ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF PRINCIPALS FOR TEACHERS' EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Florence Ukamaka Akudo, PhD,
&
Gloria Amarachi Okoye
[1-2]Department of Educational Management and Policy,
Faculty of Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State
Email: makudos@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated ethical leadership practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Four research questions guided this study, and four hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 267 principals and 7,027 teachers in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for this study consisted of 797 respondents made up of 103 principals and 694 teachers drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A Researchers developed questionnaire titled "Ethical Leadership Practices of Principals for Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire (ELPPTEQ)'' was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. In order to test for the reliability of the instrument, the data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instruments. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is strong agreement across all areas of ethical leadership practices (communicative, climatic, decisional, and behavioral) for principals' roles in improving teachers' effectiveness. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the views of principals and teachers on these ethical leadership practices, suggesting alignment in perceptions. It was recommended that Anambra state ministry of education should encourage principals to adopt ethical leadership style since teachers in Anambra state unanimously agree that it led to their job effectiveness, and that ethical leadership qualities should be included as one of criteria for appointment of principals in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Keyword: Ethical, Leadership, Practices, Teachers' Effectiveness.

Introduction
Education is one of the most powerful tools for building a nation and developing society. It helps individuals grow by giving them the knowledge, skills, and values needed for personal success and contributing to national progress. Ugochukwu, Adaobi, and Vivian (2021) stated that good education makes people more creative, independent, and able to solve problems. In Nigeria, formal education happens in three stages: primary, secondary, and tertiary. This study focuses on secondary education.

Secondary education comes after basic (primary) education and before university or other higher learning. It provides broader learning to help students get ready for higher education or careers. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), the purpose of secondary education is to prepare students to live useful lives in society and to pursue further education. Teachers are key to achieving this, as they deliver lessons and guide students' growth. Nwosu (2021) described teachers as central to organizing learning and helping students achieve educational goals. Therefore, schools need to pay close attention to how effective their teachers are.

Teachers' effectiveness refers to how well teachers help students learn and grow academically and personally. Kapur (2018) said that effective teachers create a good learning environment, explain subjects well, and help students think critically. They also understand student needs and ask questions that challenge learners. Anyanwu and Nnorom (2020) added that teacher qualities like motivation and subject knowledge are important for effectiveness.

Effective teachers help students stay healthy and mentally balanced. They teach important values, critical thinking, and how to adapt to life's challenges (Amadi & Allagoa, 2017). According to Ikedimma and Okorji (2023), teachers who are committed to their work and care about students' development help schools reach their goals. However, school principals also play a major role in making sure teachers are effective.

Principals are school leaders responsible for the overall success of the school. Their leadership practices—how they manage and lead—can help or harm school performance (Obiekwe, Unachukwu, Ikedimma & Mbonu, 2021). When principals lead ethically—with honesty, fairness, and respect—they motivate teachers and encourage better performance (Agbim, 2018). Ethical leaders show concern for their staff, respect their rights, and treat everyone fairly.

Ethical leadership includes transparency, fairness, responsibility, and respect. According to Demirdağ and Ekmekçiolu (2015), ethical leaders make honest decisions and create supportive work environments. If principals behave unethically, school performance can suffer. Majeed (2018) explained that principals should live by ethical values to foster peace and cooperation in the school. Ezeugbor (2015) described ethical leaders as fair, honest, and open. Karakose (2007) outlined four key areas of ethical leadership: communicative ethics, climatic ethics, decisional ethics, and behavioural ethics. Obiekwe and Ezeugbor (2019) supported this and suggested these are essential for school principals.

Communicative ethics consist of practices such as the leader accepting his failures, not being selfish, being fair, being constructive in discussions, being patient, respectful, sincere, and modest in communicating with staff. This includes honest, patient, respectful, and fair communication. A principal should listen well, accept mistakes, and involve staff in discussions. Good communication builds trust and improves teamwork (Janiah, Suriansyah & Effendi, 2023). When communication is poor, school operations suffer. According to Obiekwe and Ezeugbor (2019), ethical communication strengthens school climate and supports teacher effectiveness.

Climatic ethics has to do with the responsibility of leaders to create an enabling environment for their staff, encouraging and motivating them to perform their duties effectively. This means creating a supportive and respectful school environment. Principals should provide resources, motivate staff, and care about teachers' needs (Bağrıyanık & Can, 2017). Leithwood and Riehl (2015) noted that when teachers feel valued and supported, they perform better. A positive environment improves school outcomes.

