Social loafing and teachers' organizational commitment: Examining the impact of perceived organizational support

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Abstract

Organizational commitment is pivotal for achieving organizational goals. Committed teachers are likely to exhibit positive behavior towards their job and organizational goals. They are more likely to perform beyond the call of duty to meet the students need and the demands of the entire society. Our objective was to investigate whether perceived organizational support would moderate affective and continuance organizational commitment of teachers who have quitting intentions and consequently engages in social loafing. We sampled a total of 538 teachers comprising 129(24%) males and 409(76%) females (ages ranged 20-59 years, M = 40.45 years, SD = 8.68) selected from 21 public secondary schools within Enugu urban region, Nigeria. Three instruments were used for data collection. They include: Perceived Social Loafing Questionnaire (PSLQ), Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) and Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS). The study found that there is a negative relationship between perceived social loafing and both affective and continuance organizational commitment. Negative correlations were also identified between perceived organizational support (POS) and affective and continuance organizational commitment. Furthermore, perceived organizational support (POS) was found to have a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived social loafing and affective/continuance organizational commitment. The findings of this study revealed that institutional support for the teachers ignites teaching passion for affective teaching commitment which reduces the extent of social loafing.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support, Perceived social loafing, Affective, Continuance, Organizational commitment.

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Introduction

Education is an important aspect in everyone's life (Giami et al., 2018) and as such, contributes immensely towards ensuring overall personal and societal development. For this reason, the education sector should be strategically planned to produce the best results for all concerned. Amongst the teachers, tutors, facilitators or lecturers, regardless of the title, the teachers shoulder heavier responsibilities in the impartation of knowledge. The school as an organization employs teachers in order to realize its own goals which include among others the production of intellectuals and responsible human beings. Teachers are responsible for conducting the class design, ensuring productive use of time, resources, learning technologies and providing attention to each student (Dillenbourg et al., 2011; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Recently, teachers have been observed showing poor commitment to teaching. The poor commitment of teachers across institutions has immensely contributed to the prevailing economic challenges across Nigeria and the world at large (Fayankinnu, & Ogungbamila, 2015). This trend in the school system is quite disturbing as organizational commitment of teachers is highly volatile and unstable, resulting to massive exodus of the best and most experienced teachers to other sectors in search of better working conditions. This has been the basis for *japa,* loosely translates to "run away" or "escape" syndrome in Nigeria. It is on this accord that we looked at how teachers' perceived organizational support could moderate their social loafing and affective organizational commitment.

Employees' organizational commitment depends on their belief in the organization's values, norms, orientations, and goals, as well as their personal involvement in its success (Zhang & Liu, 2022; Kumar et al., 2012). Organizational commitment refers to the attitudes and behaviors of employees that demonstrate a voluntary psychological attachment to the company (Chovwen, 2012; Maish et al., 2023). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), organizational commitment comprises three components: affective, continuance, and normative. Jaros (2007) observed a discrepancy between the scale items employed to assess normative commitment (the "normative commitment scale," developed by Allen & Meyer, 1990). Furthermore, scholars examining the construct's definition contend that normative commitment (NC) may indeed represent a variant of continuance commitment (Powell & Meyer, 2004) or a precursor to commitment, rather than a distinct form of commitment (Cohen, 2007). On that basis, we focused on affective and continuance commitment, which represent the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement of employees in the organization. We believe that a lack of affective organizational commitment contributes to employee laziness. Teachers with strong affective commitment remain in the teaching profession because of their passion, while those with strong continuance commitment work hard to retain their jobs. Personal beliefs and choices may influence these feelings. Commitment may be more complex than previously thought. However, an individual's overall commitment to the organization reflects any or all of these psychological states (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The varying levels of commitment among teachers appear to influence the overall psychological state of commitment (Weibo et al., 2010).

Teachers who have a positive view of their job are more likely to support their organization, while those with a negative view are inclined to engage in social loafing and other behaviors that hinder organizational goals. Therefore, teachers' job attitudes can influence their work behavior. Committed teachers typically display positive job behavior and are more likely to go above and beyond to meet student and societal needs. Xu et al. (2016) indicates that a fair climate and ethical leadership can foster employees' trust and belief in their organization, as well as the fairness of its rewards. It is important to examine the relationship between perceived social loafing and teachers' organizational commitment. Many organizations, including schools, face challenges related to perceive social loafing. This counterproductive behavior can diminish employee morale, productivity, organizational commitment, and operational efficiency. Perceived social loafing refers to the belief that one or more group members are not performing

up to par (Comer, 1995; Sing et al., 2018). Social loafing may impact group members' motivation and commitment only if it is noticed. Individuals' perceptions of the social environment precede their reactions (Czyz et al., 2016). The incidence of perceived social loafing are assumed to be less when teachers are more cohesive and productive. Similarly, peer evaluations during team projects can help reduce social loafing. Peer evaluations can alert instructors on problems within the group and can send a signal to group members that there will be consequences for nonparticipation (Goodwin & Wolter, 1998).

