PRINCIPALS' ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AS CORRELATE OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
The study investigated principals' ethical leadership practices as correlate of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 7,027 teachers in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. Multistage sampling procedure was used to draw 786 teachers for the study. Two sets of instruments titled Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PELPQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated by three experts of which two were from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha method was used for a test of internal consistencies of the instruments which yielded overall coefficient value of 0.80 and 0.79 for PELPQ and TJPQ respectively. The instruments were administered by the researcher and three research assistants and 97% return rate was recorded. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and test of correlation to test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that ethical guidance and orientation practices have strong and significant relationships with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also found that there is moderate correlation between principals' ethical power sharing practices and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should organize periodic meetings, constitute committee and delegate authority to members of staff as means of fostering ethical power sharing practices that can contribute to increase in job performance of teachers.

Keywords: Principals, Ethical Leadership, Teachers, Job Performance, Ethical Orientation, Ethical Guidance, Power sharing

Introduction

The success of any educational institution is highly dependent on the members of staff. The members of staff exhibit professional attitude and behaviour that influence the attainment of set objectives of any education institution. The work behaviour and attitude of staff is influenced through the leaders of the educational institution. The leader who influences the activities of members of staff in a secondary school is the principal.

A principal is the administrator who leads, guides and directs the efforts of others toward the attainment of predetermined goals. Onuorah and Eziamaka (2021) defined principal as the chief executive officer charged with daily administration of a secondary school. It is the duty of the principal to control and coordinate all activities for smooth operation of a secondary school. He is responsible for getting work done through scheduling, assigning, motivating and overseeing tasks carried out by members of staff in a secondary school. The principal takes leadership roles of influencing the efforts of members of staff to get things well done in a secondary school. According to Manafa (2020), the principal is the person responsible for administrative tasks of using the resources at his or her disposal to achieve school's objectives. The author added that functions/roles of principals include: establishing of healthy school climate; provision and maintenance of school plant facilities as well as engagement in instructional and non-instructional supervision. The primary role of the principal is to plan, organize and coordinate the work of all members of staff in a secondary school to achieve best results. A principal is the top level manager who devises plans and takes important decisions that ensure smooth functioning of the daily activities of a secondary school.

Operationally, principal is the chief executive officer and a leader who is responsible for overseeing and ensuring smooth functioning of the daily activities of a secondary school. The principals who want to carry out their duties in accordance to moral values could engage in ethical leadership practices.

Ethical leadership practices are leadership approaches which are concerned with exhibiting right, fair and just behaviour in the workplace. It is the exhibition of fairness, trustworthiness, transparency and honesty in influencing the efforts of subordinates in the workplace. Imran and Akhtar (2023) defined ethical leadership practices as the styles of leadership that prioritizes ethical principles, values, and behaviours in decision-making and action. Ethical leaders' clear expectations for behaviour, encourage open communication and show concerns for professional needs of subordinates. Ethical leaders act with integrity, model desirable behaviour and prioritize the well-being of their followers. Almandeel and Dawood (2019) defined ethical leadership as the act where the leader shows trust, dignity, honesty, and consideration toward the followers. They added that ethical leaders have traits such as kindness, honesty, truthfulness and fairness which are essential for achieving organizational objectives. Principals who are ethical leaders tend to respect, support and exhibit high level of integrity in dealing with members of staff which could improve the job performance of teachers. Contextually, ethical leadership practices is the act of leading by behaving in accordance with moral principles, setting clear standard for conduct, showing fairness in dealing with others and considering the opinions of staff in running the daily affairs of schools for attainment of set goals.

Ethical leadership practices have many dimensions which could be applied to encourage subordinates to work hard towards the attainment of set goals. Several scholars dimensionalised ethical leadership practices as including ethical guidance, power sharing, integrity, fairness, role clarification, and people orientation (Mseti, Lameck and Kinemo, 2023; Mugizi, Mujuni, and Dafiewhare, 2019; Oniku, Kuye and Nnaji, 2022). The focus of this study was on ethical guidance, ethical orientation and ethical power sharing practice.

