

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' JOB ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

Principals' administrative skills are crucial for enhancing teachers' job engagement. The application of different administrative skills invariably improves productivity which in turn would influence the achievement of educational objectives. The study examined principals' administrative skills as correlates of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 12,080 teachers in public secondary schools in six Education Zones in Anambra State. The sample size for the study was 604 teachers drawn from the population of the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the study. The instruments for data collection were a researcher-structured questionnaire titled: Principals' Administrative Skills Questionnaire (PASQ), and Teachers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (TJEQ). The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.81 for PASQ; and TJEQ is 0.90. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The study revealed that principals' instructional leadership skill ($r = 0.908$; $p < 0.000$), and principals' personnel management skill ($r = 0.873$; $p < 0.000$) positively and significantly related to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that principals' administrative skills positively and significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study recommended among others that the Ministry of Education should consistently enforce comprehensive professional development programmes to enhance principals' instructional leadership skills.

Keywords: *Principals' Administrative Skills, Personnel Management, Instructional Leadership, Teachers' Job Engagement*

Introduction

Education takes place in formal settings such as schools and universities, as well as through informal experiences in daily life. It aims to empower individuals, promote personal and intellectual growth, and prepare individuals for active participation in society. The importance of education, as stated in Ugochukwu et al. (2021) and Agogbua (2024) cannot be overemphasized as it plays an important role in the supply of manpower needed for national development. Education is expected to build the character of the learners, to get them informed about what is worthwhile, socially acceptable, desirable, and purposeful about themselves, their environment, and society. That notwithstanding, teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring quality educational output. Therefore, teachers' job engagement must be upheld at all come if the goal of education would continue to be achieved.

Job engagement is the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Teachers' job engagement reflects how dedicated and passionate teachers are about their work, which can significantly impact their effectiveness in the classroom and overall job satisfaction. Oyeh and Oluwuo (2018) defined teachers' job engagement as the degree of enthusiasm, commitment, and emotional investment that teachers have in their teaching profession. As indicated by Egboka and Alike (2019), dedicated teachers are important for any educational system. The success or failure of any country's education system depends mainly on the level of teachers' job engagement. Thus, when teachers are satisfied, they exhibit a high level of engagement in the job. Therefore, understanding the important factors affecting teachers' job engagement is vital to attaining the required information to support an educational system to succeed in its objectives.

Teachers' job engagement can be influenced by multiple factors, including a supportive school environment, opportunities for professional growth, autonomy in the classroom, decision-making autonomy, and proper recognition of their efforts (Oyeh&Oluwuo, 2018). Additionally, the contribution of school principals is vital in ensuring and maintaining teachers' job engagement, as they establish an environment

that facilitates the effective execution of teachers' daily responsibilities in the school. Principals as chief administrators of their schools are bequeathed with multifarious tasks to ensure the realization of their school objectives. It becomes imperative, therefore, that principals must possess an array of administrative skills to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities in their various schools.

Administrative skills are a set of competencies and abilities that enable individuals to effectively manage and oversee various aspects of an organization or institution. Within the school setting, these skills are particularly important for principals, who are typically responsible for the overall leadership and management of schools. Akinbode et al. (2023) stated that principals' administrative skills are various skills or techniques used by principals in running educational institutions, which involve guidance, planning, leadership, and controlling of efforts of individuals in the achievement of goals of the institution. Ayodele et al. (2016) argued that the use of a set of administrative skills by principals is informed by the fact that principals are to bring all-around development into the school, to improve productivity. Ayodele et al. argued that principals must be able to adopt some administrative skills and also evaluate their teachers to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional delivery system for better academic performance.

Principals as administrators represents a crucial component of the social system. This implies that principals as chief executives of their schools deal with people and require a set of skills to effectively manage them. These skills as stated by Mohammed et al. (2020) help to get things done and have the ability to inspire, improve, guide, and also encourage both teachers and students to strive for excellence. There are essentially administrative skills that are pertinent to effective school administration every principal is expected to possess. These skills include instructional leadership skill, personnel management skill, financial management skill, instructional supervisory skill, communication skill, and creativity skill (Ogundele et al., 2015; Obuako et al., 2021). Therefore, within the context of this study, the researcher focused on instructional leadership skill, and personnel management skill.

Instructional leadership skill refers to the abilities and competencies that educational leaders, such as principals, possess to effectively support and improve the teaching and learning processes within an educational institution. Nguyen et al. (2015) explained that instructional leadership involves guiding and overseeing various aspects of educational programs, including curriculum development, resource provision, instructional supervision and evaluation, promoting quality instruction, monitoring students' progress, providing teacher training, maintaining instructional records, implementing policies, ensuring safety, and ensuring effective teaching practices. In the view of Callao and Callao (2021), instructional leadership is the management of curriculum and instruction by a school principal. The authors further explained that the rise and fall of the quality of schools could be traced to the quality of instructional leaders. The effectiveness and efficiency of teaching-learning experiences in school can only be minimally affected by the school administrators' involvement in classroom instruction. This means that instructional leaders can have a great impact and effect on the quality of teaching and learning through the teachers they hire, how they assign those teachers to classrooms, how they retain teachers, and how they create opportunities for teachers to improve (Diang & Mustapha, 2023).