It is therefore possible that educational organizations whose employees perceive social loafing are vulnerable to internal and external challenges because of gross under-performance. This seems to be the case with school teachers who do not go extra mile to meet their in-role job duties. Thus, it appears that teachers who engage in social loafing or perceive social loafing, are likely to exhibit low organizational commitment. Therefore, the researcher is interested in finding the moderating role of perceived organizational support on the relationship between perceived social loafing and organizational commitment of teachers.

Perceived organizational support is the general perception or belief of employees regarding the degree to which their organization or management values their contributions and prioritizes their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Perceived organizational support is also valued as an assurance that the organization and management will provide assistance when necessary to effectively perform one's duties and manage stressful situations (Amazue & Onyishi, 2016; George et al., 1993). It is conceivable that the relationship between perceived social loafing and affective/continuance organizational commitment of teachers in educational institutions in Nigeria could be moderated by higher levels of perceived organizational and managerial support. This could lead to job satisfaction, felt obligation, organization commitment, citizenship behavior, weaker intentions to leave the organization, and reduced absenteeism and tardiness. We base the explanation on the principles of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) in order to elucidate the relationships between employees and organizations. The theory elucidated that each party has expectations and perceptions about the behavior of the other, but these expectations and perceptions are associated with the timing or the specifics of the services that each party is required to provide. Consequently, reciprocity is a component of social exchange (Tansky & Cohen, 2001). Consequently, the current state of affairs for the government and other employers of labor is characterized by a high turnover of teachers. One potential indicator of the organization's ability to enhance productivity, satisfaction, and satisfactoriness is the perception of the organization's support by teachers. Consequently, organizations could develop policies that are most advantageous to both the organization and the teachers by leveraging these perceptions.

POS is defined as the extent to which employees perceive that the organization is prepared to provide them with adequate working conditions, make their work interesting, stimulate them, and provide them with fair compensation in exchange for their efforts (Aube et al., 2007; Onyishi, 2006; Ugwu et al., 2018).

Perceived social loafing and organizational commitment

Organizational social loafing has various causes. Karau and Williams (1993) identified two reasons: "Blame Avoidance" and "Effort Management." An individual might reduce their effort in a group setting or task to deflect personal blame for group or personal failure. In situations where group or personal failure is likely, "blame avoidance," also known as "hiding in the crowd," allows an individual to distance themselves from the group. When an individual anticipates acting alone or in a situation where maximum social benefit, such as recognition or praise, is likely, they may save effort for a future task by reducing their contribution to a group task. Bennett and Naumann (2005) suggested that perceived suppression or withholding of effort can lead to employee turnover, lower productivity,

morale issues, and diminished organizational commitment. Furthermore, perceived social loafing is a motivational construct that refers to perception of a reduction in motivation and effort when individuals work in a team, in comparison to individual effort (Linden et al., 2004). If social loafing is perceived, teachers may reduce their effort or their contribution to the team to avoid being seen as a deviant. Teachers do not want to be seen as a deviant by working harder than others. Both group and individual suppression can reduce efforts (Czyz et al., 2016; Mefoh & Nwanosike, 2012). Thus we hypothesize that:

> **H1:** Perceived social loafing (PSL) will significantly be associated with (affective and continuance) organizational commitment of teachers.

Organizational support and its role on organizational commitment

POS has been discovered to have an impact on the general reactions of employees to their job, such as job satisfaction (Cakar & Yildiz, 2009), job involvement (Agu et al., 2018; George & Brief, 1992), organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1990), and a reduced intention to leave or withdrawal behavior (Pathak, 2012). One of the significant outcomes of POS is organizational commitment. Loi et al. (2006) have observed that employees with high POS experience a sense of obligation to demonstrate supportive behaviors and positive job attitudes towards the organization, as well as to contribute to the organization's objectives. Consequently, it was anticipated that POS would enhance the organization's performance by fostering a greater sense of employee commitment and obligation to the organization (Jain et al., 2013). As a result, the study sought to assess the extent to which perceived organizational support could help to buffer or reduce the affective and continuance organizational commitment of teachers who have quitting intentions and, as a result, engage in social loafing. Consequently, our objective is to determine the moderating influence of perceived organizational support (POS) on the relationship between perceived social loafing and organizational commitment among teachers in relation to the "japa" syndrome. Based on these objectives, we hypothesized that:

> **H2:** POS would significantly be associated with affective and continuance organizational commitment of secondary school teachers; and
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> **H3:** POS would moderate the association of perceived social loafing and affective and continuance organizational commitment of secondary school teachers.

