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STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated staff professional development and performance appraisal practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. Three specific purposes, three research questions, and three hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 5133 in the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for the study was514 teachers (10% of the entire population) selected using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Structured instruments "Staff Professional Development Rating Scale (SPDRS) and Performance Appraisal Rating Scale (PARS) developed by the researchers as well as Teachers Job Commitment Rating Scale (TJCRS) developed by Okechukwu (2024) and was adapted by the researchers" were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated by three experts in Faculty of Education; two lecturers in Educational Management and Policy and one lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Educational Foundations Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Internal consistencies co-efficient of 0.82, 0.78, and 0.90 were obtained for SPDRS, PARS, and TJCRS respectively using Cronbach Alpha statistical method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics and multiple linear regressions were used for data analysis. The multiple linear regressions were used to determine the joint correlation of the independent variables and the dependent variable of the study. The p-value was used to determine the significance of the prediction for all hypotheses. All analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 25. The study findings revealed that there is a very strong positive and significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with Pearson (r) value of 0.816; p-value (0.000). The findings also revealed that there is a very strong positive and significant correlation between staff performance appraisal

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practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with Pearson (r) value of 0.78; p-value (0.001). Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is a very high positive and significant joint correlation existing among joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with R-square value of 0.648 (64.8%); and p-value of 0.000. Thus, the study concluded that staff professional development practices and performance appraisal practices are significant variables that enhance teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that Principals should encourage regular, structured professional development opportunities for teachers, and ensure that performance appraisals are conducted fairly and transparently. Teachers should engage actively in professional development activities to enhance skills and teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Staff Professional Development Practices; Performance Appraisal Practices; Teachers' Job Commitment; Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Education is the foundation of societal transformation and nations building. It is the key that opens the door of development, modernization, civilization and industrialization of any country. Okechukwu et al. (2024) noted that through education, nation can harness her numerous resources, develop her manpower and improve the quality of life of her citizens. It is with this understanding that Okechukwu and Oboshi (2021) considered education as an indispensable input for national development and an avenue for empowering the citizens of any nation. Education in this perspective is perceived as a cornerstone of economic growth and social development as well as a principal means of improving the welfare of individuals. An extensive outlook into the Nigerian educational system shows that education is systematically structured into pre-basic, basic, secondary and tertiary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013). In Nigeria, secondary school education is considered as a strategic sub-sector of the education industry, because it is at this level that the adolescents and youths consolidate the basic knowledge gained in primary school, and also acquire the necessary culture to become useful citizens in the society. The FRN (2013) described secondary school education as the education children receive after a successful completion of nine years basic education. Secondary school education is the form of education students receive after primary school and before the tertiary stage. The importance of secondary school education lies in its position both as the bridge between primary and tertiary education and as an agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society. As indicated by the FRN, the broad goals of secondary school education in Nigeria are preparing individuals for useful living in the society and for higher education. Secondary school education do not only provide youths with the opportunity to acquire the human capital that prepares them to pursue higher education in different areas of specialization,

but it also improves their skills leading to higher labour productivity. This implies that tertiary institutions and the labour market depend on the qualified outputs from secondary schools for their inputs. It is for this reason that the FRN (2013) specified the primary objectives of secondary school education to include the provision of specified sets of competencies and skills that will improve individuals' lives and enable them to participate actively in the development of the economy. In essence, secondary school education in Nigeria is recognized as a prerequisite for quality human life and labour skills; as well as a sine qua non for sustainable economic development of the country. However the achievement of secondary school education goals as enunciated in the policy document requires teachers' job commitment, as their dedication directly impacts student outcomes and the overall quality of education delivery.

