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Relationship Between Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices and Teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between principals' ethical leadership practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 15,321 teachers in the 296 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for this study consisted of 1,072 teachers drawn using a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Two sets of instruments titled "Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PELPQ)", and "Teachers' Job Effectiveness Scale (TJES)" were used for data collection. The face validated was determined by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one from the Department of Educational Foundations in the Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Cronbach's alpha method was used for a test of internal consistency of the instruments, which yielded overall coefficients of 0.78 for PELPQ and 0.81 for TJES. The researchers and three research assistants collected data for the study and a 97% return was achieved. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that there was a strong and significant relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Further result indicated that there was a strong and significant relationship between principals' people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Enugu State Secondary Education Management Board should conduct regular and continuous seminars for principals to refresh and update their knowledge on engaging in ethical power-sharing practices for improving teachers' job effectiveness.

Keywords: Principals, Ethical Leadership, Practices, Teachers, Job Effectiveness, Schools, Power-Sharing, People-Oriented

1. Introduction

Education is a cornerstone for societal progress through equipping individuals with skills and knowledge to engage in productive activities. Duru and Osegbue (2025)^[6] pointed out that education has been universally acknowledged as a potent and dynamic instrument for national development and societal transformation. The authors added that it is an important instrument for the development of the individual and society, as it serves as a weapon against poverty, illiteracy, and disease. Education contributes to technological advancement that brings about modernization in society. At the centre of the basic and tertiary levels of education lies secondary education.

Secondary education is the post-basic learning content offered to students for their intellectual and personal development. Nwankwo and Edeani (2023) ^[20] noted that in secondary school, students receive training generally under the junior secondary classes and choose an area of specialty from the senior secondary classes. The authors added that these areas include sciences, arts and commerce in some cases. Secondary education plays an essential role in shaping the character of children through exposing them to moral instructions that sensitize them to the values and norms of society. The management of the daily affairs of a secondary school rest on the shoulders of the principal.

The principal is the administrative head who plans and oversees the daily activities of a secondary school. According to Oguejiofor (2023) ^[21], the principal is the administrative head of the secondary school in charge of managing the activities and programmes as well as the available resources for productivity and quality outputs. The author added that it is the duty of secondary school principals to manage the resources available in the school, such as the human, material, financial, energy and time resources. The principal is the highest in authority in the organizational structure of a secondary school. The principal is described by Madubueze and Nwankwo (2025) ^[14] as a person responsible for overseeing the smooth operation of a secondary school's daily activities. Furthermore, Madubueze and Nwankwo noted that it is the duty of the principal to exercise formal authority in leading members of staff and controlling other resources in a secondary school. The principal carries out numerous administrative and instructional functions to foster the attainment of predetermined goals of secondary education. The administrative functions are financial management, record keeping, processing of students' admission, planning of programmes, among others, while instructional functions are formulation of the time-table, curriculum management, supervision of teaching activities and coordination of time for classroom activities, among others. The principal develops visions, influences action, gives a sense of direction and ensures good conduct of teachers through ethical leadership practices.

Ethical leadership practices are the act of influencing to conduct of subordinates so that they behave in accordance with the accepted norms, values, beliefs and principles in an organization. Ethical leadership practices are described by Ngene *et al* (2025) ^[18] as the acts of exercising school leadership based on core moral values such as integrity, fairness, transparency, accountability, respect, empathy, justice, and a dedication to the collective well-being of subordinates. Ethical leadership practices are the exhibition of appropriate conduct, trustworthiness and genuine care to subordinates in leading and controlling the activities of an organization. Arinze, Egboka and Nwosu (2024) ^[4] defined ethical leadership practices as the act of leading by behaving in accordance with moral principles, setting clear standards for conduct, showing fairness in dealing with others and considering the opinions of staff in running the daily affairs of schools for the attainment of set goals. Ethical leadership practices involve acting as role models in that members of staff emulate them in the workplace. According to Geribo (2025) ^[8], ethical leadership practices involve influencing and guiding others depending on moral principles, namely justice, respect, and honesty.