Method

Participants

In this study, 538 teachers were involved, including 129 (24%) males and 409 (76%) females, selected from 21 secondary schools in the Enugu metropolis. The researchers used a multi-stage sampling procedure. First, they employed stratified sampling to choose 21 secondary schools in the Enugu metropolis falling under the Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) in Enugu State. This method was chosen due to the prevalence of loafing behaviour in public schools and the fact that some schools had already participated in the pilot study. For the second stage, the researchers employed the proportionate stratified sampling technique, a method known for its thoroughness and reliability. This technique allowed for the selection of 25% of the entire teacher population in each school, ensuring a representative sample. The researchers selected a sample by taking a proportion of respondents from each school, forming a cluster. The whole population was divided into smaller groups known as strata. The sample was chosen by distributing the sample size proportionally among the various strata, ensuring that each contributed a proportionate

amount to the overall sample size. In the third stage, a systematic random sampling method was used to select 620 participants. Also, 25% of the total number of teachers from each stratum was included in the sample. The nominal roll in each cluster was used as the sampling frame to select a random unit of 4, which represented 25% of the teachers in each cluster.

The participants in this study were diverse in terms of age, marital status, educational levels, and employment duration. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 60 years, with an average age of 40.45 years and a standard deviation of 8.68. Three hundred and eighty-five 385 (71.5%) of the participants were single, and 153 (28.5%) were married. The educational levels of the participants were distributed as follows: 1.8% (9) PhD, 13.5% (73) M.Sc, 72.3% (389) B.Sc, and 12.4% (67) HND. In terms of employment duration, 413 teachers (76.8%) had served for more than ten years, while 125 teachers (23.2%) had worked for less than ten years. This diversity ensures that the findings of this study are comprehensive and inclusive.

Instruments

Perceived Social Loafing Questionnaire (PSLQ)

The Perceived Social Loafing Questionnaire (PSLQ) is a short and focused tool that consists of five items. It was created by Hoigaard in 2002 to measure teachers' perceptions of social loafing behaviors displayed by their colleagues. Participants assess the extent to which they believe teachers are engaging in social loafing behaviors, such as "Teachers in my school are contributing less than I expected." The assessment is done using a 5-point rating scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree." Higher scores indicate higher perceptions of social loafing among teachers and vice versa. Hoigaard (2002) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.74 for the questionnaire. To test the PSLQ's reliability, the researcher involved 71 teachers from 10 secondary schools under the Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) in the Enugu zone. Each school selected a teacher, chosen by the Principal, to distribute ten copies of the questionnaire to participants. The sampling procedure used was convenient. Seventy-one copies of the questionnaire were returned, resulting in a return rate of 71.0%. The Cronbach's alpha (α) for the perceived social loafing questionnaire was .77, indicating good internal consistency reliability.

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) developed a shortened version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), which includes 8 items. This questionnaire evaluates employees' perceptions of their organization's or management's recognition of their contributions and prioritization of their well-being. Respondents rated their agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The 8-item questionnaire contains statements, such as "This organization appreciates my contribution to its overall welfare." For negatively worded items, the scoring was reversed. The 8-item instrument includes direct score items (1, 4, 6, and 8) and reverse score items (2, 3, 5, and 7) to reduce response bias. A higher score indicates a greater appreciation of employees' contributions and the level of concern the organization or management has for their well-being, and vice versa. Hutchison (1997) and Eisenberger et al. (2001) reported Cronbach's alpha values for this scale of .92 and .77, respectively. Onyishi (2006) validated the scale for the Nigerian sample using face and content validity, and the item-total correlation ranged from .30 to .67. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .88, indicating high internal consistency. Furthermore, the test-retest reliability was found to be .89, indicating good stability over time. The reliability of POS for the present study was obtained from the result of pilot study involving 71 secondary school teachers drawn from ten schools in Enugu educational zone.

Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha, α) for Survey of Perceived Organizational Support was .86.

Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS)

The Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS), developed by Allen and Meyer in 1996, is a 24-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess employees' attitudes and feelings towards their current job. The scale comprises three sub-scales: Affective, Continuance, and Normative, each containing eight items. Affective commitment measures emotional attachment to the organization, while Continuance commitment evaluates the perceived costs of remaining in the organization, and Normative commitment assesses a sense of obligation to remain with the organization. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement). The OCS has been found to be reliable across different cultures. Studies have explored all three components as well as individual components. Allen and Meyer (1996) reported reliability coefficients of .87 for affective commitment, .75 for continuance commitment, and .79 for normative commitment.

