

**IN-SERVICE TRAINING AS A PREDICTOR OF TEACHER  
COMMITMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA  
STATE, NIGERIA.**

**Ibe, Deborah Nwanne\***

**ABSTRACT**

This study examined in-service training as a predictor of teacher commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone, of Abia State. The main purpose was to find out whether in-service training predicts teachers' affective, normative, and continuance commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. Three hypotheses were addressed. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population consist 1877 teachers and a sample of 306 teachers was drawn using multi stage random sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was a structured and adapted questionnaire. Data was analyzed using linear regression. The result revealed that in-service training does not significantly predict teachers' affective commitment, while in-service training does significantly predict teachers' normative commitment and continuance commitment. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that State Government should improve on the incentives teachers receive during their exposures to in-service training.

**Keywords:** In-service training, Affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment.

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\* **Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria**

## Introduction

The secondary education system is seen as a tool for equipping students to live effectively in the modern age of science and technology. It is expected to inspire students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and later life. The secondary education system cannot achieve its goals and objectives without committed teachers. Teacher commitment is a very important factor in the educational system. This is because the commitment of teachers tends to facilitate school-based innovations and reformations that are meant to benefit students' learning and development (Chan, 2006).

Commitment refers to an individuals' devotion to his or her work. Gupta (2013) defined commitment as the socio-psychological bonding of an individual to his group or organization. Gupta believed that commitment is an emotional attachment an individual has towards oneself or in an organization. It also refers to mental dependence towards a profession, belief, and identification of an individual with his professional goal and value with which an individual is willing to defend his profession by hard-work (Fan-Yun, Tsu-Ming and Kai-I, 2012). Metin and Gokhan (2011) defined commitment as the psychological relationship an individual established with his or her profession and the emotional responses towards his or her profession. According to Yukl (2006) commitment describes an outcome in which one agrees with a decision and makes a great effort to carry out that decision effectively. This implies that commitment entails total compliance and devotion to carry out a task. It is believed that commitment predict turnover, citizenship behaviours, job performance, absenteeism, and tardiness (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky, 2002). Meyer and Allen (2007) in their study identified three forms of commitment, namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Affective commitment refers to the employee's positive emotional or psychological attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. This means that an individual who is affectively committed strongly identifies with the goals of the organization because he or she wants to. It is defined as the employee's positive emotional attachment to the profession (Meyer and Allen, 2007). Affective commitment is more concerned with intrinsic factors than extrinsic factors. For instance, an individual teacher who is affectively committed, strongly identifies with the goals of the teaching profession, desires to remain a member of the profession, and will

maintain the developments in the teaching profession because he or she wants to. There is an assumption that when employees are allowed to sponsor seminars, workshops, and full and part time courses, it will reduce the employees' affective commitment to their job, and they will be more willing to leave for better opportunities. This was supported by Bartlett (2001), whose findings indicated that provision of in-service training has a strong relationship with affective commitment.

Continuance commitment is a form of commitment based on the employee's recognition of the costs associated with staying or leaving the organization. Any teacher with a strong continuance commitment perceives that leaving the teaching profession leads to denial of benefits and staying retains the benefits at the end of service, and as such he or she becomes more committed to the teaching profession. Thus, in secondary schools, teachers with strong continuance commitment perceive that they have much to lose if they leave the teaching profession. Cho and Huang (2011) are of the view that continuance commitment affects teachers' intention to leave for professional advancement.

Normative commitment is another dimension of commitment which is based on an employee's feelings of obligation towards the organization. It is called "normative" because many people are brought up with the idea that it is the norm to be loyal and dutiful to one's profession. It is rooted in the norms of reciprocity. This form of commitment occurs when an employee feels a need to stay with the organization even if he or she is unhappy or wants to pursue better opportunities. The individual feels that he or she should stay with the job because it is the right thing to do. In secondary schools, teachers' are normatively committed when they feel that they should remain with the teaching profession because it has invested money and time in training them and perhaps it provides a reward in advance. Meyer and Allen (2007) proposed that employees will likely feel a sense of normative commitment if their profession has invested a lot in their training and development. Normative commitment can also result from an individual's upbringing. For instance, an individual's family might have stressed the need for members to stay loyal to one's profession. Normative professional commitment may develop because of effective professional socialization or the sacrifices involved in becoming a member of a particular profession (Meyer,

Allen and Smith, 1993). Normative commitment is usually influenced by induction (Harold and Shiju, 2012).

In the Nigerian secondary education system, a lot of factors influence teacher commitment to the teaching profession. One of the factors is in-service training. In-service training is an on-going process that goes on continuously throughout the educational life of a teacher. It refers to those activities that contribute to the professional growth and qualifications of an employee. Robert (2006) is of the view that in service training enhances commitment in the any organization. It is a means for continuing professional growth, which encourages the extension of technical assistance by teachers' educators (Nakpodia, 2010). Omenyi (2002) described in-service training as an exercise which is designed normally to enhance commitment. In-service training is in the form of attendance to conferences and workshops, organizing inductions and seminars, mentoring, job rotation, part-time and full time courses among others.

