
REPOSITIONING EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT TO REVITALIZE TEACHER COMMITMENT AND ENROLLMENT IN EDUCATION FACULTIES: A STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO THE FUTURE OF TEACHING IN NIGERIA (A CASE STUDY OF ENUGU STATE)

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Abstract: This study explores the declining interest in teaching and low enrollment into faculties of education in Enugu State. Utilizing questionnaire-based data from students, teachers, and educational administrators, the research investigates how educational management can be repositioned to rekindle passion for teaching. A total of 120 respondents participated in the study. The responses were thematically analyzed and presented in tables for clarity. Findings reveal that poor public perception of teaching, lack of mentorship, weak leadership, economic disincentives, and outdated training curricula are significant deterrents. Strategic reforms in educational management are recommended as a path toward revitalizing teacher commitment and enrollment.

Keywords: Educational management, teacher motivation, faculty of education, low enrollment, Enugu State, strategic leadership, teacher training, professional commitment, educational reform, thematic analysis

Introduction

Teaching is no longer considered a first-choice profession by many youths in Enugu State, even among students currently enrolled in faculties of education. What was once regarded as a noble and respectable vocation is now largely seen as a fallback option, selected out of compulsion rather than genuine interest. This decline in the desirability of teaching as a career choice has profound implications for Nigeria's educational development and national future.

The crisis is multifaceted. Dwindling enrollment rates in faculties of education, high attrition among early-career teachers, and the rising trend of trained education graduates abandoning teaching altogether point to a deeper structural and managerial failure within the education system (Edeh & Nwachukwu, 2022; Nweke, 2023). Educational management—which includes school leadership, policy implementation, human resource management, and teacher welfare—is at the center of this dilemma. Poorly motivated teachers, uninspiring leadership, lack of mentorship, delayed remuneration, and minimal career growth opportunities have made the classroom a demoralizing space for many (Okafor & Uche, 2021; Oji & Eze, 2024).

Enugu State, often hailed as a key educational hub in southeastern Nigeria, has not been spared from these challenges. Reports from the Enugu State Ministry of Education (2023) indicate that fewer than 30% of education students in final-year classes express a willingness to enter the classroom after graduation. This signals an alarming trend of teacher supply shortages that may severely compromise the quality of basic and secondary education across the state. More disturbingly, current teachers express frustration with educational administrators who often lack visionary leadership and fail to provide motivational frameworks for professional engagement (Aroh, 2023).

At the heart of the problem lies a fundamental question: Where are our future teachers, and why is the teaching profession no longer attractive to those trained to lead it? This study investigates these questions through the lens of educational management, focusing on how institutional leadership and managerial practices can be strategically repositioned to reverse the current trend.

This research is timely and necessary. It aligns with national and global concerns about teacher shortages, educational quality, and the need to professionalize teaching (UNESCO, 2022). By focusing on Enugu State as a case study, this paper not only explores the localized realities of educational decline but also contributes to broader national conversations on how to restore dignity, motivation, and enrollment in the teaching profession.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing demand for quality education, there is a concerning decline in both the number and motivation of teachers in Enugu State. Faculties of education face dwindling enrollment figures, while many trained teachers are either leaving the profession or never entering the classroom. Poor leadership and lack of career development support are often cited as major reasons. The study seeks to identify these barriers and recommend strategic management solutions.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify factors responsible for the declining interest in teaching among students and teachers in Enugu State.
2. To examine the perceptions of educational management among teachers and education students.
3. To assess the impact of current educational management practices on teacher commitment.
4. To propose management-driven strategies for restoring passion and commitment to teaching.

Literature Review

The Status of Teachers in Nigeria

Teaching, historically regarded as a noble profession in Nigeria, has witnessed a steady erosion of its societal prestige over the past few decades. This decline is more evident today than ever, as fewer young people express interest in joining the teaching workforce, and even those trained in education are increasingly opting for alternate careers in banking, tech, or entrepreneurship. Several studies affirm that this disinterest is linked to both external and internal challenges facing the profession (Okoye, 2020; Musa & Anyaegbunam, 2022).