Ethical guidance is concerned with provision of required information on how teachers are expected to perform their job. Abun, Fredoline, Acidera and Apollo (2023) posited that guidance dimension of ethical leadership practice is the act in which managers communicate and explain moral values to be followed by others and reward those who behave ethically. Ethical guidance practice entails formulating rules, establishing standards and developing codes to serve as guidelines for moral conduct among teachers in secondary schools. Mugizi, Mujuni, and Dafiewhare (2019) noted that with ethical guidance, the leaders clearly explain integrity-related codes of conduct, expected behaviours from staff, provide guidelines, ensure compliance and clarify the likely consequences of possible unethical behaviour. Ethical guidance involves clearly stating the goals of the school and what behaviour is expected from subordinates to achieve them. Ethical guidance could make teachers to adhere to the expected standard in discharging their duties which could improve their job performance. Teachers could adhere to ethical standards set by principals whose daily actions are staff-oriented.

Staff orientation is a dimension of ethical leadership in which school administrators show high concern for the professional needs of members of staff. Staff ethical oriented school administrators accord necessary right to members of staff and fairly treat them. According to Khan, Yasir, Yusuf, Bhatti and Umar (2017), ethical orientation practice denotes caring about, respecting and supporting followers. When teachers are treated in a just and respectful way by principals, they are likely to reciprocate by putting extra efforts in discharging their duties to enhance their job performance. It is also about showing true concerns towards the feelings of subordinates. Nastiezaie, Bameri, and Salajage, (2016) pointed out that ethical orientation practice is exhibited by leaders who treat subordinates with respect, pay attention to details and build mutual relationship among staff in organizations. Teachers in schools, where principals apply ethical orientation practice could relate to each other, feel valued and respected which might motivate them to put substantial efforts in discharging duties to attain desirable performance. The needs of staff could be known by principals who engaged in power-sharing in secondary schools.

Power sharing is the component of ethical leadership practice which is concerned with the participation of subordinates in running the affairs of an organization. According to Abdullahi (2020), power sharing is a dimension of ethical leadership exhibited through delegation of authority,

participative decision-making and share responsibility for the attainment of goals and objectives. It entails encouraging the participation of subordinates in planning and setting goals in the workplace. Power sharing practices is exhibited through various acts such as sharing leadership, resources, rewards, and outcomes; encouraging participation in decision making, and delegation of authority (Coleman in Mugizi et al, 2019). When teachers are granted freedom to make decisions and execute tasks without consulting principals all the time, they may be highly motivated to carry out their responsibilities in a way to enhance their job performance. Ethical power-sharing practices which permit teachers to make some decisions that could their boost self-esteem, job satisfaction and cooperation with principals to work together towards the attainment of set goals. The support of teachers to get involved in decision making processes could motivate them towards working hard to improve their job performance.

Teachers' job performance is the outcome of the day-to-day work carried out by academic staff in schools. It is the result of effort made by teachers in using the available resources to achieve predetermined objectives. Agbajeola and Hassan (2023) described teachers' job performance as the results that members of teaching staff achieved in carrying out their duties or work during a certain period according to the standard competency and criteria set for the job. It is also the act of discharging pedagogical duties within the classroom settings as well as other official responsibilities in the school. The job performance of teachers could shape the character of students and determine how much they may learn which influence their academic achievement. According to Davies, Baba, Demenang and Uyanga (2023), teachers' job performance is associated with the ability of members of teaching staff to be aware of assigned targets, fulfill expectations and achieve targets to accomplish a standard set of tasks for the attainment of set educational goals and objectives. Contextually, teachers' job performance is the process whereby members of the teaching staff execute official duties to achieve set goals and objectives of secondary education.

Teachers' job performance could be assessed by how well they discharge their responsibilities in terms of lesson preparation and delivery, discipline of students and execution of other official tasks assigned to them by the principals. In the same vein, Aigboje, Abhulimen and Uhunmuavbi (2023) opined that teachers' job performance could be measured through a rating of teacher's activities in terms of lesson preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject matter, commitment to their duties, participation in extra-curricular activities, monitoring of students' work, motivation of learners, effective use and completion of scheme of work among others. In the context of this study, the job performance of teachers could be evaluated in terms of preparation of their lessons, classroom management, active engagement in school functions, mastery of subject matter and effective instructional delivery which is reflected in the academic achievement of students.

Some teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State appear to not meeting up to expectations in some aspects of their job performance. To buttress this, Dunu (2023) noted that it is worrisome that there appears to be laxities in the job performance of teachers which could be evidenced in the inability of teachers to timely cover the scheme of work, poor attitude towards teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Some teachers are probably not getting leadership supports required by them to effectively discharge their duties.