Personnel management skill involves effectively overseeing and coordinating the activities and well-being of an organization's employees to optimize performance and achieve organizational goals. Iloabuchi et al. (2016) stated that personnel management is a continuous process for identifying, evaluating, and developing teachers so that the goals and objectives of the school are more effectively achieved, while at the same time benefitting teachers in terms of professional development and career guidance. Principals need a specific set of personnel management skills such as conflict resolution, team building, performance evaluation, strategic planning, decision-making, employee relations, training, and development to effectively oversee the staff in their various schools (Udeani, 2023). Educational leaders need to invest in the development of personnel management skills if they intend to make a lasting and positive impact in their schools.

In some public secondary schools in Anambra State, some teachers appear not to engage fully with their job. There is doubt whether some teachers in the State really know what their primary assignment is all about. One of the most pressing worries in some public secondary schools in Anambra State is the apparent lack of teachers' job engagement. It has been observed that cases of disorganization, inefficiencies, and a lack of clear direction in some public schools are a result of some teachers' inability to focus on doing their primary assignment which is teaching and learning. Some teachers have been accused of moonlighting instead of focusing on their duties while in the school environment. It could be that school principals do not have the needed administrative skills to effectively handle some of these teachers' inefficiencies. Perhaps, some of these principals are not skilled in instructional practices to encourage and guide teachers in discharging their duties. It could be that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State are not well

taken care of. Maybe principals in some public schools lack appropriate personnel management which may have led to some teachers' inability to engage fully in their job. The researcher wonders if some teachers' lack of job engagement could be a result of administrative skills adopted by their principals in coordinating the affairs of their schools. In seeking ways to improve teachers' job engagement in the State, the researcher sought to examine the extent principals' administrative skills relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to examine principals' administrative skills as correlate of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent principals' instructional leadership skill relates to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Determine the extent principals' personnel management skill relates to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does principals' instructional leadership skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does principals' personnel management skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals' instructional leadership skill does not significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' personnel management skill does not significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

The study adopted correlational research design. The study was carried in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 12,080 teachers in 268 public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in Anambra State (Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Anambra State Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka, 2023). The sample size comprised 604 teachers drawn from the population of the study. The instruments for data collection were Principals' Administrative Skills Questionnaire (PASQ), and Teachers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (TJEQ). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section 'A' 'Principals' Administrative Skills Questionnaire (PASQ)' has two Clusters 'A-B'. Cluster 'A' elicits information on principals' instructional leadership skill with 10-item statements; while Cluster 'B' elicits information on principals' personnel management skill with 10-item statement. All the clusters were weighted on four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE). The range of scores will be weighted as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Section 'B' 'Teachers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (TJEQ)' was adopted from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The Teachers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (TJEQ) has 17-item statements that elicited information on teachers' job engagement. Each statement is followed by several columns marked as follows: Never (N), Almost Never (AN), Rarely (R), Sometimes (S), Often (O), Very Often (VO), and Always (A). The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot test on 20 teachers from public secondary schools in Enugu State. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.81 for PASQ; and TJEQ is 0.90. Out of 604 copies of the questionnaires administered, 561(93%) of them were correctly completed and returned. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and also test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does principals' instructional leadership skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Extent Principals' Instructional Leadership Skill Relate to Teachers' Job Engagement in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Principals' Instructional Leadership Skill	Teachers' Job Engagement	Remarks
Principals' Instructional Leadership Skill	561	1.00	.908**	Very High Extent
Teachers' Job Engagement	561	.908**	1.00	

**Significant at $p < 0.05$

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 1 showed that principals' instructional leadership skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State with: $r = 0.908$. This analysis revealed a positive correlation coefficient of 0.908, indicating a strong positive correlation between principals' instructional leadership skill and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in principals' instructional leadership skill leads to 0.908 (90%) increase in teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does principals' personnel management skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Extent Principals' Personnel Management Skill Relate to Teachers' Job Engagement in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Principals' Personnel Management Skill	Teachers' Job Engagement	Remarks
Principals' Personnel Management Skill	561	1.00	.873**	Very High Extent
Teachers' Job Engagement	561	.873**	1.00	

