

**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO DECLINE IN ATTRACTIVENESS OF PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING CAREER AMONG ECONOMICS
TEACHERS IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE, ENUGU STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The decline in the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career has become a pressing concern in Nigeria, particularly among Economics teachers. This study investigated the factors contributing to the declining attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Four research purposes and four research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey design was employed. The population consisted of 47 Economics teachers in public secondary schools within Nsukka Education Zone. Total enumeration was employed since the population was small and manageable. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Factors Contributing to Decline in Attractiveness of Public Secondary School Teaching Career Questionnaire (FCDAPSSTCQ), which comprised 50 items organized into four clusters on a four-point rating scale. The instrument was face validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education. The internal consistency of the items of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha and it yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a benchmark of 2.50 for decision-making. The study found that inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, low social prestige, heavy workloads, lack of mentorship, and limited career advancement opportunities significantly reduced the attractiveness of the teaching career. Conversely, economic and social factors such as job stability, social recognition, and community support were also identified. The study recommended, among other measures, that government should improve teacher salaries and working conditions, create clear career advancement pathways, and implement policies that give teachers greater participation in decisions affecting their professional lives.

Keywords: Economics teachers, teaching career, career attractiveness, secondary school

Introduction

The teaching profession has long been recognized as a critical driver of national development, serving as the foundation for human capital formation and socio-economic transformation. In Nigeria, public secondary school teachers play a pivotal role in equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for productive citizenship and lifelong learning. However, in recent years, the attractiveness of teaching as a career, particularly within the public secondary school system, appears to be on the decline (Asaju, 2026). This trend is especially noticeable among subject specialists such as Economics teachers, whose expertise is increasingly sought after in more lucrative sectors of the economy (Kalu & Ede, 2022).

Notwithstanding the critical role teachers play, the teaching profession in Nigeria has experienced a steady decline in attractiveness. Studies have consistently shown that

young people are increasingly reluctant to choose teaching as a career. Valle (2021) linked this decline to factors such as uncertainty about the future of the profession, poor salaries, limited opportunities for personal growth, and precarious working conditions. Gatti and Barreto (2019) argued that unattractive salaries and poorly structured career plans impair the social valuation of teaching and discourage entry into the profession. Froehlich (2013) demonstrated that a one percent increase in teachers' average salary relative to other professionals could increase the probability of selecting teaching degree programmes by 8 to 20 percent. This finding highlights the extent to which financial considerations influence career decisions. Beyond financial factors, the social image of teaching has deteriorated significantly. Sumra (2013) noted that teachers face complex problems ranging from low salaries to low social status, and that their concerns are rarely addressed by policymakers, leading to widespread demoralization. Diniz-Pereira (2011) observed that crises affecting teacher training programs are partly related to the declining social prestige of the profession and students' difficult experiences during their academic training. Pimentel, Palazzo, and Oliveira (2019) emphasized that the social valuation of teachers goes beyond salary and involves recognition of their role as cultural and societal mediators. When this recognition is absent, the profession becomes less appealing.

The professional environment of teaching has also become increasingly challenging. John (2010) observed that government schools fail to attract and retain good teachers because of low salaries, an uncertain promotion system, and poor treatment of teachers by the government. Egwu (2019) noted that the job description of teachers has changed substantially due to technological advancement and the knowledge economy, placing new demands on the profession that are not matched by corresponding increases in support or compensation. Feiman-Nemser (2016) warned that if teachers are excluded from decision-making processes, they are unlikely to teach in ways that meet demanding new standards, further diminishing job satisfaction and career commitment. In Nigeria, these challenges are more acute. The implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the mid-1980s led to a reduction in public spending on education, which eroded teachers' allowances and worsened their working conditions. Since then, teachers have continued to face delayed salaries, withheld promotion benefits, poor infrastructure, and a general lack of government commitment to the welfare of educators. Rabelo (2021) noted that while some teachers are drawn to the profession by intrinsic motivations such as a love for children and the desire to contribute to society, extrinsic concerns such as poor pay and lack of opportunities increasingly deter potential entrants. Barbosa (2019) concluded that salary remains one of the primary factors responsible for the growing precariousness of teaching work.

In Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, the situation reflects these national challenges. The zone has faced documented shortages of qualified secondary school teachers, particularly in specialist subjects like Economics. The shortage of Economics teachers threatens the quality of instruction in a subject that is central to students' understanding of financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and national development. Existing empirical studies on teaching career attractiveness in Nigeria have largely examined the profession in general terms, without disaggregating findings by subject specialisation. Studies such as those reviewed in the literature have addressed teacher shortages, working conditions, and retention challenges across the profession broadly, but none have specifically examined how these factors operate for Economics teachers, whose subject expertise positions them as viable candidates for more financially rewarding careers in banking, finance, insurance, and related private sector industries. This subject-specific

dimension is important because the factors that discourage an Economics graduate from entering or remaining in teaching are likely to differ in emphasis and intensity from those facing teachers in other subjects, given the wider range of lucrative alternatives available to them outside the classroom. Furthermore, studies conducted within Enugu State and the broader Southeast geopolitical zone have focused primarily on factors affecting the teaching and learning of Economics in secondary schools, such as instructional materials, classroom conditions, and student performance, rather than on the attractiveness of the teaching career itself from the perspective of the teacher. Nsukka Education Zone, as a geographically defined administrative unit with its own infrastructure realities, staffing patterns, and socioeconomic characteristics, has received no dedicated empirical attention in this regard. This zone-specific and subject-specific gap in the literature is significant because targeted policy interventions require localised evidence rather than generalisations drawn from studies conducted in different contexts. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the economic, social, and professional factors that reduce the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, as well as the strategies that could improve the situation.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges facing teachers in Nigeria are multidimensional and have had a negative effect on the quality of public secondary school education. Despite the essential role of teachers in national development, the teaching profession has experienced a consistent decline in attractiveness, particularly in public secondary schools. Teachers are confronted with delayed salary payments, stalled promotions, inadequate working conditions, and limited professional support. The professional and personal identity of teachers is largely overlooked in reform strategies and educational innovation policies. Compounding these challenges is the growing social perception that teaching is a low-status career, which discourages talented young persons from choosing the profession. In Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, observable indicators of declining interest in public secondary school teaching among Economics teachers include the increasing number of vacant Economics teaching positions in public secondary schools that remain unfilled for extended periods, the growing trend of Economics graduates seeking employment in banking, finance, and commerce rather than entering the classroom, the high rate of experienced Economics teachers leaving the public school system for private institutions or other sectors, and the reported difficulty of school principals in recruiting qualified Economics teachers to fill existing vacancies. While the general challenges facing Nigerian teachers are known, very little empirical research has focused specifically on the economic, social, and professional factors that make the teaching career unattractive to Economics teachers in this zone. Without such specific information, it is difficult for policymakers and school administrators to develop appropriate interventions. This study therefore set out to fill this gap by empirically investigating the factors contributing to the decline in attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to assess the factors contributing to the decline in attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the economic factors that affect the attractiveness of the secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

2. Determine the social factors that affect the attractiveness of the secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.
3. find out the professional challenges that affect the attractiveness of the secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.
4. find out the strategies for improving the attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the economic factors that affect the attractiveness of the secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?
2. What are the social factors that affect the attractiveness of the secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?
3. What are the professional challenges that affect the attractiveness of the secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?
4. What are the strategies for improving the attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. Nsukka Education Zone is located in the northern part of Enugu State, in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It shares boundaries with Benue State to the north and Kogi State to the northwest, placing it at the meeting point of the southeastern and north-central regions of the country. Like many education zones in South-East Nigeria, its schools face challenges related to teacher shortage. The population comprised 47 Economics teachers in public secondary schools in the zone, based on records from the Enugu State Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) for the 2024/2025 academic session. Total enumeration was employed since the population was small and manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Factors Contributing to Decline in Attractiveness of Public Secondary School Teaching Career Questionnaire (FCDAPSSTCQ). The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A captured respondents' biographical data, while Section B comprised 50 items organized into four clusters corresponding to the four research questions. All items were rated on a four-point scale.