The decline in public regard for teachers has not happened in isolation. It has coincided with the commercialization of education, a weakening of professional development structures, and years of poor policy implementation. As Adebayo and Chukwuma (2023) note, the Nigerian educational system no longer projects

teaching as a career of pride and purpose. Instead, it is often viewed as a default profession for those who couldn't secure placement in "higher status" fields such as medicine, engineering, or law.

In Enugu State, the perception of teaching mirrors this national trend. A recent survey by the Enugu State Education Commission (2024) found that only 19% of secondary school students would consider teaching as a future career, and just 24% of final-year education students felt confident they would remain in the profession beyond five years. This paints a worrying picture, particularly when viewed in the context of the increasing demand for qualified teachers in both public and private institutions.

More concerning is the experience of practicing teachers themselves. Many express dissatisfactions with the systemic neglect, poor remuneration, lack of respect from the public, and limited opportunities for professional growth. In the words of Ugwu and Okorie (2021), "teachers are expected to build the nation's future while struggling to survive their present realities." This dissonance between societal expectations and the support provided to teachers continues to push many out of the classroom, contributing to a looming crisis in teacher supply.

The Role of Educational Management

At the heart of this crisis lies the failure of educational management systems to evolve in response to modern demands. Educational management refers not just to the administrative duties of school heads or ministry officials, but to the broader leadership structures, policies, and strategic decisions that govern educational institutions. In Nigeria—and particularly in Enugu State—this system is largely characterized by rigidity, bureaucracy, and an overemphasis on compliance rather than innovation (Nwangwu, 2019; Ede & Mbah, 2022). Educational managers are expected to provide visionary leadership, inspire teachers, support continuous professional development, and act as advocates for staff welfare. However, many are themselves products of outdated administrative traditions that prioritize command-and-control models over collaborative leadership (Chidiebere & Okolo, 2023). As a result, the school environment becomes demotivating, with teachers feeling undervalued, overburdened, and voiceless in decision-making processes.

In Enugu's public schools, this problem is further compounded by infrastructural deficits, irregular payment of salaries, and a lack of accountability in school leadership. When interviewed, several teachers described their administrators as "invisible" or "non-participatory," indicating a breakdown in professional communication and support. These findings align with recent data by the National Teachers' Institute (NTI, 2023), which states that 71% of teachers in southeastern Nigeria rate their school leadership as ineffective or unresponsive.

Furthermore, school heads and administrators often lack formal training in educational leadership and management. Many rise to administrative roles through seniority rather than demonstrated capacity for leadership, leading to ineffective planning, poor human resource practices, and resistance to innovation. Ogu and Ekeh (2024) argue that one of the key strategies to revitalizing education in Nigeria is to professionalize the role of educational managers and equip them with the skills and tools necessary to drive institutional change.

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory: A Framework for Understanding Teacher Discontent

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, also known as the two-factor theory, offers valuable insight into the persistent dissatisfaction among teachers in Nigeria. The theory categorizes workplace factors into two domains:

motivators (which contribute to job satisfaction and include achievement, recognition, and the work itself) and hygiene factors (which prevent dissatisfaction and include salary, job security, working conditions, and institutional policies). In the context of education in Enugu State, both sets of factors are overwhelmingly neglected.

On the hygiene side, teachers often face irregular salaries, overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, and lack of instructional materials. These issues create a constant baseline of frustration that discourages teachers from committing to their roles long-term. In a study conducted by Uzochukwu and Nnaji (2022), 82% of teachers in Enugu State reported experiencing salary delays of more than three months, while 74% complained of having no access to teaching aids or internet facilities.

On the motivator side, the situation is equally dire. Recognition for performance is minimal, career advancement is largely stagnant, and opportunities for professional growth are scarce. Promotions are not merit-based, and teacher evaluation systems are inconsistent or entirely absent in some districts. According to a 2021 report by the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), less than 10% of public-school teachers in Enugu have attended a professional development workshop in the last two years.