Procedure

The four instruments described above were administered to the participants in their respective schools. Prior to this, the researcher requested for permission from the Chief Supervising Principal (CSP) in Enugu zonal office of PPSMB and the Principals of the schools, with a letter of identification and authorization from the Head, Department of Psychology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, addressed to the principals of the respective schools in Enugu zone. The Principals assisted the researcher in the selection of 21 research assistants in their respective schools who were tutored on the principles guiding psychological research. All participants were sufficiently informed about purpose of the research, completion of questionnaires and also that the data obtained from their voluntary participation would remain confidential. Six hundred (600) copies of the questionnaires were distributed. Each school studied formed a stratum from which the researcher took the proportion (25%) of the respondents into the sample. The study used a multi-stage cluster sampling method to select the sample. In the first stage, we employed a stratified purposive sampling technique to choose 21 secondary schools from the Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) in the Enugu metropolis. We chose to use purposive sampling because of the common occurrence of loafing behavior in public schools in the Enugu metropolis. Additionally, some schools had already participated in the initial study.

In stage two; proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted to select 25% from the total teacher population in each school. In stage three; the six hundred and twenty (620) participants were selected from Enugu education zone using systematic sampling method to select 25% of the total number of teachers from each stratum. Using the nominal roll in each cluster as sampling frame, the researcher determined the sampling interval (K = N/n) where K= the interval of selection, while N= stands for total number of teachers in each school, n= the number of teachers to be selected. Then, the random unit of 4 was used to select the 25% of teachers in each cluster. For example; 1,2,3 (4) 5,6,7, (8) 9,10,11, (12) 13,14,15, (16) 17,18,19, (20) and so on.

Each school studied formed a cluster from which the researcher took the proportion of the respondents into the sample. The teacher working in the aforementioned secondary schools helped in the data distribution and collection. No time limit was given to the participants on completion of the questionnaires. After completion and collection, five hundred and thirty eight (538) properly filled copies of questionnaire representing 86.7% of the total number of questionnaire distributed, were used for data analysis.

Design/Statistics

We used a cross-sectional survey research design and employed a multi-stage sampling technique to select the sample for data collection as explained in the participants section. The statistics for testing the hypotheses for the study was Hayes' regression based PROCESS macro for SPSS version 4.2. This was because there were complex interaction of variables involving moderation effect of two variables (perceived organizational justice and support) on the relationship between one independent variable (perceived social loafing) and one criterion or dependent variable (organizational commitment), because of need for the researcher to establish direct relationship and simultaneously check for moderation, Hayes' regression-based PROCESS macro for SPSS was utilized.

Results

The results of the findings of this study are presented in this section. The frequency distribution of the demographic variables is shown in Table 1. The descriptive statistics and correlations of study variables are shown in table 2, while findings of the Hayes PROCESS Macro for testing the hypotheses are shown in subsequent tables.

Table 1.
Frequency distribution of the demographic variables

Demographics	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Gender	Male	129	24.0
	Female	409	76.0
Age	20-29	50	9.3
	30-39	206	38.3
	40-49	194	36.1
	50 and above	88	16.4
Marital status	Single	385	71.6
	Married	153	28.4
Educational level	HND	67	12.5
	B.Sc	389	72.3
	M.Sc	73	13.6
	Ph.D	9	1.7
Length of service	Less than 10 Years	125	23.2
	More than 10 Years	413	76.8

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics and correlations of study variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender			1	.19**	-.05	.06	.03	-.07	-.10*	-.09*	.00
2. Age				1	-.31**	.22**	.49**	.02	-.05	-.11*	.22**
3. Marital Status					1	-.06	-.46**	-.07	-.03	.17**	.03
4. Educa. Level						1	.17**	.04	-.03	.05	-.03
5. Length of Ser	1.77	.42					1	-.02	-.06	-.02	-.14**
6. POS	30.89	3.13						1	.17**	-.11*	-.02
7. PSL	15.73	1.76							1	-.08	-.06
8. Affective OC	23.89	2.28								1	.07
9. Continuance OC	25.20	3.12									1

*Note: *p > .05, ** p > .01; Gender (coded '0' for male and '1' for female); Marital Status (coded '0' for single, '1' for Married); Edu Lev= Educational level (1=HND, 2=BSc, 3=MSc, 4=PhD); LS=Length of Service ('0' for less than 5 years, '1' for more than 5 years); POS= Perceived Organizational Support; PSL= Perceived Social Loafing; Affective OC= Affective Organizational Commitment; continuance OC= continuance Organizational Commitment;*