Some principals appear to be rigid and unsupportive to teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Oshia, Chukwudi and Obionu (2022) noted that the series of principals' unhealthy or unethical behaviours such as being biased, refusing teachers to air their views on school affairs, favouritism and untimely dissemination of communication might be among the contributing factors to unwillingness of teachers to act beyond their formal job description and expectations. They added that the hostile, dishonest and unfriendly attitudes of some secondary school principals toward their teachers could demotivate them from performing their duties that contribute to the attainment of educational objectives in Anambra State. Also, Thompson and Akudo (2020) observed that some school principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State rarely delegate responsibility and power to subordinates which could provide opportunity for them to utilize their initiatives to execute tasks in the secondary school system. These authors also observed that some principals seem to use force, threat and authority to get teachers to perform their duties without consideration of their skills and ideas which contradicts the tenets of transformation leadership practices that create opportunity for change and innovation in the school system through staff creativity, challenging and stimulation of the work environment. It is against the background that the study investigated principals' ethical

leadership practices as correlate of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

There is remarkable job performance of teachers as reflected in students' academic achievement but there are laxities in some areas in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Some teachers appear to be absent from school without fair reason, unavailable in classes to teach at the stipulated periods in the timetable which might lead to inability to and fail to cover their scheme of work probably due to untimely dissemination of information and unsupportive behaviours of principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Some principals tend to be biased in dealing with some teachers by excluding them from participating in crucial decision-making matters. These teachers therefore develop low level of trust and lack of respect for the principals, and are demotivated from effective performance of their duties. Furthermore, inputs and unique skills of some teachers seem to be hardly taken into consideration before deciding on their affairs and delegating duties to them. Consequently, teachers tend to be demotivated to teach at the stipulate period in the time-table, maintain orderliness in the classroom, inspect the lesson notes of students, give and mark learners' assignments in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It is based on this problem that the study investigated principals' ethical leadership practices as correlate of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the correlation between principals' ethical leadership practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the following:

1. Relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Relationship between principals' ethical power sharing ethics practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between principals' ethical power sharing practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical power sharing practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Methods

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in Anambra State which is one of the five states in South-Eastern Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 7,027 teachers in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for this study comprised 786 teachers drawn using multistage sampling procedure. Two sets of instruments titled Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PELPQ) and Teachers' Job

Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) were used for data collection. The first instrument titled PELPQ was adopted from Mugizi, Mujuni, and Dafiewhare (2019). The instrument which measured ethical leadership practices contains 30 items spread three clusters (A-C). The second instrument titled TJPQ was a standardized instrument adopted from Ali and Haider (2017). The instrument contained 22 items which measured teachers' job performance. The items of both instruments were placed on a 4-point rating of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine internal consistency of the research instruments. These yielded co-efficient values of 0.81, 0.78 and 0.77 for the three clusters A, B and C of PELPQ with the overall reliability index of 0.80. On the other hand, the coefficient value of 0.80 was obtained for TJPQ. The researchers with the help of three research assistants adopted a direct approach for data collection. A total of 786 copies of instruments were distributed and 761 copies of questionnaires were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 97 percent return rate. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test of correlation to test hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, the coefficient r and the size of the relationship was interpreted using the correlation coefficient by Alsagr (2021), as follows: Coefficient

	Relationship
.00- .19	Weak correlation
.20- .39	Fair correlation
.40- .69	Moderate correlation
.70- .89	Strong correlation
.90- .1.00	Very strong correlation

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if p-value is equal to or less than significant value of 0.05 (p-value ≤ 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected, but if p-value is greater than, the significant value of 0.05 (p-value > 0.05) the null hypotheses was accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson (r) on Relationship between Principals' Ethical Guidance Practice and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices	Teachers' Job Performance	Remarks
Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices	761	1.00	.770	
				Strong
Teachers' Job Performance	761	.770	1.00	

As shown in Table 1, a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.770 was obtained. This shows that there is strong correlation between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicated that the increase in principals' ethical guidance practices will strongly improve teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical guidance practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: The Summary of t-test of Correlation on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices	Teachers' Job Performance	*P*-value	∞	Remarks
Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices	761	1.00	.770			
				.000	.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Performance	761	.770	1.00			

The result presented in Table 2 revealed that the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the *p*-value is less the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between principals' ethical guidance practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Pearson (r) on Relationship between Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices	Teachers' Job Performance	Remarks
Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices	761	1.00	.702	
				Strong
Teachers' Job Performance	761	.702	1.00	

Table 3 revealed that a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.702 was obtained. This shows that there is strong correlation between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicated that an improvement on principals' ethical orientation practices will strongly lead to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: The Summary of t-test of Correlation on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices	Teachers' Job Performance	*P*-value	∞	Remarks
Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices	761	1.00	.702			
				.000	.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Performance	761	.702	1.00			