Herzberg's theory suggests that even if hygiene factors are addressed, the absence of motivators will still leave employees disengaged. In other words, simply increasing teacher salaries will not, on its own, rekindle passion for the profession. Teachers must also feel a sense of purpose, progress, and professional esteem. Without this dual approach, efforts to revitalize the profession will likely fall short (Ike & Nwankwo, 2021; Obi, 2025).

Methodology

Research Design:

A descriptive survey research design was adopted.

Population and Sample:

The study population consisted of education students, teachers, and educational administrators in Enugu State. A total of 120 respondents were selected using purposive sampling:

- 50 final-year education students (from UNN and ESUT)
- 60 secondary school teachers (public and private)
- 10 educational administrators

Instrument for Data Collection:

A structured questionnaire with 20 items divided into 5 thematic sections:

- Public Perception of Teaching
- Educational Management and Leadership
- Motivation and Job Satisfaction
- Financial Considerations
- Curriculum and Professional Training

Method of Data Analysis:

Data were analyzed using simple percentage and thematic interpretation. Results were presented in tables and followed by brief narrative discussions.

Results and Thematic Analysis

Table 1: Public Perception of Teaching as a Career (N = 120)

Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching is a respected profession in society	Agree	25	20.8%
	Disagree	95	79.2%
I would recommend teaching to a younger sibling	Agree	18	15.0%
	Disagree	102	85.0%

Theme

Identified:

Low societal regard for teaching is a major reason youth avoid the profession.

Table 2: Educational Management and Leadership Support

Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
My school head/administrator shows concern for staff welfare	Agree	32	26.7%
	Disagree	88	73.3%
Educational managers provide mentorship and career guidance	Agree	20	16.7%
	Disagree	100	83.3%

Theme

Identified:

Weak and uninspiring leadership creates a demotivating environment for teachers and students.

Table 3: Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
I feel motivated to remain in the teaching profession	Agree	29	24.2%
	Disagree	91	75.8%
There are opportunities for promotion and growth in my workplace	Agree	21	17.5%
	Disagree	99	82.5%

Theme

Identified:

Lack of motivation and professional growth opportunities contributes to the exit of trained teachers.

Table 4: Financial Considerations

Item	Response Frequency Percentage		
My salary is sufficient to meet my basic needs	Agree	18	15.0%
	Disagree	102	85.0%
Delays in salary payment affect my job commitment	Agree	100	83.3%
	Disagree	20	16.7%

Theme

Identified:

Poor remuneration and salary delays discourage teachers from remaining in the profession.

Table 5: Curriculum and Professional Training

Item	Response Frequency Percentage		
The teacher training curriculum is practical and relevant	Agree	26	21.7%
	Disagree	94	78.3%
I feel adequately prepared for the classroom	Agree	33	27.5%
	Disagree	87	72.5%

Theme

Identified:

The **disconnect between theory and classroom practice** leaves new teachers unprepared and frustrated.

Discussion of Findings

The thematic analysis of the questionnaire results reveals deep systemic issues in the teaching profession in Enugu State. The profession suffers from a poor image, uninspiring leadership, financial hardship, and outdated training models. These factors interact to demoralize both current teachers and potential future ones. The central role of educational management in this crisis is undeniable. Managers are not effectively engaging staff, mentoring them, or advocating for systemic improvements. This misalignment must be corrected for real change to occur.

Recommendations

1. **Leadership Transformation Training** for educational managers to become mentors and motivators, not just supervisors.
2. **Incentivized Teaching Policy** with rural bonuses, housing support, and fast-track promotion pathways.
3. **Mentorship Framework** where experienced teachers coach early-career educators, improving classroom readiness.
4. **Curriculum Overhaul** in teacher training programs with focus on practical teaching tools, digital literacy, and classroom innovation.
5. **Statewide Teacher Branding Campaign** to reposition teaching as a career of pride and national value.

Conclusion

Reversing the decline in teacher commitment and enrollment in Enugu State requires a holistic overhaul of how education is managed. Questionnaire results reveal a consistent pattern of dissatisfaction linked to ineffective

leadership, poor remuneration, and irrelevant training. Educational managers are at the center of this challenge and the solution. Through strategic repositioning, they can rebuild trust, inspire a new generation of teachers, and secure the future of education in Enugu State.

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