Table 2 presented the descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables. Gender (male) was negatively related to affective organizational commitment (r= -.09, p <.05), but not to continuance commitment. Age was negatively correlated with affective and continuance organizational commitment (r= -.11, p<.05; r = -.22, p <.01), respectively. Marital status positively correlated with affective organizational commitment (r = .17, p<.01). Educational level was related to length of service (r= .17, p <.01). Length of service was negatively related to continuance (r= -.14, p <.01). Perceived Organizational support positively related to perceived social loafing affective (r= .17, p <.01) and negatively to affective organizational commitment (r= -.11, p<.05). PSL neither correlated with affective nor continuance organizational commitment.

Table 3.
Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Organizational Commitment

	AFFECTIVE		CONTINUANCE	
	B	**t**	**B**	**T**
Gender	-.44	-1.90	.29	.97
Age	-.22	-1.69	-.74	-4.27**
Marital status	.87	3.52**	-.49	-1.54
Educational Level	.30	1.71	.07	.30
LS	.51	1.73	-.48	-1.25
PSL	-.09	-1.51	-.05	-.65
POS	-.08	-2.50*	.04	.86
INT_1	.01	.68	.08	4.86**
INT_2	.01	.40	-.05	-1.93
INT_3	-.01	-1.69	.00	.40
INT_4	.01	1.22	-.02	-4.06**
R^2	.074		.162	
F	3.476**		8.459**	
ΔR^{2*}	.003		.026	
F	1.495		16.443**	

*Note: *p > .05, ** p > .01; Gender (coded '0' for male and '1' for female); Marital Status (coded '0' for single, '1' for Married); Educational level (1=HND, 2=BSc, 3=MSc, 4=PhD); LS=Length of Service ('0' for less than 5 years, '1' for more than 5 years); POS= Perceived organizational Support; PSL= Perceived Social Loafing*

Results of the SPSS Process macro regression model 3 for the test of organizational commitment (affective and continuance) for perceived social loafing, Perceived organizational support, and the interaction terms. The demographic variable gender, age, marital status, educational level and length of service were entered as controls. Perceived social loafing was found not to be a significant predictor of organizational commitment (affective and continuance). Perceived organizational support was a significant predictor of organizational commitment (affective) (β = -.08, t= -2.50, p <.05).

Table 4.
Conditional effects of the perceived social loafing at values of the perceived organizational support

POS	Effect	SE	T	*P*	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-.338	.100	-3.370	.001	-.535	-.141
Mean	-.199	.083	-2.402	.017	-.362	-.036
High	-.060	.126	-.476	.634	-.307	.187
Low	-.079	.073	-1.092	.275	-.222	.063
Mean	-.074	.057	-1.309	.191	-.185	.037
High	-.069	.086	-.804	.422	-.237	.099
Low	.179	.110	1.624	.105	-.038	.396
Mean	.051	.080	.635	.526	-.106	.208
High	-.078	.112	-.693	.489	-.298	.143

Note: POS= Organizational Support; PSL= Perceived Social Loafing

Table 4 showed that POS moderated the association of PSL and Affective OC such that low levels of POS and high PSL leads to low level of affective organizational commitment. A combined moderation graph was plotted in figure 1 indicating that the interaction effect that low perceived social loafing leads to lower organizational commitment(affective) (see figure 1). Also, the last interaction effect showed that low POS, low perceived social loafing with average perceived organizational support would also lead to lower organizational commitment (affective).

