

Psychological Well-Being and Employee Affective Commitment: Evidence from Public Secondary School Teachers in Oshimili-South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the effect of psychological well-being on affective commitment among public secondary school teachers in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the effects of mental health, work–life balance, and job stress on affective commitment. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, with data collected from 275 teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Standardized instruments were employed, including the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, Carlson et al.'s Work–Family Balance Scale, Parker and DeCotiis' Job Stress Scale, and the affective dimension of Meyer and Allen's Organisational Commitment Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that mental health ($\beta = .25, p < .001$) and work–life balance ($\beta = .23, p < .001$) had significant positive effects on affective commitment, while job stress ($\beta = -.18, p = .002$) had a significant negative effect. The model explained 29% of the variance in affective commitment ($R^2 = .29$). These findings underscore the importance of promoting teachers' mental well-being, facilitating work–life balance, and addressing job stress as strategies to enhance teacher commitment. The study recommends policy interventions and school-level practices that strengthen teacher wellness and reduce stress to improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: *Psychological well-being, Mental health, Work–life balance, Job stress, Affective commitment.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as the foundation of national development, and teachers are the central drivers of human capital formation (Nwachukwu, 2024). According to Adeniyi and Ogude-Ufoma, (2024) the performance of the educational system in Nigeria depends largely on the quality, motivation, and commitment of teachers, particularly those in public secondary schools.

These teachers play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and social development of learners who will constitute the nation's future workforce. Yet, many public secondary school teachers in Nigeria work under conditions marked by inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, irregular salaries, and limited instructional resources (Jacob & Ndubuisi, 2020). Indeed, such challenges threaten their psychological well-being and may undermine their willingness to remain emotionally attached to their schools, a key indicator of affective commitment.

Psychological well-being refers to the overall state of mental health, balance between work and personal life, and ability to manage stress effectively (Mmbengwa, 2025). It extends beyond the absence of illness to include resilience, optimism, life satisfaction, and emotional stability (Gautam et al., 2024). Employee psychological well-being has increasingly drawn attention in organisational studies (Uford et al., 2023; Dhanabhakym & Sarath, 2023). Indeed, prior research also indicated that it enhances organizational citizenship behavior (Iqbal et al., 2024), improving job performance, and reducing work-family conflict and absenteeism.

For teachers, whose work demands sustained intellectual effort and emotional engagement, well-being is essential. When teachers experience poor mental health, high job stress, or difficulty balancing professional and personal life, their affective commitment (Emeljanovas et al., 2023). According to Arbia et al. (2023), that can lead to decreased enthusiasm for their work, a reduced sense of loyalty to the school, and a higher likelihood of considering leaving the profession altogether.

Meyer and Allen's (1991) identify affective, continuance, and normative commitment as three distinct forms of employee commitment. Among these, Moreira et al. (2024) argue that affective commitment is the most desirable because it reflects employees' genuine emotional attachment to and identification with their organization. Affective commitment is an employee's emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization, where personal values align with organizational goals, resulting in stronger engagement, dedication, and higher performance (Ndaeyo, et al., 2025; Uford, 2026). Teachers with strong affective commitment not only remain with their schools but also display enthusiasm, dedication, and willingness to go beyond their formal duties. On the other hand, Hemanthakumara (2024) indicated that low affective commitment often manifests in absenteeism, low morale, reduced classroom effectiveness, and, in severe cases, attrition from the profession.

Generally, the teaching profession is recognized as highly stressful. Studies report that teachers frequently experience burnout, emotional exhaustion, and job strain due to workload pressures, student misbehaviours, and limited professional support (Emeljanovas et al., 2023). In Nigeria, for instance, systemic issues such as underfunding, irregular salary payments, large class sizes, and poor infrastructure exacerbate these stressors (Ahmed, 2024). Teachers often juggle professional and personal responsibilities with little institutional support, leading to poor work-life balance and declining psychological well-being (Foluso, 2021). These conditions may reduce their affective commitment, weakening their emotional connection to schools and limiting their willingness to invest discretionary effort.