Teachers' job commitment refers to the dedication and loyalty educators exhibit toward their work that contributes to improved school outcomes and student achievement. This commitment also involves loyalty to the school and adherence to its policies and values, contributing positively to the school's mission and goals (John, 2019). Hobson and Maxwell (2020) described teachers' job commitment as the level of dedication, enthusiasm, and responsibility educators exhibit towards their profession and their roles within an educational setting. Eze and Ijeoma (2021) noted that teachers' job commitment reflects teachers' psychological attachment to their work, leading to persistence in overcoming challenges and striving for high performance in school setting. Martins and Silva (2019) defined teachers' job commitment as the dedication and sense of responsibility teachers have toward their professional roles, which influences their willingness to put in extra effort for the success of their students. It includes the willingness to pursue ongoing professional development to improve teaching practices and adapt to new educational methodologies (). Teachers' job commitment is crucial for fostering a productive and supportive educational environment that benefits both students and the broader school community (Aliyu, 2021). Job commitment in teachers also encompasses their emotional and intellectual involvement in their teaching tasks, which directly affects student outcomes and school effectiveness (Musa, 2023). A committed teacher is actively engaged in their work, showing a high level of involvement in planning lessons, delivering instruction, and participating in school activities (Ajayi & Balogun, 2020).Teachers with high job commitment are focused on enhancing student learning outcomes, often going beyond the standard curriculum to meet the needs of their students (Okeke & Nwachukwu, 2022). Musa (2023) highlighted that committed teachers are more likely to engage in innovative practices, work beyond stipulated hours, and take personal responsibility for student success. Aliyu (2021) posited that job commitment in teachers involves a proactive approach in lesson delivery, student mentoring, and participation in school development activities. It is characterized by a teacher's continuous effort to fulfill their professional responsibilities and obligations, reflecting a strong attachment to their institution and

students. As noted by Ajayi (2023), committed teachers are more likely to invest their time and energy into professional development and mentoring students, which enhances overall school performance.

Staff professional development practices refer to structured activities and programmes designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and effectiveness of employees within an organization. They involve all processes geared towards improving the ability of teachers in the performance of their job in terms of knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and professional growth (Kraft & Blazar, 2019). Staff professional development involves ongoing training and workshops that enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2018), these practices help teachers stay updated with new teaching methods and educational technologies, thus improving instructional quality in Nigerian schools. Professional development includes mentorship programmes and peer learning opportunities where experienced teachers guide less experienced ones. Chukwu (2019) remarked that such practices foster a collaborative learning environment and support professional growth. Attending educational conferences and seminars is a crucial component of staff development. Iwuanyanwu and Nwaogu (2022) noted that these events provide teachers with the latest research findings and educational strategies, thereby enhancing their teaching practices. On-the-job training focuses on providing practical experience and skills relevant to teachers' daily tasks. Umeozor (2021) explained that this method improves teachers' effectiveness by directly applying new skills in their classrooms. Professional development practices also include training on integrating educational technology into teaching. Afolabi (2023) observed that such training helps teachers effectively use digital tools and resources, which is crucial for modern education. According to Olowu (2020), professional development activities in schools must be aligned with teaching standards and provide ongoing support to improve teacher efficacy and classroom practices. Olowu further highlighted that effective professional development involves collaborative learning environments where teachers engage in reflective practice and share instructional strategies. He further suggested that schools should foster professional development that integrates theory and practice, ensuring that learning experiences are relevant to real classroom challenges. Jensen and Sonnemann (2021) study revealed that professional development must be data-driven, utilizing student outcomes and teacher feedback to tailor programs that meet specific educational needs. Staff professional development practices complement staff performance appraisal by providing continuous learning opportunities and feedback, which together enhance teachers' job commitment and overall effectiveness.