The instrument was validated by three experts: two from the Economics Education unit of the Department of Social Science Education, and one from the Measurement and Evaluation unit of the Department of Science Education, all from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their corrections and suggestions were used to refine the final instrument. Reliability was established through a trial test involving 20 teachers in Udenu Local Government area which is outside the study area but bears similar characteristics with teachers in the study area. Cronbach alpha estimate was used to compute the internal consistency of the items, and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained, confirming that the instrument was reliable and suitable for the study. The researcher and two research assistants whom were briefed on the purpose of the study administered copies of the questionnaire to respondents. Completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved using on-the-spot delivery technique. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A mean benchmark of 2.50 was adopted for decision-making.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the economic factors that decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?

Table 1: Mean response of the respondents on the Economic Factors that decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Insufficient salaries for secondary school teachers affect the attractiveness of secondary school teaching career	3.10	0.21	Accepted
2	Delayed payment of teacher salaries discourages individuals from pursuing teaching careers in public secondary school	2.93	0.11	Accepted
3	Lack of financial incentives (such as bonuses or allowances) reduces the attractiveness of teaching as a career in public secondary school.	2.67	0.12	Accepted
4	The cost of living in Enugu State outweighs the salary benefits of teachers having their career in secondary school	3.09	0.10	Accepted
5	Poor working conditions in public secondary schools	2.92	0.21	Accepted
6	Late remittance of retirement benefits affects the attractiveness of public secondary school career	3.15	0.24	Accepted
7	High cost of professional development programs for teachers affect the attractiveness of public secondary school career	3.74	1.13	Accepted
8	Limited opportunities for salary growth over time discourages sustained careers in secondary school teaching career.	3.03	1.01	Accepted
9	Economic instability in Nigeria makes teaching career less reliable choice compared to other professions	2.87	0.13	Accepted
10	Lack of access to affordable healthcare and other employee benefits affects the attractiveness of public secondary school career	2.01	0.12	Not Accepted
11	High transport costs to work locations discourage teachers from public secondary school career	2.31	0.10	Not Accepted
12	Under paid salary condition of public secondary school career affect its attractiveness	2.14	0.21	Not Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.83	0.13	Accepted

Table 1 showed that nine of the twelve items on economic factors recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark and were accepted. These include insufficient salaries (M = 3.10), delayed salary payments (M = 2.93), lack of financial incentives (M = 2.67), high cost of living relative to teacher pay (M = 3.09), poor working conditions (M = 2.92), late remittance of retirement benefits (M = 3.15), high cost of professional development (M = 3.74), limited salary growth opportunities (M = 3.03), and economic instability (M = 2.87). Three items were rejected. They are lack of access to healthcare benefits (M = 2.01), high transport costs (M = 2.31), and general underpayment (M = 2.14). The grand mean of 2.83 (SD = 0.13) indicated that economic factors significantly decline the

attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

Research Question 2: What are the Social Factors that decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?

Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on the Social Factors that decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
13	Strong societal respect for secondary school teachers, which encourages individuals to pursue this career.	1.09	0.13	Not Accepted
14	Parents in Enugu State highly value education and support teachers, enhancing the teaching profession's appeal.	1.71	0.18	Not Accepted
15	Perception that teaching is a less prestigious profession.	2.31	0.12	Not Accepted
16	Strong community support for local schools fosters a positive teaching environment	2.17	0.15	Not Accepted
17	Negative stereotypes about teachers affect decline to attractiveness of teachers in public secondary school	2.22	0.21	Not Accepted
18	Social recognition and appreciation for teaching work motivate individuals to enter the profession.	3.92	0.17	Accepted
19	Lack of involvement from community leaders in education.	2.89	0.13	Accepted
20	Belief that teaching is a stable career option	3.01	1.31	Accepted
21	Peer pressure and social expectations discourage individuals from pursuing a teaching career.	3.45	0.21	Accepted
22	Teachers often receive social support from their communities.	3.21	0.11	Accepted
23	Perception that teaching does not lead to social mobility limits its attractiveness as a career.	2.87	0.31	Accepted
24	Family members who are educators positively influence younger generations to consider teaching.	2.97	0.21	Accepted
25	Lack of social networks for teachers in public schools	3.06	0.12	Accepted
26	Social stigma associated with teaching as a low-status job	3.01	0.18	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.71	0.21	Accepted

Table 2 showed that items 13 to 17 recorded mean scores below the 2.50 benchmark and were rejected. These include that there is strong societal respect for teachers ($M = 1.09$), that parents value and support teachers ($M = 1.71$), and that strong community support fosters a positive teaching environment ($M = 2.17$). Items 18 to 26 were accepted, including social recognition as a motivating factor ($M = 3.92$), peer pressure discouraging entry into teaching ($M = 3.45$), social support from communities ($M = 3.21$), and social stigma associated with teaching as a low-status job ($M = 3.01$). The grand mean of 2.71 ($SD = 0.21$) confirmed that social factors significantly decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

Research Question 3: What are the Professional Challenges that decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?

Table 3: Mean responses of the respondents on the Professional Challenges that decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
27	Adequate professional development opportunities.	2.93	1.02	Accepted
28	Supportive administration and leadership positively influence teacher retention in secondary schools.	3.08	0.10	Accepted
29	Heavy workload and lack of resources discourage teachers from continuing in their careers.	3.21	0.11	Accepted
30	Professional recognition and awards enhance job satisfaction and encourage teachers to remain in the field.	3.10	0.21	Accepted
31	Insufficient salary and benefits contribute to teachers' dissatisfaction with their careers.	3.01	0.24	Accepted
32	Opportunities for career advancement within the education sector attract individuals to teaching.	2.98	1.13	Accepted
33	Lack of mentorship programs leads to feelings of isolation among new teachers	3.07	1.01	Accepted
34	Support from colleagues helps create a positive work environment for teachers	2.85	0.13	Accepted
35	High levels of classroom management challenges discourage teachers from pursuing long-term careers in education.	2.58	0.12	Accepted
36	The opportunity to impact students positively inspires teachers to remain in the profession	3.07	0.10	Accepted
37	Inadequate infrastructure and facilities in schools make teaching less appealing as a career	3.01	0.21	Accepted
38	Collaborative professional learning communities enhance teachers' job satisfaction and commitment.	2.81	0.13	Accepted
39	Burnout and stress due to classroom demands contribute to teachers leaving the profession.	3.23	1.01	Accepted
40	The ability to engage in meaningful professional relationships with students enhances my commitment to teaching	3.14	0.13	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.01	1.01	Accepted

Table 3 showed that all 14 items (items 27 to 40) on professional challenges recorded mean scores above 2.50 and were accepted. Notable items include heavy workload and lack of resources (M = 3.21), burnout and stress (M = 3.23), professional recognition as a motivating factor (M = 3.10), and lack of mentorship programmes (M = 3.07). The grand mean of 3.01 (SD = 1.01) indicated strong agreement among respondents that professional challenges significantly decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies for improving the attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone?