Research globally, including the works of *Benevene et al.* (2020), and *Chan et al.* (2021), reveals a consistent trend of teachers experiencing heavy workloads and job-related stress, which in turn reduce their job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and loyalty. These studies emphasize that excessive work demands, poor mental health, and limited work-life balance are major factors undermining teachers' occupational well-being and overall performance. However, most of these studies treat commitment in general terms, without focusing specifically on affective commitment, which is the most critical for fostering enthusiasm and emotional investment in the profession.

This gap, therefore, highlights the need for empirical work that can directly link psychological well-being to affective commitment among Nigerian secondary school teachers. This present study investigates the effect of psychological well-being on affective commitment among public secondary school teachers in Asaba, Delta State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- i. determine the effect of mental health on affective commitment,
- ii. examine the effect of work-life balance on affective commitment, and
- iii. assess the effect of job stress on affective commitment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being refers to the "overall mental state of employees and their ability to cope effectively with work and life demands" (Bakker et al., 2019). The World Health Organization (WHO) also defines psychological wellbeing as "a state of mind in which an individual is able to develop their potential, work productively, and creatively, and is able to cope with the normal stresses of life" (WHO, 2021). It encompasses mental health, work-life balance, and the level of stress experienced in the workplace. The well-being of teacher is essential because stress and burnout reduce instructional quality, create negative classroom environments, lower job satisfaction and commitment (Agyapong et al., 2022), and ultimately increase teacher turnover, leading to instability in schools. These stressors may reduce their satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately their commitment to the school system.

Mental health is the psychological condition that enables teachers to think clearly, manage emotions, and maintain resilience in the face of challenges (World Health Organization, 2020; Ahmed, 2024). Teachers experiencing poor mental health may feel burnout, anxiety, or depression, which can lower their commitment. Work-life balance reflects the ability of teachers to harmonize professional duties with family and personal life. Poor work-life balance can result in stress, absenteeism, and low morale.

Affective Employee Commitment

Affective employee commitment refers to the emotional attachment, identification, and sense of belonging an employee has toward their organization (Uford & Etim, 2019; Moreira et al., 2024). When we consider teaching profession, affective commitment is particularly important because it reflects the genuine passion teachers have for their work together with their alignment with the school's values. Indeed, teachers with high affective commitment willingly go beyond contractual obligations, showing dedication to students' academic growth and overall well-being (Burmansah et al., 2019; Akai et al., 2007). Furthermore, they are more likely to adopt innovative teaching

methods, participate in extracurricular activities, and contribute positively to the school environment. In other words, such teachers derive satisfaction not merely from financial rewards they get, but from the intrinsic joy of making a difference in students' lives. When affective commitment is strong, schools benefit from lower turnover rates, stronger teamwork, and improved student performance. Therefore, cultivating affective commitment through supportive leadership, recognition, and professional development is essential for sustaining educational quality.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory (SET) as propounded by Blau (1964), which provides a robust theoretical lens for explaining the link between teachers' psychological well-being and affective commitment in public secondary schools. Social Exchange Theory posits that relationships within organizations are governed by reciprocal exchanges between employees and their employers. In the context of public secondary schools in Oshimili-South Local Government Area of Delta State, when school authorities demonstrate concern for teachers' psychological well-being, through supportive leadership practices, fair treatment, recognition, manageable workloads, and policies that enhance work-life balance, teachers are likely to perceive such actions as valuable organisational support. In response, they develop positive emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with their schools, which manifests as strong affective commitment.