Decisional ethics focuses on principals' ability to utilize a shared decision-making process to make sound decisions regarding students and staff that exercise good and rationale judgment. Principals should make fair and honest decisions based on what is right. This includes listening to others, using good judgment, and involving teachers in decision-making (Bağrıyanık & Can, 2017; Cherkowski, Walker & Kutsyuruba, 2015). Akpakwu (2017) said that ethical decision-making helps select the best course of action and improves school performance.

Behavioural ethics involve a range of behaviours that are fundamental to moral and ethical conduct. These include self-awareness, which involves an understanding of one's actions and their impact on others, as well as being veracious, meaning consistently telling the truth. This also involves personal integrity, truthfulness, courage, and respecting others' rights. Principals should be role models in their behaviour. Yılmaz (cited in Obiekwe & Ezeugbor, 2019) emphasized honesty and awareness of how one's actions affect others. Ayoka (2022) added that respecting different values and beliefs helps principals create a respectful school culture that improves teacher effectiveness.

Principals are supposed to lead their schools well by managing all areas to meet educational goals. Their leadership must include ethical practices that teachers accept and respect. However, in some secondary schools in Anambra State, principals seem to show unethical behaviours. For example, some fail to include teachers in decisions or misuse school funds. Even though a great number of teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State show high level of job effectiveness, there are some that display ineffective behaviour in the school. Obiekwe and Ezeugbor (2019) Ikedimma and Okorji (2023) and Akudo, Ezeokenwa and Ikedimma (2025), have at different times reported ineffectiveness amongst secondary school teachers in Anambra State. In some cases, teachers sell personal goods in school, and students behave poorly—coming late to school, cheating, bullying, or damaging school property. Modebelu and Onyali (2014) and Mbonu (2015) linked these issues to principals' failure to lead ethically. Ezeugbor (2015) also reported that some principals act as if they are above others, refusing to work with teachers as a team.

These challenges suggest that ethical leadership is missing in many schools in Anambra State. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how principals' ethical leadership practices influence teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to determine the ethical leadership practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, this study ascertained:

1. principals' communicative ethical practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. principals' climatic ethical practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. principals' decisional ethical practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
4. principals' behavioural ethical practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are principals' communicative ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What are principals' climatic ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What are principals' decisional ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
4. What are principals' behavioural ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Research Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of principals and teachers on the communicative ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of principals and teachers on the climatic ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean response of principals and teachers on the decisional ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean response of principals and teachers on the behavioral ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Methods
Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Four research questions guided this study, and four hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 267 principals and 7,027 teachers in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for this study consisted of 797 respondents made up of 103 principals and 694 teachers drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Researchers' developed questionnaire titled "Ethical Leadership Practices of Principals for Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire (ELPPTEQ)'' was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. In order to test for the reliability of the instrument, the data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instruments. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses.

Results
Research Question 1: What are principals' communicative ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on principals' communicative ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Listens attentively to teachers' concerns, fostering a supportive environment that enhances their job effectiveness.	2.74	.70	Agree
2.	Uses clear and concise messages when addressing staff, ensuring smooth communication that improves instructional delivery.	2.91	.76	Agree
3.	Provides teachers with adequate information, enabling them to perform their duties efficiently.	3.12	.69	Agree
4.	Maintains open communication with teachers, reducing misunderstandings and increasing work efficiency.	3.01	.76	Agree
5.	Regularly discusses school-related issues with teachers, ensuring they are well-informed and proactive in their responsibilities.	2.84	.70	Agree
6.	Offers continuous feedback to teachers, helping them improve their teaching strategies and classroom management.	2.86	.72	Agree
7.	Keeps teachers informed about new changes through effective communication methods, ensuring they remain updated and adaptable.	3.08	.67	Agree
8.	Uses available time to communicate with teachers, reinforcing a culture of collaboration and support.	2.99	.74	Agree

9. Considers teachers' suggestions on school communication methods, promoting inclusivity and effectiveness in job execution.	2.79	.66	Agree
10. Responds effectively using proper school communication channels, ensuring clarity and alignment with institutional goals.	2.77	.69	Agree
11. Creates a comfortable and open environment for teachers, increasing their engagement and motivation.	3.13	.64	Agree
Mean of Means	2.93	.70	Agree

Results in Table 1 indicate the mean ratings of respondents on principals' communicative ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The analysis shows that the respondents agree with the 11 items as the communicative ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness. The mean ratings for the 11 items ranged from 2.74 to 3.13. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .64 to .76 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings were homogenous.