**Significant at $p < 0.05$

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 2 showed that principals' personnel management skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State with: $r = .873$. This analysis revealed a positive correlation coefficient of 0.873, indicating a strong positive correlation between principals' personnel management skill and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in principals' personnel management skill leads to 0.87 (87%) increase in teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis One: Principals' instructional leadership skill does not significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Significant Correlation between Principals' Instructional Leadership Skill and Teachers' Job Engagement in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Principals Instructional Leadership Skill	Teachers' Job Engagement	P-value	Remarks
Principals Instructional Leadership Skill	561	1.00	.908**		
Teachers' Job Engagement	561	.908**	1.00		
Pearson r-value				.000	Significant

**Significant at $p < 0.05$

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 3 showed that principals' instructional leadership skill significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State with $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Since $p\text{-value}$ (0.000) is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that principals' instructional leadership skill does not significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that principals' instructional leadership skill significantly relates to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two: Principals' personnel management skill does not significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Significant Correlation between Principals' Personnel Management Skill and Teachers' Job Engagement in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Principals Personnel Management Skill	Teachers' Job Engagement	P-value	Remarks
Principals Personnel Management Skill	561	1.00	.873**		
Teachers' Job Engagement	561	.873**	1.00		
Pearson r-value				.000	Significant

**Significant at $p < 0.05$

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 4 showed that principals' personnel management skill significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State with $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Since $p\text{-value}$ (0.000) is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that principals' personnel management skill does not significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that principals' personnel management skill significantly relates to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion

Findings on the extent principals' instructional leadership skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that principals' instructional leadership skill positively and significantly related to teachers' job engagement to a high extent. The study revealed that principals to a high extent influence the culture of learning through interactions with teachers towards achieving effective curriculum delivery, always support the teaching process within the school, encourage teachers' collaborations to achieve instructional goals in the school, support teachers through adequate motivation such as the use of incentives as means of improving quality instructional services in the school

among others. The findings of the study are in line with the findings of Akpakwu (2014), Onuma (2016), Agu and Okoli (2021). These studies revealed that principals through their instructional leadership ensure that teachers update their lesson notes weekly, allow teachers to participate in school curriculum planning, allow teachers to participate in the selection of textbooks and materials, engage in classroom visitations to make sure instructions are delivered correctly and demonstrate new methods of delivering of instructions to the teachers. Callao and Callao (2021) revealed that principals with strong instructional leadership skills play a vital role in enhancing the overall quality of education. Diang and Mustapha (2023) also found that there is a significant relationship between the school administrators' overall instructional leadership skills and teachers' performance. In addition, the finding is in line with Asiyai (2020) who revealed that principals' administrative effectiveness lies in their competency in the communication of best instructional practices that could enhance teachers' job performance. The similarities in the studies emphasize the significance of principals' roles in influencing teachers' instructional delivery and acknowledge the impact of various factors on teachers' engagement in the classroom.

Findings on the extent principals' personnel management skill relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that principals' personnel management skill positively and significantly related to teachers' job engagement to a high extent. This is a result that principals to a high extent demonstrate fairness in handling personnel matters, provide constructive feedback to staff members that would help improve their overall performance, create a supportive learning environment that improves the overall success of the school, use various means to motivate staff members to give their best towards achieving the goals of the school among others. The findings of the study agreed with Iloabuchi et al. (2019) who stated that personnel management helps to increase the effectiveness of teacher by enabling them to achieve their potential and contribute to the provision of excellence in teaching and research development.

The findings disagreed with the findings of Udeani (2023) who revealed that the principals applied personnel management skills for both effective human relations and staff security to a low level. Furthermore, it was found that the level of application of the personnel management skill is not influenced by the gender of the principals. Edom (2016) expected principals as leaders to be able to influence the actions, behaviours, and feelings of staff to win their willingness to cooperate. The principals who rose in the rank would have learned from their own experiences that treating staff as worthy human beings helps to motivate them. In support of these, Ezeaku (2019) revealed that no proactive initiatives should be spared in ensuring that there is effective staff personnel management in public secondary schools in Nigeria. When this is realized, not only will the laudable formulated policies of secondary education be implemented but also the goals of this level of education will be fully or significantly realized. Effective personnel management will go a long way in ensuring that educational policies are implemented to the letter. This translates into helping policymakers gauge their successes and failures to re-strategize subsequently.

Conclusion

Principals' administrative skills are critical factors in shaping the culture and overall success of school organizations. Effective principals prioritize collaboration and creating a positive learning environment for students, teachers, and other staff members. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals' administrative skills positively and significantly relate to teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of Education should consistently enforce comprehensive professional development programmes to enhance principals' instructional leadership skills. Doing so would equip principals with advanced instructional skills that can significantly increase teacher job engagement.
2. Educational administrators should promote a supportive leadership environment where principals are encouraged to adopt best practices in personnel management. This approach will help sustain high levels of teacher job engagement and contribute to a more positive and effective school environment.

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