture of the schools in which they teach and the extent to which these perceptions influence first, their commitment to the school and second, the teaching profession. This study, really a case study, focused on Ashaiman, a fast growing community attached to Tema, the industrial city of Ghana. This community was chosen for the study because it is one key place where the public opinion is that teachers are not committed to their profession, and are thus mere mercenaries.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The sole research question guiding the study was:

1. How positively or negatively do public basic school teachers perceive the organizational culture of their schools?

HYPOTHESIS

Teachers commitment to the teaching profession has come under attack but the literature fails to establish a direct link between teachers' perception of the organizational culture of their school on the one hand, and their commitment to the teaching profession, on the other. The hypothesis formulated to test this assumed link is that:

H₀: Public basic school teachers' perception of the organizational culture of their school will not directly predict their commitment to the teaching profession.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A single definition of school organizational culture has proven to be very elusive (Iivari & Huisman 2007). However, most researchers define school organizational culture as a system of shared values and beliefs that produces norms of behaviour and establishes the school's way of life (Iancu 2009). School organizational culture is thus the way things are done in a particular school.

The organizational culture of one school varies from those of others. It is these variances that differentiate one school from others (Sempane et al. 2002). Although all schools have cultures, some appear to have stronger, more deeply rooted cultures than others (Hulpiaa, Devosb & Rosseelc 2009). According to Ravasi and Schultz (as cited in Agyenim-Boateng et al. 2009), organizational culture is a set of shared mental assumptions that guide interpretation and action in organisations by defining appropriate behaviour for various situations. School organizational culture can be labelled as strong or weak based on adherence to shared core values and norms among members of the school and the degree of commitment the members have to these core values and norms (Iancu 2009).

The organizational culture of a school influences teachers' attitudes concerning outcomes, such as job satisfaction, motivation, morale and commitment to the school (Balay & İpek 2010). Balay and İpek are of the view that for teachers to be satisfied in the school, they must perceive the organizational culture of the school in positive terms. It can be pointed out that school organizational culture stands as the centre from which all other factors of human resource management in schools are derived. Wallach (as cited in Sempane et al. 2002) suggested that teachers' job performance and favourable job outcomes, including job satisfaction, propensity to remain with the school and job involvement, depend upon the match between a teacher's characteristics and the school's organizational culture.

One of the biggest challenges facing researchers in the development of school organizational culture models is identifying the appropriate features of the school organizational culture construct and the differences that exist among them. As the construct incorporates both school and psychological features, different meanings are often attached to this construct, and many school organizational culture instruments with questionable construct validity have consequently been developed (Sempane et al. 2002). Therefore, it is in the right direction for the current study to look at some of the known and popular features of school organizational culture and types of it.

The current study adopted some portions of the school organizational culture features used by Balay and İpek (2010) as a systematic way in measuring the basic school teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to the school and the teaching profession. Some modifications were made to the adopted school culture features that make

them more suitable and appropriate to the current study. Job satisfaction and commitment to the school are some of the most described, discussed and researched topics in educational administration because of their relevance to the physical and emotional health of teachers (Abdulla et al. 2011).

There has been a long debate among researchers regarding the relationship between school organizational culture and teachers' job satisfaction. Many of them have found supporting evidence about the relationship between these two concepts (Lund 2003; McKinnon et al. 2003). Job satisfaction is thus related to job characteristics and people will evaluate their satisfaction level according to what they perceive as being important and meaningful to them. A study conducted by McKinnon et al. (2003) indicates that there is a compelling support for the importance of school organizational culture in teachers' job satisfaction. They are of the view that apart from the importance of the work itself, other attributes such as the responsibility that comes with the job and the recognition one receives from work greatly influence job satisfaction.

In a recent review of articles, Wade et al. (2008) argue that school organizational cultures which emphasise strong norms for obligation are likely to create high levels of teacher job satisfaction. Similarly, Abdulla et al. (2011) also argue that school organizational cultures with strong norms for control, role, outcomes, internalisation and identification are likely to generate high levels of teacher job satisfaction and commitment to work in general.

Overall, although a few studies have been conducted on school organizational culture and teachers' job satisfaction, many are limited in their conceptualisation and

in the methods of enquiry. However, the approach adopted in many of these studies tends to be quantitative, which is consistent with the preferred method of analysis suggested by leading scholars in the field of school organizational culture (Bailey 2009). It is for these reasons that this study provides a quantitative evaluation of the influence of school organizational culture on teachers' professional commitment. Hulpiaa et al. (2009) examined the relationship between leadership behaviours of secondary school teachers and their job commitment. They found the democratic leadership behaviour as the strongest predictor of commitment to work in Belgian secondary schools. Similarly, Balay and İpek (2010) also found a significant positive correlation between school organizational culture and teachers' commitment to their work in Turkey.