Research Question 2: What are principals' climatic ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents on principals' climatic ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
12. Encourages teachers to be diligent in their duties, fostering commitment and improved student performance.	2.84	.72	Agree
13. Promotes his/her ideas with empathy and respect, inspiring teachers to align with the school's vision.	3.20	.59	Agree
14. Sets clear objectives for the future, helping teachers plan and execute their instructional strategies effectively.	2.99	.69	Agree
15. Shows a willingness to learn, setting an example for teachers to pursue continuous professional development.	2.83	.62	Agree
16. Values diverse ideas from teachers, leading to innovative and effective teaching approaches.	2.74	.70	Agree
17. Rewards teachers' achievements fairly, boosting morale and motivation.	2.91	.76	Agree
18. Establishes clear school rules, creating a structured environment that enhances teacher effectiveness.	3.12	.69	Agree
19. Provides a free and open environment for discussion, fostering collaboration and problem-solving among staff.	2.74	.70	Agree
20. Strives to enhance professional efficiency, ensuring that teachers receive the necessary support for their growth.	2.91	.76	Agree

21. Carries out responsibilities with a strong sense of duty, motivating teachers to uphold professional integrity.	3.12	.69	Agree	
22. Creates an environment that nurtures creativity, encouraging teachers to develop innovative teaching strategies.	3.01	.76	Agree	
Mean of Means	2.95	.70	Agree	

The above table shows that the respondents agree on the 11 listed items as the principals' climatic ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The mean ratings for the 11 items ranged from 2.74 to 3.20. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .59 to .76 indicating homogeneity in the responses of the respondents.

Research Question 3: What are principals' decisional ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents on principals' decisional ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
23. Values teachers' input in decision-making regarding training criteria, leading to more relevant and effective professional development.	2.84	.70	Agree
24. Consults teachers before finalizing resolutions in school meetings, ensuring their participation in governance.	2.86	.72	Agree
25. Allows teachers to exercise creativity in decision-making, fostering innovation in lesson delivery and student engagement.	3.08	.67	Agree
26. Encourages teamwork among teaching staff during decision-making, promoting a cooperative and productive work environment.	2.99	.74	Agree
27. Considers teachers' opinions when initiating school actions, ensuring alignment with academic objectives.	2.74	.70	Agree
28. Grants teachers autonomy in decision-making within their scope, empowering them to take responsibility for their work.	2.91	.76	Agree
29. Supports an effective committee structure for decision-making, ensuring transparency and accountability.	3.12	.69	Agree
30. Engages with staff members when addressing school progress challenges, fostering collective problem-solving.	3.01	.76	Agree
31. Makes informed decisions on what should be done and how it should be done, providing clear direction for teachers.	2.84	.70	Agree
Mean of Means	2.93	.72	Agree

Results in Table 3 indicate the mean ratings of respondents on principals' decisional ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The analysis shows that the respondents agree with the nine listed items as principals' decisional ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The mean ratings for the

nine items ranged from 2.74 to 3.12. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .67 to .76 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings were homogenous.

Research Question 4: What are principals' behavioural ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 4: Mean Ratings of Respondents on principals' behavioural ethics practices for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N Items	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
32. Engages in self-evaluation to improve leadership effectiveness, setting a reflective example for teachers.	2.86	.72	Agree
33. Maintains transparency in dealings, building trust and cooperation among staff.	3.08	.67	Agree
34. Demonstrates honesty in all interactions, fostering a culture of integrity and professionalism.	2.99	.74	Agree
35. Shows determination in school activities, motivating teachers to remain dedicated and goal-oriented.	2.45	.75	Disagree
36. Is truthful in all conditions, creating an atmosphere of trust and ethical conduct.	2.59	.71	Agree
37. Possesses deep knowledge of school matters, ensuring informed decision-making that benefits teachers.	3.12	.69	Agree
38. Protects teachers' rights, ensuring a fair and supportive work environment.	3.01	.76	Agree
39. Acts based on realistic principles, promoting practical and effective solutions in school management.	2.84	.70	Agree
40. Respects societal values, reinforcing ethical conduct and professionalism in teaching.	2.86	.72	Agree
Mean of Means	2.87	.72	Agree