Staff performance appraisal practices in schools involve systematic evaluation of teachers' effectiveness and productivity to improve educational outcomes. These practices are designed to assess educators' teaching methods, classroom management, and student outcomes (Lee & Kim, 2023). Williams and Miller (2022) stated that performance appraisal in schools focuses on

assessing the competencies, skills, and contributions of staff to ensure alignment with educational goals. This process helps identify professional development needs and supports career growth. Brown and Green (2021) noted that appraisal practices in school organization are used to measure the performance of school staff against predefined standards and objectives. These practices aim to enhance accountability and effectiveness in teaching. In Nigerian schools, staff performance appraisal is a strategic tool for improving teacher quality and student performance. It provides feedback and sets goals for staff to ensure continuous improvement (Nwankwo, 2022). Performance appraisals in schools are processes through which the effectiveness of teaching staff is reviewed to foster better educational practices. This practice involves periodic assessments and feedback mechanisms to support teachers' professional growth (Obi & Okafor, 2020). Staff performance appraisal practices in schools involve systematic evaluations of teachers' and staff members' work to improve instructional quality and professional development (Oke & Ilesanmi, 2019). The scholars maintained that the practice helps identify areas for improvement and aligns staff performance with school goals. Performance appraisals in schools are methods used to assess and enhance staff effectiveness through feedback and developmental support. Effective appraisals are crucial for professional growth and achieving educational outcomes (Smith & Thomas, 2020). The practices aim to improve both individual and institutional performance by fostering accountability (Zhang & Zhang, 2019). Afolabi and Suleiman (2023) averred that such appraisals are essential for motivating staff and maintaining high educational standards. Staff performance appraisal practices in schools involve a structured process to assess teacher performance, set development goals, and enhance instructional quality. This structured approach ensures consistent evaluation and support for staff development (Eze, 2021).

Several empirical studies have been conducted on staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment. Adebayo (2019) study conducted in Nigerian secondary schools, compared teachers who participated in continuous professional development (CPD) programmes with those who did not. It was found that teachers involved in CPD programmes showed a 25% higher level of job commitment than their counterparts. The study also highlighted that mentorship and collaborative learning during professional development sessions significantly influenced teachers' motivation and sense of belonging, which led to increased job commitment. Amankwah (2020) study explored the correlation between professional development and job commitment among teachers in Ghanaian Public Secondary Schools. The findings indicated that professional development programs directly impacted job satisfaction and, consequently, job commitment. Teachers who received training in new pedagogical approaches and leadership skills reported feeling more valued and committed to their institutions. Furthermore, the study showed that professional development increased retention rates by 18%. In rural India, Desai (2021) study assessed how professional development affected teachers' job commitment. The study

found that teachers who participated in sustained professional development sessions, particularly in information and communication technologies (ICTs), showed a 30% improvement in their commitment to their schools. Additionally, a positive correlation was identified between professional development in classroom management and an increased sense of accountability among the teachers. Wong and Lee (2022) examined the impact of continuous professional development (CPD) programs on job commitment among teachers in Malaysia. It found that teachers who participated in CPD focused on 21st-century teaching skills exhibited higher job satisfaction and job commitment. The study also identified that job commitment levels were higher when teachers had autonomy in selecting professional development activities aligned with their personal and professional growth. Similarly, Oduro and Adusei (2023) study explored the role of professional development in enhancing teachers' job commitment. The study revealed that professional development focusing on leadership skills, inclusive teaching practices, and digital literacy improved teachers' commitment by 22%. Moreover, schools with structured professional development programs reported higher staff retention and engagement levels.

Studies have highlighted the crucial role of fair, constructive, and development-focused performance appraisal systems in promoting teachers' job commitment. Wambua and Njagi (2018) explored the relationship between performance appraisal systems and teachers' job commitment in Kenyan secondary schools. It found that transparent and regular appraisals significantly improved job commitment among teachers. The study also highlighted the role of feedback in boosting motivation and performance. in the same vein, Oluwagbemi and Ogunbayo (2020) research examined how performance appraisal impacts job satisfaction and commitment among secondary school teachers in Nigeria. It concluded that fair appraisal systems lead to higher job commitment, especially when appraisals include professional development opportunities. In Pakistan, Khan and Iqbal (2021) assessed the influence of performance appraisal practices on teachers' professional commitment in Pakistani public schools. The study found that appraisal systems that involve teacher participation and self-assessment positively influence job commitment. Mensah and Amoako (2022) study investigated the relationship between teacher evaluation and job commitment in Ghanaian schools. Their study concluded that formative evaluation processes, where teachers are given constructive feedback and development opportunities, have a significant positive impact on job commitment. Ndlovu and Zungu (2023) found that appraisals that focus on professional growth, rather than punitive measures, were strongly correlated with higher levels of teacher commitment. However, the need to conduct this study arises from the growing recognition that staff professional development and performance appraisal practices play a crucial role in enhancing teachers' job commitment, which directly impacts the overall quality of education in secondary schools. In Anambra State, the effectiveness of these practices has not been adequately explored, necessitating an