Figure 1.
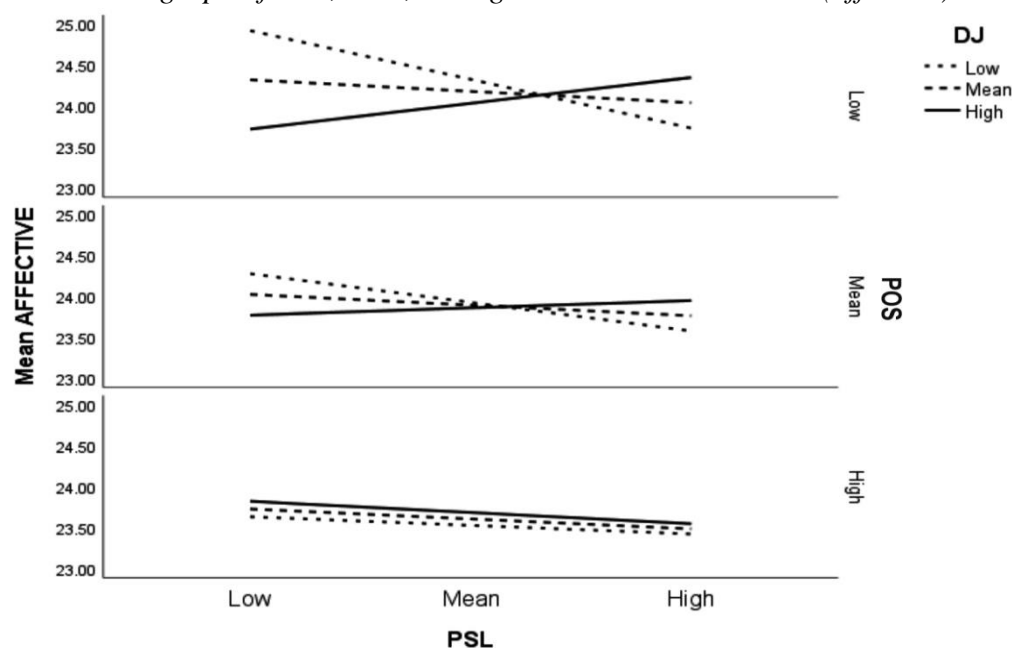*Interaction graph of PSL, POS, on organizational commitment (affective)*

Table 5.
Conditional effects of the perceived social loafing at values of the perceived organizational support

POS	Effect	Se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-.588	.126	-4.663	.000	-.835	-.340
Mean	-.426	.108	-3.947	.000	-.638	-.214
High	-.264	.166	-1.590	.112	-.591	.062
Low	.097	.100	.971	.332	-.099	.292
Mean	-.050	.076	-.653	.514	-.199	.100
High	-.196	.115	-1.710	.088	-.421	.029
Low	.781	.173	4.513	.000	.441	1.121
Mean	.327	.109	2.996	.003	.113	.541
High	-.127	.140	-.908	.364	-.403	.148

Note: POS= Perceived Organizational Support; PSL= Perceived Social Loafing

Table 5 showed that perceived social loafing moderated the association between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment such that low level of PSL and perceived organizational support negatively predicted continuance organizational commitment. While, high level PSL and low level of perceived organizational support predicted continuance organizational commitment positively.

Figure 2.
Interaction graph of PSL, POS, on organizational commitment (continuance)
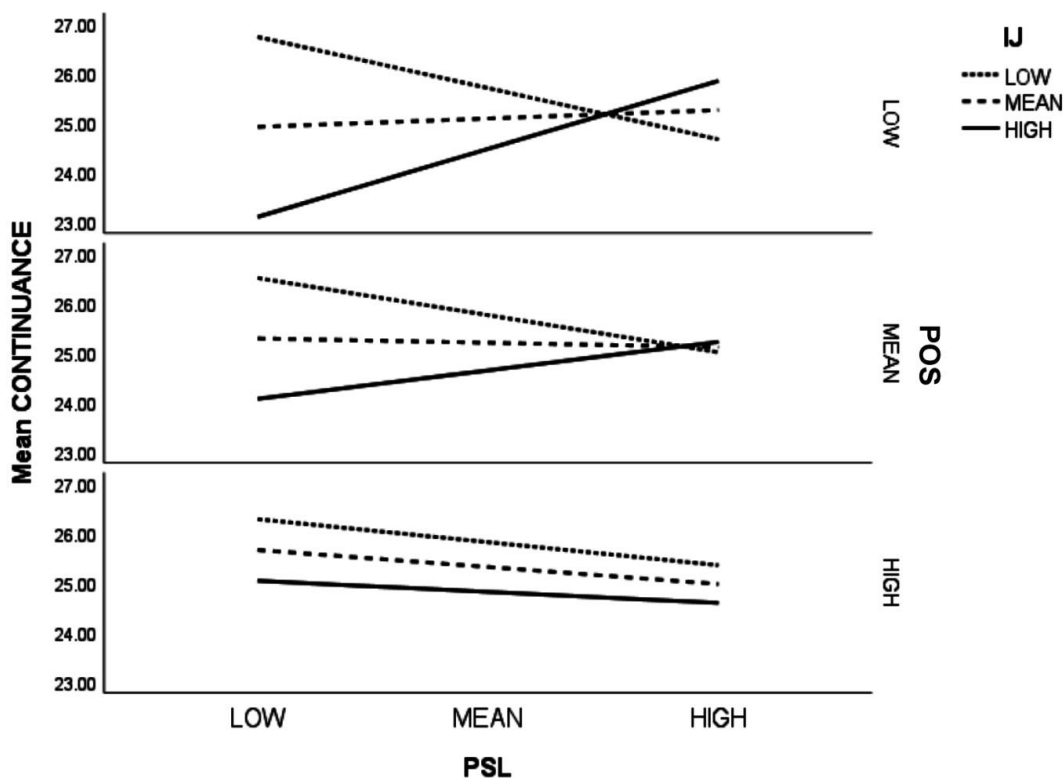
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how perceived organizational support could buffer or mitigate affective and continuance organizational commitment of teachers who have quitting intentions and consequently engages in social loafing. Several hypotheses were tested. Firstly, it was hypothesized that perceived social loafing (PSL) will significantly be associated with (affective and continuance) organizational commitment of teachers. The