Conversely, when teachers' psychological well-being is neglected, evidenced by excessive work pressure, lack of administrative support, poor interpersonal relationships, and limited recognition, the reciprocal exchange is weakened. This often results in reduced emotional attachment, low morale, diminished commitment, and increased intentions to withdraw or leave the school system. Social Exchange Theory is particularly relevant to this study because it captures the implicit psychological contract between teachers and school management. It emphasizes that sustained affective commitment among teachers is largely driven by perceptions of mutual care, trust, and reciprocity within the school environment, making it an appropriate framework for explaining commitment outcomes in public secondary schools.

Empirical Review

Nurtanto et al. (2025) investigated how psychological well-being influences vocational teacher performance with personality traits and work commitment as mediators. Using a survey of 1,297 teachers across nine Indonesian provinces and analyzing data with PLS-SEM, the study confirmed that personality traits and work commitment significantly mediate the relationship between psychological well-being and performance. However, emotional intelligence showed no significant effect on work commitment or career motivation. The findings emphasize the importance of that enhancing teachers' psychological well-being, fostering positive personality traits, and strengthening work commitment.

Hemanthakumara (2024) examined the role of psychological well-being in shaping organizational commitment and job satisfaction among IT professionals. Using quantitative methods, data were collected from 475 IT employees across multiple organizations and regions. The study employed validated instruments for measuring psychological well-being and organizational commitment. Findings proved a strong positive link between psychological well-being and job satisfaction, suggesting that employees with higher well-being experience greater job happiness. Additionally,

organizational commitment mediated this relationship, indicating that dedicated and loyal employees are more likely to report higher satisfaction.

Lado et al. (2023) investigated the effects of economic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic on employee commitment and subjective well-being. Using survey data from 697 participants, including employees from different sectors, the study employed correlational and regression analyses. Findings revealed that economic stress significantly reduced psychological well-being and employee commitment. Subjective income-related stress strongly predicted well-being, while economic deprivation and employment stress predicted commitment and its components.

Lee and Kim (2023) investigated the effect of employees' mental toughness on psychological well-being in Korean companies. Using structural equation modeling on survey data collected from 534 office workers, the study revealed that mental toughness significantly enhanced psychological well-being. Interestingly, mental toughness exerted a stronger direct influence on organizational commitment than on job satisfaction, although job satisfaction improved notably when psychological well-being was introduced as a mediator. The authors concluded that fostering mental toughness is crucial for boosting employee resilience, well-being, and long-term organisational attachment.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design to investigate how psychological well-being relates to employee commitment among public secondary school teachers in Asaba, Delta State. The choice of this design was considered suitable because it allowed the researcher to gather data from respondents at one point in time. It also made it possible to apply structured measurement tools to examine the association between the study's independent and dependent variables.

The target population consisted of all 1,260 teachers across 13 public secondary schools in the Local Government Area. Using Yamane's formula at a 5% error margin, a sample size of 304 teachers was determined. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to guarantee fair representation of teachers across the various schools, taking into account differences in school size, available resources, and staff distribution.

The analysis of data combined both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations, were used to present the demographic profile of respondents and provide an overview of their responses. To examine the relationship between psychological well-being and employee commitment, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was employed, as it is appropriate for testing the strength and direction of associations between continuous variables. Multiple regression analysis further examined the direct effects of psychological well-being dimensions, including work-life balance and job stress, on affective commitment. This methodology ensured systematic, ethical, and rigorous investigation of the study objectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 304 copies of the questionnaire that were sent out to respondents, only 275 were filled and returned. This represents a response rate of 90.4%.

Demographic Characteristics of Teacher (N = 275)

TABLE 1A: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	148	53.8
Male	127	46.2
Total	275	100

Source: Researchers Computation, 2025

A total of 148 respondents representing 53.8% of the respondents were female, while 127 representing 46.2% were male, indicating that the sample was fairly balanced in terms of gender distribution.