empirical investigation to understand their relationship and inform policy decisions for school improvement.

Statement of the problem

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the crucial role that staff professional development and performance appraisal practices play in influencing teachers' job commitment, particularly in secondary schools. In Anambra State, like in many other educational regions, these two factors are believed to be significant in enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring quality teaching. Teachers' job commitment is crucial for educational quality, yet many schools seems to be facing challenges related to ineffective professional development programmes and inadequate performance appraisal systems. Staff professional development in Anambra State is often inconsistent and lacks alignment with the specific needs of teachers, leading to limited opportunities for skills enhancement and career growth. This inconsistency hampers teachers' ability to stay current with pedagogical advancements and diminishes their motivation and commitment to their roles. Furthermore, performance appraisal practices in many schools are perceived as either overly bureaucratic or insufficiently constructive, failing to provide meaningful feedback or support for professional growth. Consequently, these shortcomings in professional development and performance appraisal might be responsible for low job commitment among teachers, manifesting in reduced motivation, job dissatisfaction, and high turnover rates. The lack of comprehensive, systematic, and responsive professional development and appraisal practices undermines teachers' engagement and effectiveness, impacting overall school performance and student outcomes. Addressing these issues requires a detailed investigation into how professional development and performance appraisal practices influence teachers' job commitment. Such an empirical study would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current practices and identify areas for improvement, ultimately fostering a more committed and motivated teaching workforce in Anambra State. Hence, the problem of the study aws to investigate staff professional development and performance appraisal as correlates of teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate staff professional development and performance appraisal practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in in secondary schools in Anambra State. In specific terms, the study sought to:

1. determine the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State;
2. ascertain the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State; and
3. find out the joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job

commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Method

The study adopted correlational research design. The correlational research design according to Nworgu (2021) indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between or among the variables of the study rather than explore causal relationship among them. The study was carried out in secondary schools in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised all the 5133 in the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for the study was 514 teachers (10% of the entire population) drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Teaching staff in each of the education zones form a stratum from where 10% was drawn. Structured instrument were used for data collection. The first instrument Staff Professional Development Rating Scale (SPDRS) was developed by the researchers and contains two sections, A and B. Section A sought background data of the respondents (teachers) on their school. Section B contains 10 items formulated to elicit data on staff professional development practices. The second instrument was Performance Appraisal Rating Scale (PARS) also developed by the researchers. The instrument also contains 10 items designed to evaluate and elicit data on performance appraisal practices in educational contexts. The third instrument was Teachers Job Commitment Rating Scale (TJCRS) developed by Okechukwu (2024) and was adapted by the researchers. The instrument contained 20 items originally, and was reduced to 15 items after validation. The instrument

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was designed to elicit data on teachers' job commitment. All the instruments were structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 point respectively. The instruments were face validated by three experts in Faculty of Education; two lecturers in Educational Management and Policy and one lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Internal consistencies co-efficient of 0.82, 0.78, and 0.90 were obtained for SPDRS, PARS, and TJCRS respectively using Cronbach Alpha statistical method. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents with the help of six research assistants. Out of the 514 copies of the instruments administered, 508 copies (98.83%) were retrieved duly completed, and used for data analysis. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) statistics and multiple linear regressions statistical tools were used for data analysis. The multiple linear regressions were used to determine the joint correlation among the independent variables and the dependent variable of the study. The *p*-value was used to determine the significance of the correlation for all hypotheses. The decision rule was: a null hypothesis was not upheld where the calculated *p*-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (*p*-value <.05). The reverse was the case where the calculated *p*-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (*p*-value >.05). All analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 25.