Workshop as a form of in-service training is a training tool organized for the purpose of improving teaching and learning conditions. Ogonnaya (2011) asserts that workshop is a training device used in upgrading professional efficiency, and also brings teachers together in an informal manner to work on problems of mutual interest and need. Induction is a very important form of in-service training especially for the newly recruited teacher. Induction, according to Armstrong (2009), is the process of receiving and welcoming employees when they first join an organization and giving them the basic information they need in order to settle down quickly and happily start work. Armstrong further noted that one of the aims of induction is to reduce the likelihood of the employee leaving quickly and it also increases employee commitment. Ndu (2002) sees induction as a form of orientation given to a new staff or newly promoted staff to provide general information needed to get by in the organization or new position. It is also a planned introduction of employees to their jobs, their co-workers and the organization. Seminars as a form of off-the-job training and development could help teachers to become professionally more committed (Maheshwari, 2003).

In-service training can also be in form of mentoring. Mentoring involves putting the staff under the guidance of an experienced employee who shows the staff how to do the job, giving the staff

several jobs in succession so as to gain experience on a wide range of activities. Teacher-mentoring can be in the form of team teaching. According to Uche (2008), teacher mentoring is the establishment of a personal relationship between teachers with different levels of professional skills and experiences for the purpose of professional instruction, guidance of the less experienced, and the professionally incompetent one. It also affords the opportunity for the new teacher to gain from the wealth of knowledge and experience of the older teachers.

Job rotation as an aspect of in-service training refers to the act of assigning a superior officer's job to a junior staff mostly when the superior officer is absent. In relation to secondary school setting, job rotation involves the provision of a variety of work experiences to a teacher by assigning the teacher to teach different subjects to different classes within the teacher's area of specialization. It also involves assigning to the teacher some administrative functions such as form teachers, house masters/mistresses, patrons and matrons or school clubs and societies. The aim of job rotation is to enable the junior staff have experience of the demands of a more senior position. It also aims at enabling a staff to gain an understanding of interdepartmental relations. Hossein, Gholamreza and Samereh (2010) hold the view that job rotation will help employees enjoy their work and be committed to their job more than ever.

The provision of in-service training helps teachers in improving the teaching and learning process in secondary schools. Udofia and Ikpe (2012) found out that teachers who had low commitment to the teaching profession prior to in-service training became highly committed after they were given opportunity to go for in-service training. Supporting this finding, Ibe (2014) found out that in-service training predicts teachers' professional commitment in secondary schools. It has been observed that workers may adopt a far less positive pattern of work such as passivity, resistant to change and lack of responsibility if they are deprived of an opportunity to grow professionally (Nwankwo, 2007). The rationale behind this view is that when teachers are not given the opportunity to grow professionally, it will lead to a decline in the commitment of teachers, which in turn will affect their performance.

It has been observed that the public school system has been criticized for examination malpractices, increase in failure in examinations, high incidence of students indiscipline among

others. These can be attributed to the laissez-faire attitude displayed by secondary school teachers. Such laissez-faire attitude could be in form of truancy, negligence, lateness, non preparation of lesson notes and engagement in anti-school activities such as selling of goods. All these could be as a result of the level of teacher preparedness towards teaching. Although commitment might not be the intended or at least the most obvious objective of the provision of in-service training of teachers, it can nevertheless be influenced in the process. Chew and Chan (2008) found that in-service training was not significantly related to commitment. The provision of staff training sends a message to the teachers that the teaching profession will always care and support them, and this is likely to lead to increased commitment. Some researchers believe that training can play an integral role in building a sense of debt to the teaching profession, and that the training that achieves reciprocity in the employee will foster an individual's commitment to the profession.

Many scholars agree that professions that train their employees consistently have better outcomes than those that do not. Some believe that in-service training do not predict commitment while others believe that it does predict commitment. Burke (1995) found that employees that participated in the most number of in-service training programmes had less of intent to quit, rated the trainings they attended as most relevant and also viewed the organization as being more supportive and more favorably. Oluwakemi, Oluseyi, Francis and Ekundayo (2012) found out that in-service training is positively correlated with employees' commitment and that the more training is given, the higher the level of employee's commitment to the organization. Also, Noor (2009) found out that in-service training has a positive impact on commitment, and a significant and positive relationship exists between in-service training and commitment. Training was also found to be positively related to organizational commitment (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006). Birdi, Allan, and Warr (1997) found out that a positive relationship exist between organizational commitment and training opportunities. The findings of Taormina (1999) showed that training do significantly predict employee commitment. Edel and Katty (2003) reported that training do not significantly predict employee commitment.