TABLE 1B: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 30 years	59	21.5
30-39	90	32.7
40-49	86	31.3
50 and above	40	14.5
Total	275	100

Source: Researchers computation, 2025

The largest proportion of respondents were between 30 and 39 years of age (32.7%, n = 90), followed closely by those aged 40–49 years (31.3%, n = 86). Teachers younger than 30 years constituted 21.5% (n = 59), while those aged 50 years and above accounted for 14.5% (n = 40).

TABLE 1C: Years of Teaching Experience

Year of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	28	10.2
5-10 years	97	35.3
11-20	110	40
21 years and above	40	14.5
Total	275	100

Source: Researchers Computation, 2025

Most of the teachers had between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience (40.0%, n = 110), followed by those with 5–10 years (35.3%, n = 97). Teachers with 21 years or more of experience represented 14.5% (n = 40), while those with fewer than 5 years of experience made up 10.2% (n = 28).

TABLE 2: Descriptive Statistics for Main Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Mental Health (WEMWBS composite, 1–5)	3.03	0.49	1.00	4.96
Work-Life Balance (composite, 1–5)	2.98	0.52	1.00	4.98
Job Stress (composite, 1–5; higher = more stress)	2.91	0.51	1.00	4.98

Affective Commitment (OCQ affective composite, 1–5)	2.99	0.54	1.00	4.98
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Source: SPSS output, 2025

Respondents reported an average mental health score of $M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.49$, with scores ranging from 1.00 to 4.96, suggesting a generally moderate level of psychological well-being among teachers. The mean score for work–life balance was $M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.52$, ranging from 1.00 to 4.98, indicating that most teachers experienced a moderate balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. Similarly, teachers reported a mean job stress score of $M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.51$, with values between 1.00 and 4.98, reflecting a moderate but notable level of work-related stress in the teaching profession. Finally, the average affective commitment score was $M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.54$, with scores ranging from 1.00 to 4.98, suggesting that teachers expressed a moderate degree of emotional attachment and identification with their schools.

Reliability

The reliability analysis showed that all study scales demonstrated acceptable to good internal consistency, with Cronbach's α values of .82 for mental health, .79 for work–life balance, .78 for job stress, and .84 for affective commitment. These results confirm that the instruments used were reliable for measuring the constructs in this study.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Main Study Variables (n = 275)

Variable	1	2	2	4
Mental Health	-			
Work-life Balance	.42**	-		
Job Stress	-.36**	.39**	-	
Affective Commitment	.45**	.41**	-.33**	-

Note. $p < .05$; $p < .01$.

Source: SPSS output, 2025

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed that mental health and work–life balance are positively and significantly associated with affective commitment with $r(273) = .45$, $p < .01$. $r(273) = .41$, $p < .01$.) respectively. In contrast, job stress is negatively and significantly related to affective commitment, $r(273) = -.33$, $p < .01$. The correlations also indicated that mental health is positively correlated with work–life balance ($r = .42$, $p < .01$) is negatively correlated with job stress ($r = -.36$, $p < .01$), while work–life balance is negatively correlated with job stress ($r = -.39$, $p < .01$). These results suggest meaningful associations among the study variables, consistent with expectations.

TABLE 4: Multiple Regression Results Predicting Affective Commitment

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	VIF
Mental Health	0.38	0.09	.25	4.22	<.001	1.52

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	VIF
Work–Life Balance	0.35	0.08	.23	4.06	<.001	1.61
Job Stress	-0.28	0.09	-.18	-3.11	.002	1.47
Constant	1.24	0.28	—	4.43	<.001	—

Model Fit: $R^2 = .29$, Adjusted $R^2 = .28$, $F(3, 271) = 37.01$, $p < .001$

Source: SPSS output, 2025

Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine how mental health, work–life balance, and job stress jointly and individually influenced affective commitment among public secondary school teachers in Asaba. The overall model was significant, $F(3, 271) = 37.01$, $p < .001$, explaining approximately 29% of the variance in affective commitment ($R^2 = .29$, Adjusted $R^2 = .28$).