The above table shows that the respondents agree on eight (item 32, 33, 34, 36, 27, 38, 39 and 40) of the nine listed items as behavioural ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The mean ratings for the eight items ranged from 2.59 to 3.12. The respondents however disagree on the remaining item (Item 35) as part of the behavioral ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .67 to .76 indicating homogeneity in the responses of the respondents.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the communicative ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 5: t-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the communicative ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Source of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	*P*-value	Decision
Principals	103	2.96	.26				
				750	1.27	.20	Not-Sig
Teachers	694	2.92	.31				

The results in Table 5 shows that the mean score for Principals (*M=2.95, SD=.26*) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers (*M=2.92, SD=.31*); *t (750) =1.27, p=.20*. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on communicative ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the climatic ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: t-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the climatic ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Source of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	*P*-value	Decision
Principals	103	2.95	.30				
				750	.002	.99	Not-Sig
Teachers	694	2.95	.35				

Table 6 shows that the mean score for Principals (*M=2.95, SD=.30*) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers (*M=2.95, SD=.35*); *t (750) =.002, p=.99*. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on climatic ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the decisional ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 7: t-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the decisional ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Source of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	*P*-value	Decision
Principals	103	2.73	.29				
				750	.96	.33	Not-Sig
Teachers	694	2.69	.34				

Table 7 shows that the mean score for Principals (*M=2.73, SD=.29*) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers (*M=2.69, SD=.34*); *t (750) =.96, p=*.33. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on decisional ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the behavioral ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 8: t-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the behavioral ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Source of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	*P*-value	Decision
Principals	103	2.89	.27				
				750	.87	.38	Not-Sig
Teachers	694	2.86	.33				

The results in Table 8 shows that the mean score for Principals (*M=2.89, SD=.27*) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers (*M=2.86, SD=.33*); *t (750) =.87, p=*.38. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the behavioral ethics practices of principals for teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings
Principals' Communicative Ethical Practices and Teachers' Effectiveness
　　　　The first research question explored principals' communicative ethical practices for enhancing teacher effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. These results presented in Table 1 indicated that the respondents agreed with all 11 items, with mean ratings

ranging from 2.74 to 3.13. The responses showed homogeneity, with standard deviation values ranging from .64 to .76. The findings suggest that principals' communicative ethics practices, such as active listening, clear communication, open discussions, and providing continuous feedback, contribute significantly to teachers' effectiveness. Hypothesis testing (Table 5) confirmed no significant difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions. This alignment implies that both groups recognize the role of ethical communication in fostering collaboration and instructional efficiency.

The findings on communicative ethics align closely with prior studies on ethical leadership. For instance, Obiekwe, Ogbo, and Igbokwe (2020) identified a medium positive relationship between principals' communicative ethics (e.g., transparency and clarity) and teachers' job performance in Anambra State, which resonates with this study's emphasis on practices like active listening and open communication. These practices foster trust and reduce ambiguities, as noted in Kaldick's (2020) work in Port-Harcourt, where communicative ethics were linked to administrative efficiency. The consensus between principals and teachers further validates the universality of these practices, echoing Obiekwe et al.'s (2021) conclusion that communicative ethics are critical for goal attainment in Anambra schools.

Principals' Climatic Ethical Practices and Teachers' Effectiveness

The second research question examined principals' climatic ethical practices. Respondents emphasized practices that cultivate a positive organizational climate. The data in Table 2 revealed that respondents agreed with all 11 listed items, with mean scores ranging from 2.74 to 3.20. Standard deviation values ranged from .59 to .76, indicating homogeneity in responses. The findings highlight that maintaining a positive school climate through encouragement, setting clear objectives, rewarding achievements, and fostering collaboration contributes significantly to teacher effectiveness. Hypothesis testing (Table 6) revealed no significant difference between principals' and teachers' ratings. The consensus underscores shared recognition of ethical climate-building practices, such as fairness and professional support, which are critical for teacher morale and innovation.

The role of climatic ethics in fostering a positive organizational climate mirror finding from Ezeugbor (2015) and Eslamieh and Davoudi (2016). For example, promoting ideas with empathy and respect and fairly rewarding achievements align with Ezeugbor's emphasis on ethical climates boosting teacher commitment. Similarly, Eslamieh and Davoudi's discovery that ethical leadership reduces burnout is reflected in this study's focus on structured rules and open forums, which create a disciplined yet supportive environment. However, the current study advances prior work by linking climatic ethics to innovation (e.g., valuing diverse ideas, and professional growth (e.g., enhancing efficiency), dimensions less explored in earlier research. The homogeneity in responses and stakeholder consensus underscore the shared recognition of climatic ethics as a driver of teacher morale and creativity.