Premised on these empirical findings, studies on in-service training showed that it influences teacher commitment. However, these studies did not show whether in-service training predicts

the three dimensions of commitment. Hence, it becomes pertinent to explore whether the three forms of commitment is predicted by in-service training. Actually, the problem that triggered this study posed as a question is: Does in-service training predict the three dimensions of teacher commitment in public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone of Abia state?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate in-service training as a predictor of teacher commitment in public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

- 1 Whether in-service training predicts affective commitment of teachers in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.
- 2 Whether in-service training predicts normative commitment of teachers in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.
- 3 Whether in-service training predicts continuance commitment of teachers in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.

### **Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub> In-service training does not significantly predicts affective commitment of teachers in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.

H<sub>02</sub> In-service training does not significantly predicts normative commitment of teachers in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.

H<sub>03</sub> In-service training does not significantly predicts continuance commitment of teachers in secondary school in Aba Education Zone.

### **Research methods**

A correlational survey method was adopted for the study to determine whether in-service training predicts teacher commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 1877 teachers in the 95 public secondary schools, and the sample was 306 teachers selected from 30 public secondary schools using a multi stage sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection was a questionnaire which was trial tested to ascertain the reliability using Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability

coefficient estimates was 0.83. The test statistic used to analyze the data was Linear Regression Model, and data was analyzed using SPSS version 16.

### Data Analysis and Results

The results were analyzed according to the hypotheses formulated.

#### Hypothesis One

**In-service training does not significantly predict teachers' affective commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.**

The data for answering the above hypothesis are presented on Table 1.

**Table 1: Regression analysis on in-service training as a predictor of teachers' affective commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.791	1	.791	.434	.511 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	55.404	304	.182		
Total	55.483	305			

Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

Predictors: (Constant), In-service Training.

Data presented on Table 1 shows in-service training as a predictor of teachers' affective commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. The table reveals that the probability value associated with the calculated value of F (.434) for the relationship between in-service training and affective commitment is .511. Since the probability value of .511 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that in-service training does not significantly predict teachers' affective commitment.

#### Hypothesis Two

**In-service training does not significantly predict teachers' normative commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.**

The data for answering the above hypothesis are presented on Table 2.

**Table 2: Regression analysis on in-service training as a predictor of teachers' normative commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Regression	7	.000417	00420.920	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual		101.777304		.335
Total		108.781305		

Dependent Variable: Normative Commitment

Predictors: (Constant), In-service Training.

Data presented on Table 2 shows in-service training as a predictor of teachers' normative commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. The table reveals that the probability value associated with the calculated value of F (20.920) for the relationship between in-service training and normative commitment is .000. Since the probability value of .000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that in-service training does significantly predict teachers' normative commitment.

### Hypothesis Three

**In-service training does not significantly predict teachers' continuance commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.**

The data for answering the above hypothesis are presented on Table 3.

**Table 3: Regression analysis on in-service training as a predictor of teachers' continuance commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone.**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.29717	7	2.9730876	30.876	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	71.841304		.236		
Total	79.138305				

Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment

Predictors: (Constant), In-service Training.

Data presented on Table 3 shows in-service training as a predictor of teachers' continuance commitment in secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. The table reveals that the probability value associated with the calculated value of F (30.876) for the relationship between in-service training and normative commitment is .000. Since the probability value of .000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that in-service training does significantly predict teachers' continuance commitment.

### Discussion of findings and Recommendations.

The result on Table 1 showed that in-service training does not significantly predict teachers' affective commitment. The explanation for this finding is not farfetched. There is an assumption that when employees are allowed to sponsor seminars, workshops, and full and part time courses, it will reduce the employees' affective commitment to their job, and they will be more willing to leave for better opportunities. This finding contradicts the findings of Bartlett (2001), whose findings indicated that provision of in-service training has a strong relationship with affective commitment. The result on Table 2 showed that in-service training does significantly predict teachers' normative commitment. The explanation for this finding could be as a result of the incentives they receive during their exposure to seminars and workshops. This is in line with the proposition of Meyer and Allen (2007) that employees will likely feel a sense of normative commitment if their profession has invested a lot in their training. The result on Table 3 showed that in-service training does not significantly predict teachers' continuance commitment. This finding is not far fetched. It could be attributed to the nature of the in-service training given to teachers. Some teachers pass through a lot of rigours in the quest for acquiring more degrees and so they may not be able to consider the benefits in the teaching profession. This confirms Cho and Huang (2011) findings that continuance commitment affects teachers' intention to leave for professional advancement.

### Conclusion

Based on these findings, it was concluded that in-service training does not significantly predict teachers' affective and continuance commitment, but it does predict teachers' normative commitment.

### Recommendations

The following were recommended based on the findings of the study.

- 1 Teachers should be sponsored to attend in-service training programmes.
- 2 The State government should improve on the incentives teachers receive during their exposures to in-service training.
- 3 The State government should endeavour to enhance the nature of in-service training teachers receive.

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