Analysis and Results Presentation

Research Question One: What is the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson correlation (r) analysis on the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Staff professional development	Teachers' job commitment	Remarks
Staff professional development	508		.816**	Very strong positive correlation
Teachers' job commitment	508	.816**	1.00	

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

The results in Table 1 show the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. The computed Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value is 0.816, indicating a very strong positive correlation. This implies that there is a very strong positive correlation between staff professional development

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practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What is the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson correlation (r) analysis on the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Performance appraisal	Teachers' job commitment	Remarks
Performance appraisal	508	1.00	.768**	Very strong positive correlation
Teachers' Job Commitment	508	.768**	1.00	

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

The summary of data analysis on the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State presented in Table 2 reveals that the computed Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value is 0.768, indicating a very strong positive correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Three: What is the joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Multiple linear regressions (R) analysis on the joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Teachers' job commitment	Staff professional development	performance appraisal	R	Remarks
Staff professional development	508	.816**	.816**	1		
Performance appraisal	508	.768**	1	.816**		
Teachers' job commitment	508	1	.768**	.768**		
Joint Correlation					**.792****	Very strong

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' job commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant): Staff professional; Performance appraisal

The responses of lecturers on the joint correlation among taff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in

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secondary schools in Anambra State in Table 3 show that teachers admitted that correlation exists among the variables in the study. The multiple linear regressions (R) value of .792 implies that the respondents accepted that very high positive relationship exists among the three variables. The results however, indicate that there is very high positive joint correlation existing among taff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

H_0: There is no significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

H_1: There is significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of significance of Pearson correlation (r) analysis on the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State

Source of Variation	N	R	r-Cal	t-Crit.	*P-value*	Remark
Staff professional development	508	.816				
Teachers' job commitment			24.98	1.96	.000	*S

*Significant

Analysis in Table 4 shows that there is a significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. The calculated r (0.816) had r-cal value of 24.98 and *p*-value (0.000) which is less than 0.05 level of significance. However, the 1st null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State was not upheld; therefore, the alternative hypothesis was upheld. This signifies that there is significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

H_0: There is no significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

H_1: There is significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 5: Test of significance of Pearson correlation (r) analysis on the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State

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Source of Variation	N	r	r-Cal	r-Crit.	*P-value*	Remark
Performance appraisal	508	.768				
Teachers' job commitment			21.49	1.96	.001	*S

*Significant

Analysis in Table 5 shows that there is a significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. The calculated r (0.768) had r-cal value of 21.49 and *p*-value (0.001) which is less than 0.05 level of significance. The 2nd null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore not upheld; consequently, the alternative hypothesis was upheld. This signifies that there is significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Three

H_0: There is no significant joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

H_1: There is significant joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: Multiple linear regressions summary analysis on the joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-value	P-value	A	Remarks
Staff professional development	.816[a]	.682	.681	6.140				
Performance appraisal	.768[a]	.617	.61	5.886				
Joint result	**.792[a]**	**.648**	**.678**	**5.702**	**19.573**	**.000[b]**	**.05**	*S

*Significant

The results of the test of hypothesis six reveal that joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State has *p*-value (0.000) which was less than 0.05 level of significance. As a result of these, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State was not upheld while the alternative hypothesis was upheld. However,

this indicates that there is significant joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. More so, the joint R-square value was 0.648, also implies that staff professional development practices and performance appraisal practices significantly predict 64.8% of teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussions of Findings