Despite the large number of studies on school organizational culture and work commitment of teachers, little evidence has been found of similar studies in the context of developing countries. Some recent studies in first world countries only emphasised the correlation between these two major concepts in these countries (Yilmaz 2009). This study makes a contribution by attempting to close the lacuna.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

From the method of Balay and İpek (2010) and the empirical works reviewed, the model in Figure 1 was derived to form the conceptual framework within which the study was conducted. The constructs under organizational culture are control, role, outcomes/results and teacher orientation.

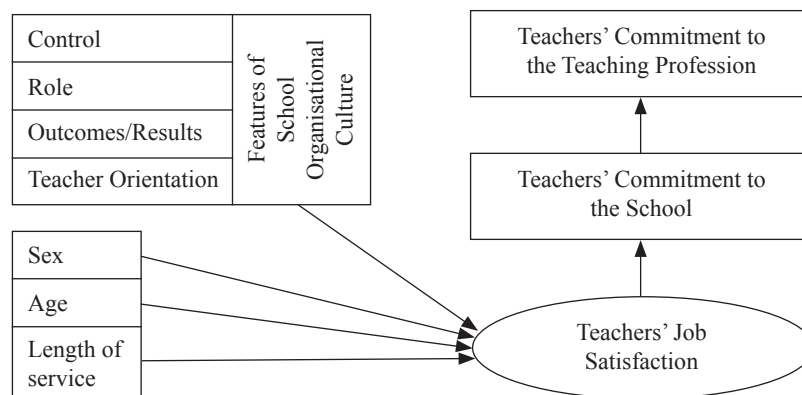


FIGURE 1. Model of the influence of school organizational culture on public basic school teachers' commitment to the teaching profession

Control refers to rules and regulations that guide members of the school. Teachers and students are supposed to abide by these rules and regulations if the school is to function. In the absence of this situation we say that school organizational culture is weak. Role also refers to situations where by teachers and students know what they are supposed to do as members of the school.

Outcomes also refer to situations where in the performance of their work both teachers and students are aware of the expected outcomes. If teachers and students are not clearly aware of the expected outcomes all that goes on will be aimless. Teachers must know what results society yearns for; students on their part must also recognise the output expected of them.

The model theorises that the independent variables from control to teacher orientation, as well as the control variables from sex to length of service tend to influence teachers job satisfaction. The feeling of satisfaction or lack thereof influences teachers commitment to the school. Teachers who are satisfied with conditions in the school tend to stay on and eventually they become committed to the profession at large.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The target population for the study was all pre-tertiary teachers in Ashaiman while the accessible population was professional teachers in Ashaiman public basic schools. There are two types of basic schools running side by side in the Ghanaian educational system. The first one public schools that are state-owned and are run by the local government. The second is those schools owned by private individuals and organisations. They are referred to as private school. Records available at the Ashaiman Municipal Education Directorate (AMED) indicated that at the time of the study the selected public basic schools had a total teacher population of 655 (AMED 2011). The sample was selected from the accessible population. The lottery method of simple random sampling (SRS) was first used to select 40 out of the 54 public basic schools in Ashaiman. Researchers such as Krejcie and Morgan (1970), Ary et al. (2006) also Malhotra and Birks (2007) are of the view that the most used acceptable approach for determining the sample size in a descriptive study is to specify the precision of estimation desired and then to determine the sample size necessary to insure it. Approximately, a sample size of 300 elements was obtained using the recommended formula:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1 - P)}{d^2 (N - 1) + X^2 P (1 - P)}$$

$$S = 629.062 \div 2.5954 \quad S = 242.3757,$$

S = required sample size; X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (1.96); N = the population size (655); P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size); d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

The sample size does not necessarily need to be large but how it truly represents most of the characteristics of the elements in the target population is what one must look at (Malhotra & Birks 2007). Based on this recommended formula, it was appropriate to use 300 elements from the 40 selected public basic schools. The lottery method of simple random sampling was again used to select the 300 elements from the randomly selected 40 public basic schools. Each element of the population had an equal, independent chance of being selected. The selected teachers were thus deemed capable of providing data that would assist the researchers to identify public basic school teachers' perception of the issues at stake.

INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire was the sole instrument used to collect the data. The researchers were aware of the disadvantages in using this type of instrument especially regarding its construction, return rate and inflexible structure (Ary et al. 2006). Due to these disadvantages, items in the questionnaire were organised and presented systematically to avoid confusing the respondents. In addition, items in the questionnaire were carefully explained to the respondents.