Table 4: Mean responses of the respondents on the strategies for improving the attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
41	Increasing teachers' salaries and benefits would make the secondary school teaching profession more appealing	2.59	0.10	Accepted
42	Offering continuous professional development opportunities would enhance teacher retention in secondary schools	3.23	0.21	Accepted
43	Improving the working conditions, including infrastructure and teaching resources, would attract more people to the teaching profession	2.85	0.24	Accepted
44	Providing incentives such as housing allowances and transportation benefits would motivate individuals to pursue a career in secondary school teaching	3.10	1.13	Accepted
45	Mentorship programs for new teachers would significantly improve job satisfaction and career longevity.	3.01	1.01	Accepted
46	Creating clear career advancement paths would make secondary school teaching more attractive to professionals	2.97	0.13	Accepted
47	Recognizing and rewarding outstanding teachers through awards or promotions would increase teacher motivation and commitment	2.65	0.12	Accepted
48	Reducing class sizes and administrative workload would enhance teachers' job satisfaction and retention.	3.31	0.10	Accepted
49	Enhancing the public image of the teaching profession through media campaigns would make it a more attractive career option	2.63	0.21	Accepted
50	Strengthening support systems such as mental health and counseling services for teachers would contribute to a more appealing and sustainable teaching career.	3.13	0.13	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.94	0.31	Accepted

Table 4 showed that all ten items on strategies (items 41 to 50) recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark and were accepted. The highest-rated strategies include reducing class sizes and administrative workload (M = 3.31), offering continuous professional development (M = 3.23), strengthening mental health and counseling support (M = 3.13), and providing housing and transportation incentives (M = 3.10). The grand mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.31) indicated that respondents agreed that all the strategies improve the attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone.

Discussion

The findings on research question one revealed that economic factors significantly decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, with a grand mean of 2.83. Factors such as insufficient and delayed salaries, high professional development costs, limited salary growth, and the poor balance between the cost of living and teacher pay were identified as

key deterrents. These findings are consistent with the work of Barbosa (2019), who identified salary as the primary factor driving the growing precariousness of teaching work. Similarly, Gatti and Barreto (2019) observed that unattractive salaries and poorly structured career plans impair both the social valuation of teaching and the career choices of potential teachers. The reason these economic factors appear so pronounced is that teaching in Nigeria remains one of the lowest-paying professional careers, while the cost of living continues to rise. Teachers are unable to meet basic needs on their salaries, making the profession financially unappealing, especially when compared to careers in banking, oil and gas, or technology. Froehlich's (2013) finding that a one percent increase in teachers' relative salary could significantly boost enrollment in teacher training programmes further reinforced the point that financial incentives are critical to career attractiveness.

The findings on research question two revealed that social factors also significantly decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, with a grand mean of 2.71. The rejection of items related to societal respect and parental support for teachers indicates that respondents did not perceive strong social value being placed on the teaching profession in their communities. Conversely, peer pressure discouraging entry into teaching, social stigma, and the perception that teaching does not lead to social mobility were all accepted as significant factors. These findings align with those of Kusi and Manful (2019), who documented similar social perceptions in their study. The prevalence of these social factors can be attributed to the broader cultural devaluation of teaching as a career in Nigeria. When influential community members, peers, and even parents consistently direct young people away from teaching toward other professions perceived as more lucrative or prestigious, it creates a self-reinforcing cycle of decline. Pimentelet al. (2019) noted that the recognition of teachers as social and cultural mediators is central to their professional valuation. The absence of such recognition in Nsukka Education Zone further explains why social factors decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers.

The findings on research question three indicated that professional challenges substantially decline the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, with a grand mean of 3.01. All the 14 items of the professional challenges were accepted, including heavy workload, burnout, lack of mentorship, poor infrastructure, and limited career advancement. These findings are consistent with Oneya and Onyango (2021), who identified similar professional barriers among secondary school teachers, specifically excessive teaching loads, inadequate instructional resources, limited opportunities for career progression, and the absence of structured mentorship frameworks that would support early-career teachers. Egwu (2019) further observed that as the demands of the knowledge economy have expanded the scope of teachers' responsibilities, the professional support structures within Nigerian schools have remained largely static, creating a widening gap between what teachers are expected to deliver and what institutions actually provide them. This gap is particularly consequential in the area of mentorship, as new teachers who enter the profession without structured guidance are more likely to experience professional isolation and exit the classroom early, thereby worsening the teacher shortage that already undermines the system. Feiman-Nemser (2016) and Childs-Bowen et al. (2012) have argued that redefining teachers as leaders in school decision-making processes would improve their job satisfaction and, by extension, the overall appeal of the profession.