It is revealed in Table 4 that the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the *p*-value is less the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between principals' ethical orientation practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 5: Pearson (r) on Relationship between Principals' Ethical Power Sharing Practices and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	Principals' Ethical Power Sharing Practices	Teachers' Job Performance	Remarks
Principals' Ethical Power Sharing Practices	761	1.00	.665	
				Moderate
Teachers' Job Performance	761	.665	1.00	

Table 5 revealed that a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.665 was obtained. This shows that there is moderate correlation between principals' ethical power sharing practices and teachers' job

performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicated that the principals who engage in ethical power sharing practices will strongly contribute to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical power sharing practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: The Summary of t-test of Correlation on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Power Sharing Practices and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	Principals' Ethical Power Sharing Practices	Teachers' Job Performance	*P*-value	∞	Remarks
Principals' Ethical Power Sharing Practices	761	1.00	.665			
				.000	.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Performance	761	.665	1.00			

As shown in Table 6, the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the *p*-value is less the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between principals' ethical power sharing practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the study showed that there is strong relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This agreed with the finding of Mugizi, Mujuni and Dafiewhare (2019) which indicated that ethical guidance practices had strong relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The agreement with the finding could be attributed to the fact that the study was conducted at the same level of education. This disagreed with the finding of Oniku, Kuye and Nnaji (2022) which showed that there was weak relationship between ethical guidance practices and job performance of employees. The difference in the organizations in which the studies were conducted could contribute to the disagreement with the findings. The possible reason for this finding is that ethical guidance practices of principals provide directions and supports required by teachers to strongly enhance their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It is through ethical guidance practices that principals clearly explain expected work behaviours from staff and ensure compliance that could improve the job performance of teachers.

Further result indicated that there is significant relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This supported the finding of Mugizi, Mujuni and Dafiewhare (2019) which indicated that ethical guidance practices had significant relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The similarity in the level of education and participants of the studies might contribute to the agreement with the finding. Ethical guidance practices of principals help to clarify roles and provide clear procedures of executing tasks which could account for significant relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

The finding of the study showed that there is strong relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in line with the finding of Mugizi, Mujuni and Dafiewhare (2019) which indicated that ethical orientation practices had strong relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The rapport, teamwork and cordial interpersonal relationship which could be established by principals through ethical orientation practices create comfortable work environment could explain the strong relationship with the job performance of teachers. The ethical orientation practice of principals makes them to be willing to listen attentively and render support to teachers to create a feeling of being heard and cared for, that can strongly improve their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

It was also found that there is significant relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This affirmed

the finding of Mugizi, Mujuni and Dafiewhare (2019) which revealed that ethical orientation practices had significant relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The studies were conducted in the same level of education which might contribute to the agreement with the finding. The possible explanation for finding could be due to the fact that ethical orientation practices of principals encourage teamwork and collaboration which enable teachers to exchange ideas that might significantly enhance their job performance

It was showed that there is moderate relationship between principals' power sharing practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is contrary to the finding of Oniku, Kuye and Nnaji (2022) which indicated that there was weak relationship between ethical power sharing practices and job performance of employees. The studies were conducted in different organizations which might be connected to the disagreement with the findings. The possible reason for the finding is that ethical power-sharing practices of principals make teachers to feel genuinely valued and thereby reciprocate by working hard to improve their job performance in secondary schools. Ethical power sharing practices of principals encourage free-flow of ideas that improve creativity among teachers which could moderately contribute to the job performance of teachers in public secondary schools.

It was also indicated that there is significant relationship between principals' ethical power sharing practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in consonance with the finding of Kamalakannan (2021) which showed that there was a significant relationship between ethical power-sharing practices and organizational performance. The possible reason for this finding is that ethical power sharing practices of principals empower teachers to share their opinions on how to significantly improve their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that principals' ethical leadership practices have positive and significant relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Ethical and transformational leadership practices of principals provide work directions for teachers, motivate and empower them which boost their morale in performing their job.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of Education should develop and present policy manual to principals to serve as reference point for continuous improvement on ethical guidance practices to teachers for enhancing their job performance
2. School principals should design appropriate human resources policy that continuously emphasizes and facilitate ethical orientation practices to improve job performance of teachers.
3. Principals should organize periodic meetings, constitute committee and delegate authority to members of staff as means of fostering ethical power sharing practices that can contribute to increase in job performance of teachers.

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