Results showed that mental health significantly predicted affective commitment ($\beta = .25$, $t = 4.22$, $p < .001$), indicating that teachers with higher psychological well-being were more emotionally attached to their schools. Similarly, work–life balance had a significant positive effect on affective commitment ($\beta = .23$, $t = 4.06$, $p < .001$), suggesting that teachers who maintained balance between professional and personal roles were more affectively committed. Conversely, job stress had a significant negative effect on affective commitment ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -3.11$, $p = .002$), meaning that higher stress levels reduced teachers' emotional attachment to their schools.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all predictors ranged between 1.47 and 1.61, well below the threshold of 10, suggesting no multicollinearity concerns. Examination of residual plots (not shown here) indicated that assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were reasonably met. Accordingly, all three null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that mental health, work–life balance, and job stress each exert significant effects on affective commitment.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that psychological well-being, measured through mental health, significantly and positively influences affective commitment among public secondary school teachers in Asaba. Teachers with stronger mental health were more emotionally attached to their schools, reflecting findings Arbia et al. (2023) who found that psychological wellness predicted teachers' affective commitment in Nigerian schools. This implies that supporting teachers' mental health not only enhances personal well-being but also strengthens institutional loyalty.

Work–life balance also showed a significant positive effect on affective commitment. Teachers who managed work and personal responsibilities effectively demonstrated higher emotional attachment. This finding aligns with Dala and Ambalong (2025), who linked work–life balance to stronger commitment and lower turnover. For teachers, balancing professional and family roles is critical for sustained dedication, underscoring the need for supportive policies such as flexible schedules and equitable workload distribution.

However, job stress had a significant negative effect on affective commitment. Teachers experiencing high stress reported lower attachment to their schools, consistent with Arbia et al.

(2023) who associated high stress with reduced engagement. Indeed, excessive workload, inadequate resources, and time pressures were identified as key stressors diminishing commitment.

In a nutshell, the findings suggest that enhancing teachers' mental health and promoting work–life balance, while reducing job-related stress, are critical strategies for improving affective commitment. These results highlight the importance of supportive policies and interventions that foster teacher well-being, thereby contributing to greater motivation, retention, and improved educational outcomes.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of psychological well-being on affective commitment among public secondary school teachers in Asaba, Delta State. The findings revealed that mental health and work–life balance positively and significantly influenced teachers' affective commitment, while job stress exerted a significant negative effect. These results suggest that teachers' emotional attachment to their schools depends largely on their psychological wellness, ability to balance work and personal life, and manageable stress levels. Strengthening these factors is therefore critical for enhancing teacher commitment, which is indispensable for improving educational quality and student outcomes in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. The Ministry of Education should implement regular wellness programs, counseling services, and stress management workshops to strengthen teachers' psychological well-being.
- ii. School administrators should adopt supportive policies such as flexible schedules, reduced administrative workload, and family-friendly practices to improve teachers' work–life balance.
- iii. The government should provide adequate teaching resources, improve staffing levels, and ensure fair workload distribution to reduce stressors that undermine teachers' affective commitment.

Implications For Policy and Practice

The study emphasizes the need to prioritize teachers' psychological well-being as a key element of education policy in Delta State and Nigeria. Since mental health strongly predicts affective commitment, policies should integrate school-based counseling, wellness programs, and resilience-focused professional development to enhance teacher motivation and teaching quality. Promoting work–life balance is equally crucial. Family-friendly practices such as flexible scheduling, equitable workload distribution, and supportive leave policies can help teachers manage dual responsibilities, thereby fostering commitment, reducing turnover, and strengthening educational stability. Furthermore, the negative effect of job stress highlights the importance of reducing systemic pressures such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate staffing, and limited resources. School leaders should adopt proactive strategies, including collaborative decision-making, fair appraisals, and adequate instructional support. Addressing these issues will enable teachers to focus on instruction while sustaining emotional commitment, ultimately improving teacher retention and student learning outcomes.

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