hypothesis was validated, demonstrating a negative correlation between perceived social loafing (PSL) and affective and continuance commitment. This suggests that when teachers believe that their colleagues are not making as much of a contribution as they could, they are more likely to decrease their level of emotional connection, sense of belonging, and active participation in their organization. Furthermore, this result showed that teachers' degree of psychological attachment and devotion to their organization or obligation to remain in their organization is related negatively to their perceived social loafing. This result is consistent with extant literature (e.g., Abesi & Samani, 2017; Ezeh et al., 2018; Zhang & Liu, 2022) who in their separate studies have shown that when employees perceive their counterparts as embarking on social loafing they, in turn, showed negative organizational commitment. Previous studies (e.g., Comer, 1995; Liden et al., 2004; Mulvey & Klein, 1998) have reported similar findings. They found that high levels of social loafing negatively affect social interaction between individuals and reduce employees' commitment to the organization. Teachers' attitude towards their organization is related to their behavior on the job. Highly committed teachers exhibit positive behavior towards their job. They are more likely to perform beyond the call of duty to meet the demands of the entire society. Therefore it seems natural and logical that teachers who are high in affective and continuous committed are less likely to engage in social loafing.

We hypothesized a significant association between perceived organizational support (POS) and affective and continuance organizational commitment. We found that perceived organizational support had a negative correlation with affective commitment. This implies that increase in teachers' general perception of availability of care and support in their organization, was associated with a reduction in teachers' degree of psychological attachment and involvement in their organization. Previous research (e.g., Luo et al., 2018; Robins & Judge, 2013) found that affective commitment indicates a higher level of commitment, while normative commitment and continuance commitment show moderate and low levels of commitment, respectively. Additionally, these studies revealed that affective commitment has a stronger positive impact on organizational outcomes, such as turnover intentions and performance, compared to the other two dimensions of commitment. The explanation for this negative association in the current study stems from the fact that teachers' sense of loyalty and belongingness to their organization may have been affected, despite availability of care and support from their organization, consequently teachers no longer feel obliged to return the caring and support to their organization. Moreover, how teachers handle conflicting equity signal, such as disparity of inputs and outcomes between state teachers and federal teachers, could spring up negativity and other counter productive work behavior in the organization.

Similarly, we hypothesized that perceived organizational support would be associated with continuance commitment of teachers, and this hypothesis was confirmed as the result revealed a negative association between POS and continuance commitment of teachers. This indicates that teachers who reported high POS, also displayed low continuance commitment. Thus, high level of POS decreased the likelihood of continuance commitment of teachers to their organization. The explanation for this negative relationship is that teachers are driven by the antecedents of continuance commitment and not by the degree of care and support by their organization. Previous findings (Robins & Judge, 2013; Meyer et al., 2002) have supported the current result.

The factors that contribute to continuance commitment include the extent of personal investment, financial rewards, available alternative job opportunities, and organization-specific skills (Nazem & Mozaiini, 2014). According to Powel and Meyer (2004), continuance commitment is characterized as a self-centered emotion that is different from affective commitment due to the absence of an emotional connection with the organization. Therefore, teachers who possess a sense of continuance commitment persist in their roles due to their reliance on it. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), they are perceived as being less devoted than the organization's affective employees. Continuance commitment as well as affective

commitment displays modest consistent form of negative relationship with perceived organizational support (Meyers et al., 2002; Powel & Meyer, 2004; Rhodes et al., 2001). Shore and Tetrick (1991) stated that low POS may increase the "negative form of commitment" reflected in continuance commitment. Therefore, enhancing POS is not likely to help teachers remain in their organizations, hence it increases their awareness of costs associated with leaving.