The questionnaire was made up of five sections: A, B, C, D and E. Closed-ended forms of questions were used for all the items in each section. Section A dealt with demographic information such as gender, age, highest professional qualification and length of service. Sections B contained several statements on school organizational culture. The school organizational culture involves four features that are: control, role, outcome/results and teacher orientation. Five-point scale was used for each of the features. Example of control item was "rules and penalties apply to every teacher and every student in this school" while that of role is "in this school responsibilities and roles are equitably shared." Also, an item for outcomes/results is "teachers in this school always aim at working to achieve the best of results." While that of teacher orientation is "in this school the teachers recognise that no one person can succeed without the contribution of others."

Section C, D and E contained several statements on job satisfaction of teachers, teachers' commitment to the school and commitment to the profession in general. The response categories were from 'strongly disagree' with a value of (1) to 'strongly agree' with a value of (5). Section C also had a 5-point-likert scale items measured as 'highly dissatisfied' with the value (1) to 'highly satisfied' with the value (5).

Job satisfaction and commitment to the school are the intervening variables while the dependent variable is teachers commitment to the teaching profession. The instrument was pilot-tested in February, 2012, on a sample of 30 elements made up of public basic school teachers in the Accra West District. The questionnaires were tested for their internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha with a reliability coefficient of 0.86. This according to Gravetter and Forzano (2006) is high and satisfactory.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, an informal familiarisation visit was made to the selected basic schools for the confirmation of the number of teachers in the schools and to seek for more information concerning the school and the elements. The Director of Education in Ashaiman Municipality and the heads of basic schools in the study area were written to for permission to carry out the study in their various institutions. The instrument was

self-administered, but with some support from the heads in the schools. In order not to disturb teachers' instructional hours, a meeting had to be held with all heads in each school to explain the purpose of the study, to seek for their consent to participate in the study and to assure them of confidentiality.

For the purpose of data collection, the teachers were gathered together during the first break in each school with assistance from the heads to explain the purpose of the study and to administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were given out to the research participants. They were taken through all the questionnaire items, and items that were not clear to them were explained. They were again taken through how to respond to the items. They were asked to complete the questionnaires during

the second break or immediately after school hours in order not to disturb instructional time. The teachers were encouraged to complete the questionnaire the same day and as independently and frankly as possible. There was 100 percent return rate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rationale for the research was to find out how public basic school teachers in Ashaiman perceive the organizational culture of their respective schools. Table 1 presents the responses that came. The data present the means and standard deviations of the various measures of school organizational culture.

TABLE 1. Teachers' perceptions of the schools organizational culture

Features of School Organisational Culture	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Scales
Control	4.25	0.56	1 – 5
Role	4.10	0.47	1 – 5
Outcomes/Results	4.16	0.56	1 – 5
Teacher orientation	3.99	0.41	1 – 5
Job satisfaction	3.48	0.67	1 – 5
Commitment to the school	4.05	0.36	1 – 5
Commitment to the profession	4.13	0.61	1 – 5

Source: Field Data February, 2012

Sample size (N) = 300

The data in Table 1 indicate that the teachers perceived control, role, outcomes/results and teacher orientation features positively. The standard deviations are low and close to each other, indicating quite a large degree of homogeneity in the perceptions. It is therefore concluded that, in terms of the means, the teachers perceive the school organizational cultures of their schools in positive terms. Again, the teachers indicated that they were satisfied with their job in the school (mean = 3.48, SD = 0.67), committed to the school (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.36) and also committed to the teaching profession (mean = 4.13, SD = 0.61) as a whole.

THE HYPOTHESIS

H_0 : Ashaiman public basic school teachers' perception of the organizational culture of their School will not directly predict their commitment to the teaching profession.

The hypothesis tested, as indicated earlier, was that the public basic school teachers' view on school organizational culture features such as control, role, outcomes/results and teacher orientation would not directly predict teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. Multiple regression procedures were adopted to analyse the data to test the hypothesis. First, teachers' commitment to the teaching

profession in general was used as the dependent variable. Results of the analysis are shown in Table 2.

The multiple regression analysis involved testing of three models. In the first model the four features of school organizational culture were entered as independent variables. Demographic variables such as gender, age and length of service were added to the four features in the first model. All the variables had statistically significant associations with commitment to the teaching profession. As data in Table 3 show, the variables that predict teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in order of importance are control ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.01$), role ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < 0.01$), outcomes/results ($\beta = 0.160$, $p < 0.05$) and orientation ($\beta = 0.153$, $p < 0.05$). The three demographic variables; age ($\beta = 0.487$, $p < 0.01$), length of service ($\beta = 0.340$, $p < 0.01$) and gender ($\beta = 0.195$, $p < 0.01$) are also predictive of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. The total contribution of the independent and control variables to the variance in the dependent variable is 0.341 with an adjusted R^2 of 0.325. This means that these variables predicted or explained about 33% of the variance in commitment to the teaching profession.