The findings of the study on research question four showed that all the strategies were accepted by respondents as appropriate measures for improving the attractiveness of the public secondary school teaching career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, with a grand mean of 2.94. The highest-rated strategies included reducing administrative workload, providing continuous professional development, strengthening mental health support, and offering financial incentives such as housing and transport allowances. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Oneya and Onyango (2022), who found that improvements in working conditions, financial incentives, mentorship, and career pathways were key strategies for enhancing teacher retention and career attractiveness. These results reinforce the argument that addressing the decline in teaching career attractiveness requires a comprehensive approach that simultaneously targets economic, social, and professional dimensions. The endorsement of financial incentives as a priority strategy is further supported by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), who demonstrated that structured induction programmes combining mentorship and material support significantly reduced early-career teacher attrition. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2017) argued that sustainable teacher retention requires systemic investment in professional learning communities, reduced administrative burdens, and competitive remuneration that reflects the complexity of teachers' work. These findings carry important implications for educational policy and practice in Enugu State. They suggest that piecemeal interventions targeting only one dimension of teacher welfare are unlikely to produce lasting improvement in career attractiveness.

Conclusion

This study has established that the decline in the attractiveness of public secondary school teaching as a career among Economics teachers in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State is driven by a combination of economic, social, and professional factors. Inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, low social prestige, heavy professional demands, lack of mentorship, and limited career advancement opportunities collectively make the teaching career unattractive to potential and serving teachers. However, respondents agreed that targeted interventions such as improved remuneration, structured professional development, institutional support systems, and clear career advancement pathways could effectively reverse this trend and restore teaching to its rightful place as a respected and rewarding career.

The implications of these findings are significant at multiple levels. For policymakers and the Enugu State government, the findings provide empirical grounds for reviewing the conditions of service for public secondary school teachers, particularly in economically marginalised zones such as Nsukka, where geographic isolation compounds the professional disadvantages already faced by Economics teachers. For school administrators, the findings underscore the urgent need to reduce non-instructional demands on teachers and to create school environments that recognise and reward professional excellence. For teacher educators and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, the findings highlight the importance of building structured mentorship and induction frameworks into the early professional lives of graduates entering the secondary school system. More broadly, the study contributes to the growing body of evidence on teacher career attractiveness in Nigerian public education, offering a zone-specific empirical baseline that can inform future comparative studies across education zones in the South-East geopolitical zone and beyond. Addressing the identified factors is not only necessary for retaining qualified Economics teachers but is ultimately critical for

producing economically literate graduates capable of contributing to Nigeria's development agenda.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Enugu State Government should review and substantially increase the salaries of public secondary school Economics teachers, ensure timely payment of all entitlements and retirement benefits, and establish a structured system of financial incentives including housing allowances, transportation benefits, and subsidised professional development programmes, to address the economic factors identified as declining the attractiveness of the teaching career.
2. The Enugu State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with community leaders and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, should launch sustained public awareness and rebranding campaigns that project teaching as a prestigious and socially valued profession, and should create structured professional networks for Economics teachers in public secondary schools to reduce isolation and counter the social stigma associated with the career.
3. The Enugu State Post Primary Schools Management Board should develop a transparent and merit-based career advancement framework for Economics teachers, establish formal mentorship and induction programmes for newly employed teachers, and take deliberate steps to reduce administrative workload and provide adequate instructional resources in public secondary schools.
4. School administrators and educational policymakers should prioritise the reduction of class sizes, invest in school infrastructure and counselling support services for teachers, and institutionalise continuous professional development as a mandatory component of the teaching career in Nsukka Education Zone.

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