The hypothesis suggests that the perceived support from the organization would significantly impact the relationship between the perception of social loafing and the emotional/continuing commitment to the organization. The findings indicate that the influence of perceived social loafing on affective organizational commitment is affected by perceived organizational support. Specifically, teachers who perceive average levels of organizational support and low levels of social loafing are more likely to show higher levels of affective commitment. This demonstrates that teachers who see their organization as supportive, concerned about their overall well-being, and appreciative of their contributions exhibit higher levels of commitment to their organization. Additionally, the level of affective commitment is determined by factors such as organizational culture, rewards, punishment, and autonomy (Sharma & Sinha, 2015). Rhoads and Eisenberger (2002) argued that perceived organizational support (POS) weakens the correlation between stressors and tension by indicating employees' perception that the organization provides resources to address work-related difficulties and challenges. Karatepe (2011) demonstrated that elevated levels of perceived organizational support (POS) weaken the correlation between emotional dissonance and work disengagement in employees. Our findings have corroborated with extant literatures (Buluc & Gunes, 2014; Masih et al., 2023; Stephens, 2016). As suggested by Bradley and Cartwright (2002), POS creates the expectation among the teachers, that help (an alternative sense of belonging) is available despite personally frustrating events of social loafing perception in their organization. When teachers' difficulty to psychological attachment to and integration with their organization is counterbalanced by perception of organizational support characterized by belief that aid will be available from their organization and management when it is needed, they show low level of perceived reduction in personal efforts.

Similarly, we hypothesized that perceptions of organizational support (POS) would influence the relationship between perceived social loafing and continuance organizational commitment. Our results indicated that teachers who feel unsupported by their organization and engage in low levels of social loafing are likely to have lower levels of continuance organizational commitment. This supports our hypothesis. Our study suggests that teachers are less likely to engage in social loafing and other negative behaviors at work when they feel cooperation and collaboration with their colleagues. POS appears to protect against the negative effects of perceived social loafing on teachers' organizational commitment when they feel strong organizational support (Stephens, 2016; Kutesis et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2018; El-Aty & Deraz, 2018). Therefore, improving cooperation and social connections between teachers and their organizations can reduce the adverse effects of perceived social loafing and concerns about job security. Our findings are consistent with previous research showing that increased POS is associated with higher organizational commitment (Buluc & Gunes, 2014; Masih et al., 2023). Additionally, our study highlights the significant moderating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between social loafing and organizational commitment.

Implications of the findings

This study explores the impact of perceived social loafing (PSL) on organizational commitment and the moderating role of perceived organizational support (POS). It integrates insights from social identity and exchange theories to suggest that teachers' perception of

'oneness' with their organization prompts de-individuation and reduces perceived social loafing. It suggests that teachers and employers adhere to norms specifying that good deeds should be reciprocated, leading to a committed, trusting, and loyal relationship. These theories suggest that satisfaction with wages and organizational climate is based on social comparisons, leading to teachers engaging in social loafing or withdrawing services.

The study also highlights the practical implications for managers and school administrators, as perceived social loafing can threaten the sustainability of effective workgroups. It shows that an increase in teachers' perception of social loafing is associated with reducing their obligation to remain in their organizations. Interventions aimed at improving the culture of fairness and teacher support networks, as well as providing emotional management counseling, could be beneficial to minimize perceived social loafing. Managers and school administrators should establish fair, measurable, and observable performance evaluation systems based on in-role behavior. A supportive organizational climate is necessary for teachers' motivation, commitment, and effective performance. Perceived organizational support is also crucial as a moderator variable, as teachers' perception of their immediate socio-technical environment buffers the effect of perceived social loafing. Governments and educational organizations should strive to create and sustain an enabling school environment where teachers and students feel relaxed and work collectively to achieve effective curriculum implementation.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future studies

It would be inappropriate to claim that all the variables examined here provide a complete understanding of the mechanisms for enhancing and sustaining outcomes within an organization. This study focuses on perceived social loafing and perceived organizational support; these are input variables within the organization and offer only a partial view of the change process regarding organizational commitment. The review suggests that additional variables could have a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived social loafing and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the sample was drawn from a single geographical region of the country, which limits the generalizability of the study's findings. Conducting a similar study that incorporates demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, employment status, and personality traits as moderators in the relationship between perceived social loafing and organizational commitment among secondary education teachers may yield more advantageous insights.

Conclusion

Based on the results obtained from this study, the findings have far reaching implication for staffing, monitoring, performance management and leadership style within the education (secondary) sector. Managers and school administrators should periodically appraise and evaluate every teacher's individual effort. Hence, school administrators must establish fair, equitable, measurable and observable performance evaluation systems which should be based on in-role behavior. Organizations should endeavor to set reasonable and realizable monitoring system with their employees; rewarding achievement; provision of training and logistics support to create a 'cushioning-effect' on the teachers' displeasure toward perceived social loafing perception. More efforts and resources should be directed towards building a sustainable happy, committed workforce, who can endure the challenges of organizational survival and competiveness in a 21st century global economy.

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