In the second model job satisfaction was entered into the equation to serve as a mediating variable. The theory here is that the independent variables do not predict teachers' commitment to the teaching profession directly, and that they do so indirectly through job satisfaction

TABLE 2. Multiple regression analysis on teachers' commitment to the teaching profession

Variables	Model One	Model Two	Model Three
	Beta	Beta	Beta
Control	.348 (0.08)**	.321 (0.07)**	.076 (0.03)*
Role	.234 (0.06)**	.049 (0.05)	.004 (0.02)
Outcomes/Results	.160 (0.07)*	.061 (0.07)	.058 (0.03)*
Teacher orientation	.153 (0.08)*	.111 (0.07)	.013 (0.03)
Gender	.195 (0.06)**	.109 (0.05)*	.014 (0.02)
Age	.487 (0.03)**	.475 (0.03)**	.067 (0.01)*
Length of service	.340 (0.03)**	.336 (0.03)**	.058 (0.01)
Job satisfaction		.469 (0.04)**	.101 (0.02)**
Commitment to the school			.860 (0.03)**
Constant	1.140	1.405	.069
R Square	.341	.468	.900
Adjusted R Square	.325	.453	.897

(Standard errors are in parentheses) **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05 Sample size (N) = 300

and commitment to the school. When the variable job satisfaction entered the equation the beta coefficients of all the statistically significant independent variables shrank. The percentage shrinkages of the variables are control (7.8%), role (79.1%) and outcomes/results (61.9%). The amount of shrinkage for that of the demographic variables are gender (44.1%), age (2.5%) and length of service (1.2%). The beta coefficient of the variables role, outcomes/results and teacher orientation even became statistically non significant while the level of significance of gender reduced.

What all the resultant shrinkages and statistically non significance mean is that the independent variables predict teachers' commitment to the teaching profession more when teachers are satisfied with their job in their various schools. In other words, the independent and control variables in themselves do not explain commitment to the teaching profession; they do so only when teachers are satisfied with the organisation culture of their various schools.

As expected there was a slight increase with regard to the total contribution (R^2) of all the independent variables, including job satisfaction, to the variance in the dependent variable. It increased from 0.341 to 0.468 with an adjusted R^2 of 0.453, which means that job satisfaction tends to boost the total predictive power of each of all the independent and control variables. This corroborates the findings of Abdulla et al. (2011) that school organizational cultures that have strong norms for control, role, outcomes, internalisation and identification are likely to generate high levels of teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to work.

In the third model the variable commitment to the school was entered into the equation, and the result was that the beta coefficient of outcomes/results regained its statistical significance. The level of significance of control as well as age also reduced from 99 percent to 95 percent. Gender and length of service lost their statistical

significance. Commitment to the school was statistically significant when it entered the second model, which did change the beta coefficients of the other significant variables in the third model. These mean that the explanatory power of control, outcomes/results and the demographic variables are shared with the mediating variables. That is, control and outcomes/results affect commitment to the teaching profession only when teachers are committed to their various schools. The beta coefficients for all the independent variables shrank again.

The percentage changes accounting for the shrinkage of the statistically significant variables are control (76.3%), outcomes/results (4.9%), age (85.9%) and job satisfaction (78.5%). The beta coefficients of role and teacher orientation features of school organizational culture were still not statistically significant. Naturally, the total contribution (R^2) of the variables when commitment to the school was added increased from 0.468 to 0.900, while the adjusted R^2 increased to 0.897. The data further show that when commitment to the school entered the equation the R^2 nearly doubled. This suggests that commitment to the school is a major condition for teachers' professional commitment. Charity thus begins at home as commitment to the school gradually builds up to translate into commitment to the profession.

What all the resultant shrinkages and statistical non significance mean is that the independent variables including the controls do not directly influence teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. They do so only when teachers are satisfied and when they are committed to their various schools. We therefore fail to reject the hypothesis. That is, the organizational culture of the school will influence teachers' commitment to the teaching profession when first, the organizational culture of the school enhances teachers' job satisfaction, which will in turn ignite teachers' commitment to the school. This increased commitment of public basic school teachers to

their schools will result in their overall commitment to the teaching profession. The school's organizational culture is therefore not enough to explain professional commitment unless teachers' job satisfaction and their commitment to the school are also high.

CONCLUSION

Teachers in this study are seen to have positive perception of the organizational culture of their schools. However, the results show that the school's organizational culture does not influence or predict teachers' commitment to the teaching profession directly. It does so only if it boosts the teachers' satisfaction with their job in their schools. If teachers are satisfied in their various schools, they are likely to be committed to the school, and eventually they will be predisposed to be committed to the teaching profession.

The conclusion then is that when there is a critical mass of teachers who are committed to their schools the dynamics will translate into commitment to the teaching profession in the long run. It is therefore necessary for schools to nurture the kind of atmosphere that will make teachers satisfied in the schools, as this will make them committed to their various schools and to the teaching profession in the long run.

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Received : 30 September 2013

Accepted : 1 August 2014