Ethical leadership practices are demonstrated by principals who uphold essential values such as professional integrity,

fairness, equity, inclusivity, and accountability within the school setting. Msangya (2025) ^[15] asserted that ethical leadership practices are rooted in fairness, guidance, and transparent communication in the workplace. Ethical leadership practices are exhibited by principals through good behavior, respect and equitable treatment of all staff in secondary schools. Ethical leadership practices are concerned with rewarding good conduct and disciplining staff who violate norms and other moral standards in an organization. Ugwu and Pansiri (2022) ^[25] posited that empathy, transparency, honesty, and integrity are typical characteristics of Ethical leadership practices. Ethical leadership practices are exhibited through setting an example of expected behavior through rational decisions and moral conduct in secondary schools. Leaders practice ethical leadership through fairness, honesty and integrity can encourage employees to put in greater effort in carrying out their duties (Abdullah, Alias & Hamid, 2025) ^[1]. The dimensions of ethical leadership practices are integrity, fairness and justice, people orientation, ethical guidance, role clarification and ethical-power sharing (Kaduma, 2024; Siva, Mugizi, Tumwesigye and Dafiewhare, 2019; Northaini, Gurusamy and Krishnan, 2021; Singh, 2018) ^[13, 16, 24, 23]. This study focused on ethical power-sharing and people-orientation practices.

Power-sharing practices are concerned with encouraging subordinates to participate in decision-making and empowering them to have less dependency on their leaders in the workplace. Msangya (2025) ^[15] opined that ethical power-sharing practices emphasized that authority should be used to empower others, rather than control them. The author added that favoritism, bias, or personal interests should not influence their actions of school administrators in power-sharing practices, as fairness fosters trust and respect in the educational environment. Ethical power-sharing practices entail collaborating with subordinates to decide work responsibilities, expectations and performance goals in an organization. Ethical power-sharing practices foster work autonomy, creativity and empowerment of teachers in secondary schools. Dunu, Ughamadu and Ezeaku (2025) ^[5] posited that power-sharing practices are a means of promoting the participation of staff in managing the daily affairs of an organization. Continuing, Dunu *et al* asserted that it is through power-sharing practices that principals get ideas from diverse perspectives to solve the problems in secondary schools. Ethical power-sharing practices promote a positive, collaborative and productive work atmosphere.

People orientation practices are concerned with giving support and showing genuine caring to subordinates through ensuring that their needs are met in the workplace. Iyiegbuniwe *et al* (2025) ^[10] asserted that principals who demonstrate ethical people orientation show genuine concern for the professional growth and well-being of their teachers. Arinze, Egboka and Nwosu (2024) ^[4] asserted that people-orientation is a dimension of ethical leadership practices in which school administrators show high concern for the professional needs of members of staff. The authors added that 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. When teachers feel valued and respected, they are more motivated to perform their duties effectively, leading to higher job satisfaction and a greater commitment to student

success (Msangya, 2025) ^[15]. People-oriented practices are displayed by the principals who prioritize the well-being of both students and teachers.

Teachers are professionals who impart knowledge and skills to learners through the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Enwezor and Odimegwu (2025) ^[7] pointed out that teachers are responsible for delivering instruction in the classroom to impart skills to learners, advance their knowledge, and positively shape their behavior, enabling them to act in accordance with the norms and values of society. Teachers are entrusted with the task of shaping the character of learners to enable them to behave responsibly in society. Duru and Osegbue (2025) ^[6] averred that teachers are the persons who direct, instruct and impart skills, knowledge, values and morals to learners. Teachers act as role models through embodying good qualities such as honesty, patience, perseverance and respect that shape the character of the students. Given the crucial roles of teachers, the character development and academic success of students depend on their job effectiveness.