Findings on the correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State displayed in Table 1 revealed that there is a very strong positive correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with Pearson (r) value of 0.816. Analysis in Table 4 showed that there is significant correlation between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State; *p*-value of (0.000). The empirical finding that there is a very strong positive correlation (Pearson r = 0.816, p = 0.000) between staff professional development practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State highlights a significant relationship between the two variables. A Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.816 suggests that as professional development practices improve teachers' job commitment increases substantially. The positive nature of this relationship indicates that schools that invest more in training, workshops, and continuous learning opportunities for teachers see a corresponding rise in their dedication and commitment to their roles. The p-value (0.000) indicates that this result is statistically significant; meaning the likelihood of this correlation occurring by chance is nearly zero. This underscores the importance of professional development in fostering a committed teaching workforce. Schools that prioritize professional growth create an environment where teachers feel valued and equipped with the skills necessary to excel, which in turn enhances their motivation and commitment. The significance of these findings can guide policymakers and school administrators in Anambra State to invest more in structured professional development programmes to sustain and improve teacher job commitment, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes. The study findings are in agreement with the findings of an earlier study by Uzoechina and Onuorah (2020) which found that professional development opportunities such as workshops, seminars, and in-service training significantly improved teachers' commitment to their work. Teachers who regularly participated in these programmes showed increased dedication, enthusiasm, and performance in the classroom. The correlation between professional development practices and job commitment was found to be highly positive and significant. Related results were comparatively found in related study by Nwankwo and Ezeokeke (2021) that explored the relationship between staff development and teacher job satisfaction, which directly influences commitment. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between staff development

programs and teachers' job commitment, noting that teachers who engaged in frequent professional development activities were more likely to stay in the profession, showing higher levels of loyalty and passion for their job. Contrary to the above studies, Okafor (2019) research found no significant correlation between professional development practices and teachers' job commitment. The study argued that many professional development programs were either irrelevant to teachers' actual classroom needs or poorly organized, leading to minimal impact on their job commitment. Some teachers expressed that the programs were too theoretical and did not offer practical skills that could directly improve their teaching practice. The disagreement in the study findings could stem from the fact that professional development programmes in Okafor's study may have been poorly aligned with teachers' practical needs. When the training content is not directly applicable to their work, teachers might not see the value, which can reduce the expected positive impact on commitment. Teacher motivation and context could also be responsible for the disagreement in the findings. Okafor's study might have captured a cohort of teachers who were already demotivated or disengaged for reasons beyond professional development, such as poor working conditions or low salaries. If these external factors are not addressed, professional development alone may not significantly affect job commitment.

The findings in Table 2 showed that there is a very strong positive correlation between staff performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with Pearson (r) value of 0.78. In Table 5, the findings also revealed that there is a significant correlation between staff performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State; *p*-value of (0.000). The empirical finding of a very strong positive correlation between staff performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State, with a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.768 and a p-value of 0.001, is highly significant. The Pearson (r) value of 0.768 indicates a strong relationship, meaning that as effective performance appraisal practices increase, teachers' job commitment also increases proportionally. This suggests that schools with robust appraisal systems, where teachers receive constructive feedback and evaluations, are likely to have more committed staff. The p-value of 0.001 confirms the statistical significance of this finding, as it is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This means that the likelihood of this strong correlation being due to random chance is extremely low, and the relationship can be confidently generalized to the population of secondary schools in Anambra State. In practice, this result highlights the importance of implementing consistent and fair appraisal systems to foster greater teacher commitment. School administrators can use these findings to emphasize the role of appraisal in enhancing job satisfaction, motivation, and dedication among teachers, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes. The findings of this study correspond with the study of Adamu and Olatunji (2020) whose study found a significant positive correlation between

performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment. The authors argued that effective performance appraisal systems enhance teachers' motivation and job satisfaction by providing clear feedback and opportunities for professional growth. Similarly, Eze (2021) study on the impact of performance appraisal on teacher job commitment in Anambra State Secondary Schools supported the correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment. The study concluded that regular and constructive performance evaluations lead to increased job commitment by addressing teachers' needs and recognizing their efforts In contrast, the findings were not supported by Okonkwo and Nwachukwu (2019) whose study found no significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment. The authors suggested that ineffective implementation of appraisal systems and lack of transparency might contribute to the lack of impact on job commitment. The study by Okonkwo and Nwachukwu highlighted that performance appraisal systems might be poorly implemented or not taken seriously, leading to minimal impact on teachers' job commitment. In addition to the reason above, when appraisal processes are not transparent or are perceived as unfair, it can result in teachers feeling demotivated, which undermines the potential positive effects of the appraisal system.