Teachers' job effectiveness is concerned with the attainment of meaningful work outcomes using optimal resources. According to Naik (2024) ^[17], teachers' job effectiveness denotes the capacity of teaching staff to cultivate and enhance the teaching-learning process. Teachers' job effectiveness depicts the devotion of time and putting in substantial efforts to achieve predetermined goals with given available resources. It involves carrying out work activities to achieve high-quality outcomes and meet expected standards. Teachers' job effectiveness is defined by Obona, Hassan and Willie (2024) ^[11] as the extent to which members of teaching staff proficiently fulfill their duties and responsibilities, positively influencing student learning and development. Teachers' job effectiveness is the success of teaching in discharging their duties to improve students' learning outcomes.

The teachers' job effectiveness can be assessed through lesson preparation, instructional delivery, attainment of learning objectives, coverage of lesson contents, classroom management and high academic achievement of students. Obona, Hassan and Willie (2024) ^[11] maintained that teacher job effectiveness in secondary schools can be gauged through various indices such as instructional, interpersonal, and organizational dimensions. They added that other dimensions include classroom management, which involves the ability to create an organized learning environment; effective communication with students, parents, and colleagues; responsiveness to diverse learning needs; student engagement; relationship building, and commitment to ongoing professional development. Also, Iorwashima and Ivagher (2019) ^[9] asserted that teachers' job effectiveness could be evaluated through their duties such as preparation of lesson plans to deliver instructional with defined objectives, actual teaching, preparing students well for standardized tests, communicating students' progress to their parents, enforcing classroom rules that enhance effective lesson delivery and students' learning; supervising students during extracurricular activities, conducting in-class activities and better academic achievement of students among others.

Some teachers have been ineffective in certain aspects of their job in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Nwankwo and Edeani (2023) ^[20] noted that the dwindling job performance of teachers and its negative impact on the low performance of students in secondary schools' certificate

examinations in core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Sciences in public secondary schools in Enugu State have been a major concern and nightmare to stakeholders in the education sector. In the same vein, Okoro (2023) ^[22] maintained that many students in public secondary schools in Enugu State have failed to secure five credits, including English and Mathematics, which are prerequisites for university admission. Izuehie, Ugwu and Obi (2025) ^[25] posited that teachers' lack of commitment, poor attitude to job, lateness to school and absenteeism, as well as frequent incidence of squabbles, petty gossips and workplace incivility among teachers in secondary schools across Enugu State, lend credence to the likelihood of job ineffectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Similar to this, Oguejiofor (2023) ^[21] observed poor quality of teaching and irregularity of attendance to classes by teachers, leading to job ineffectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Furthermore, the author asserted that it appears principals do not involve teachers in decision making, improperly delegate duties, and disregard teachers' welfare in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Some principals seem to engage in unethical practices that probably contribute to laxities in teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Nwabueze, Oragwu and Diara (2018) ^[19] observed that over the years however, there have been some influxes of unethical behaviours of principals such as diverting some educational facilities provided for school development into private use, embezzlement of funds provided for school development, indiscipline among principals, poor supervision of instruction, poor motivation of staff, and becoming so erratic to staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State. They added that some principals also indulge in varied unethical behaviours such as lateness to work and absenteeism, abuse of power, immorality and financial misconduct in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It is against this backdrop that the study was carried out to examine the relationship between principals' ethical leadership practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between principals' ethical leadership practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. Relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Methods

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 15,321 teachers in the 296 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for this study consisted of 1,072 teachers drawn using a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Two sets of instruments titled "Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PELPQ)", and "Teachers' Job Effectiveness Scale (TJES)" were used for data collection. PELPQ contained 17 items spread across two clusters, I and II. Cluster I had seven items on power-sharing practices and Cluster B, which focused on people-orientation practices, had 10 items. On the other hand, TJES had 20 items that measured teachers' job effectiveness. The items of two 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 face validated was determined by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one from the Department of Educational Foundations in the Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe

University. Cronbach's alpha method was used for a test of internal consistency of the instruments, which yielded overall coefficients of 0.78 for PELPQ and 0.81 for TJES

The researchers and three research assistants collected data for the study. A total of 1,072 copies of instruments were distributed and 1,043 copies of questionnaires were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating a 97 percent return. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, the coefficient r and the size of the relationship were interpreted using the correlation coefficient by Alsagr (2021) ^[3], as follows:

Predictive Values	Interpretations
0.00- 0.19	Weak
0.20- 0.39	Fair
0.40- 0.69	Moderate
0.70- 0.89	Strong
0.90- 0.99	Very strong
1.00	Perfect

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if the p -value is equal to or less than the significance value of 0.05 (p -value \leq 0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected, but if the p -value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 (p -value $>$ 0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Ethical Power-Sharing Practices and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

Variables	n	Power-Sharing Practices	Teachers' Job Effectiveness	Remarks
Power-Sharing Practices	1,043	1.00	0.813	Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Effectiveness	1,043	0.813	1.00	

Result in Table 1 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.813 was obtained. This showed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals' people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 2: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Ethical People-Orientation Practices and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

Variables	n	People-Orientation Practices	Teachers' Job Effectiveness	Remarks
People-Orientation Practices	1,043	1.00	0.860	Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Effectiveness	1,043	0.860	1.00	

Table 2 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.860 was obtained. This showed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 3: The Summary of Pearson (r) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Power-Sharing and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

Variables	n	Power-Sharing Practices	Teachers' Job Effectiveness	P-value	∞	Remarks
Power-Sharing Practices	1,043	1.00	0.813	0.000	0.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Effectiveness	1,043	0.813	1.00			

As shown in Table 3, 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 practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and

teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 4: The Summary of Pearson (r) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical People-Oriented Practices and Teachers' Job Effectiveness

Variables	n	People-Oriented Practices	Teachers' Job Effectiveness	P-value	α	Remarks
People-Oriented Practices	1,043	1.00	0.860	0.000	0.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Effectiveness	1,043	0.860	1.00			

Result in Table 4, 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 people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that there was a strong relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Ethical power-sharing practices are demonstrated through allowing staff to exercise authority over work roles, which fosters trust that can explain the strong relationship with teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This agreed with the finding of Adeoye (2021)^[2], which showed that power-sharing leadership practices had a strong correlation with organizational effectiveness of non-faculty members. When teachers feel valued through delegating duties and authority to them, they are more likely to be motivated to work hard, which leads to a strong relationship with their job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Further result showed that there was a significant relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This concurred with the finding of Adeoye (2021)^[2], which indicated that power-sharing practices had a significant correlation with the organizational effectiveness of non-faculty members. Teachers are granted the power to carry out their duties and enjoy a kind of empowerment that can lead to a significant relationship with their job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

The result of the study indicated that there was a strong relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This is in line with the finding of Singh (2018)^[23], which revealed that ethical people-orientation practices had a strong relationship with organizational effectiveness. The ethical people-orientation practices are demonstrated through respect for teachers, which creates a positive and empowering work environment that contributes to the strong relationship with their job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It is through Ethical people-orientation practices that principals prioritize the well-being and needs of teachers in which they are likely to replicate by devoting time and effort to improve their job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It was also found that there was a significant relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation practices and teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This upheld the finding of Adeoye (2021)^[2] that people-orientation practices had a significant correlation with organizational effectiveness of non-faculty

members. It is through ethical people-orientation practices that show care and support the activities of teachers, which make them feel appreciated and valued and thereby reciprocate by working hard to significantly improve their teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals' ethical leadership practices have a positive and significant relationship with teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Principals' ethical leadership of power-sharing and people-orientation practices foster a culture of support, respect, collaboration and work autonomy that encourages teachers to use their initiatives to improve their job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Ethical leadership practices create a healthy work atmosphere that can boost the morale of members of staff members, which ultimately improve teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Recommendations

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

1. The Enugu State Secondary Education Management Board should conduct regular and continuous seminars for principals to refresh and update their knowledge on engaging in ethical power-sharing practices for improving teachers' job effectiveness.
2. Enugu State Ministry of Education should module to serve as a reference material for promoting ethical people-orientation practices that lead to an increase in teachers' job effectiveness.

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