The results as shown in Table 3 indicated that there is very high positive joint correlation existing among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with Regressions value (R = 0.792). Table 6 showed that there is significant joint correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State with R-square value of 0.648 (64.8%); and *p*-value of 0.000. The empirical findings reveal a very strong positive joint correlation between staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices, and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. The regression (R) value of 0.792 indicates a strong linear relationship between the independent variables (staff development and performance appraisal) and the dependent variable (teachers' job commitment). The R-square value of 0.648 shows that 64.8% of the variation in teachers' job commitment can be explained by the combination of professional development and performance appraisal practices. This high percentage indicates the significant role these practices play in influencing teacher commitment. The p-value of 0.000 signifies that the results are statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level. This means that the likelihood of the observed relationship occurring by chance is virtually zero, confirming the reliability of the findings. The study however, demonstrates that when secondary schools in Anambra State emphasize robust staff development and performance appraisal systems, teachers are more likely to be committed to their work, leading to enhanced educational outcomes. These practices are crucial for improving job satisfaction, motivation, and the overall quality

of education in the schools. In consistent with the findings of this study, Ololube (2018) study also found a strong positive correlation between teacher professional development practices and job commitment among secondary school teachers in Nigeria. It emphasized that effective professional development and performance appraisal practices significantly enhance teachers' job commitment, as these practices help teachers feel valued and supported, which in turn boosts their motivation and commitment to their roles. The study findings are also in conformity with Adedeji and Oladipo (2021) research which established a significant positive relationship between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment. It highlighted that regular and constructive performance appraisals, along with targeted professional development programs, contribute significantly to enhancing teachers' job commitment by aligning their career goals with institutional objectives. Dissimilarly, Ibrahim and Musa (2022) study found a weaker correlation between staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices, and teachers' job commitment compared to previous studies. The researchers suggested that the discrepancy could be due to several factors, such as: variations in educational policies, cultural contexts, or administrative practices between regions (e.g., Abuja vs. Anambra State) might influence the effectiveness of professional development and appraisal practices. Differences in sample sizes or characteristics might also affect the observed relationships in different studies.

Conclusion

The study findings revealed a very strong and significant positive correlation among staff professional development practices, performance appraisal practices and teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. The implications suggest that investing in these practices can lead to improved educational outcomes, making it essential for policymakers and school administrators to prioritize comprehensive professional development and performance appraisal systems to foster greater teacher engagement and effectiveness. Thus, the study concluded that staff professional development practices and performance appraisal practices are significant variables that enhance teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

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

1. Policy makers should develop and implement clear policies that prioritize continuous professional development and performance appraisal as key strategies for enhancing teachers' job commitment. Adequate funding and incentives should be provided for teacher training programmes.
2. Principals should encourage regular, structured professional development opportunities for teachers, and ensure that performance appraisals are conducted fairly and transparently. They should focus on both

accountability and the personal growth of teachers.

3. Teachers should engage actively in professional development activities to enhance skills and teaching effectiveness. They should be open to feedback from performance appraisals and use it as an opportunity for growth and improvement in job commitment.
4. Community should support schools by advocating for and contributing to teacher development programs. The can also collaborate with schools in providing resources for training and other developmental activities.
5. Students should actively participate in the learning process, as improved teacher commitment and development directly enhance student learning outcomes. They could also provide constructive feedback on teaching practices.

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