Principals' Decisional Ethical Practices and Teachers' Effectiveness

The third research question addressed principals' decisional ethical practices. Respondents affirmed that principals involve teachers in decision-making processes. Generally, table 3 indicated that respondents agreed with all nine listed items, with mean ratings ranging from 2.74

to 3.12. The responses were homogeneous, with standard deviation values ranging from .67 to .76. The findings suggest that inclusive decision-making practices, consultation with teachers, and allowing creativity in decision-making positively impact teachers' effectiveness. In line with the tested hypothesis testing (Table 7) showed no significant difference between principals' and teachers' ratings. This indicates that both principals and teachers agree on the role of decisional ethics in enhancing teachers' effectiveness.

The findings on decisional ethics reinforce (Yambo and Tuitoek 2014) advocacy for participatory governance in Kenyan schools. Practices like consulting teachers before decisions and granting autonomy align with their call for inclusive leadership. Similarly, Nwangwu (2020) highlighted the correlation between decisional ethics and teacher commitment in Anambra State, which this study expands by demonstrating how teamwork and collective responsibility enhance instructional innovation. The role of informed decision-making in providing clarity also parallels Naomy's (2015) findings on job satisfaction in Nairobi. However, this study uniquely positions creative autonomy as a catalyst for lesson delivery innovation, a novel contribution to distributed leadership frameworks. The alignment between principals and teachers further validates the universality of these practices in Anambra's public schools.

Principals' Behavioral Ethical Practices and Teachers' Effectiveness

The fourth research question focused on principals' behavioral ethical practices. Respondents agreed on eight of nine items. Hypothesis testing (Table 8) confirmed no significant difference between principals' and teachers' ratings. The consensus suggests mutual acknowledgment of behavioral integrity, though the disagreement on "determination" warrants further exploration into contextual challenges.

These findings align with Ismail's (2014) work in Malaysia, where transparency and honesty were tied to organizational commitment. For instance, truthfulness and protecting teachers' rights mirror Ismail's emphasis on integrity. Ezeugbor (2015) similarly linked behavioral ethics to commitment in Anambra State, but this study extends those insights by highlighting self-evaluation and institutional knowledge as drivers of reflective practice and informed leadership. The outlier item, demonstration of determination, suggests gaps in proactive leadership, a finding absent in prior studies and warranting further exploration. Despite this, the consensus between principals and teachers underscores mutual recognition of behavioral ethics as foundational to trust and accountability.

Conclusion

This study revealed principals' ethical leadership practices that can lead to teachers' job effectiveness. This section, therefore, draws a number of relevant conclusions based on the findings of the study. The findings highlight strong agreement across all areas of ethics practices (communicative, climatic, decisional, and behavioral) for principals' roles in improving teachers' effectiveness. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the views of principals and teachers on these ethical practices, suggesting alignment in perceptions.

Recommendations

Premised on the findings of this study, the Researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Principals should engage in leadership development programs that focus on ethical leadership, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution. These programs will equip them with the tools they need to perform their roles effectively and lead their schools toward greater success.
2. Anambra state ministry of education should encourage principals to adopt ethical leadership style since teachers in Anambra state unanimously agree that it lead to their job effectiveness.
3. Ethical leadership qualities should be included as one of criteria for appointment of principals in secondary schools in Anambra State.
4. The state government and agencies in charge of education such as the Ministry of Education and Post primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should constantly organize regular training and development programmes in form of seminars and workshops for principals on ethical leadership in order to improve teachers' effectiveness on their job

REFERENCES

Agbim, K. C. (2018). Effect of ethical leadership on corporate governance, performance and social responsibility: A study of selected deposit money banks in Benue state, Nigeria. International *Journal of Community Development and Management Studies*, 3(2), 20-37.

Akpakwu, S. O. (2017). Educational management: Theory and practice. Makurdi: Destiny Ventures.

Akudo, F. U., Ezeokenwa, A. C. & Ikedimma, I. F. (2025). Relationship between principals' motivational strategies and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. *African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies*, 14 (2), 463-475.

Amadi, E. C. & I. C. (2017). Demographic variables as determinants of teacher's effectiveness in classroom management in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Development & Policy Studies,* 5 (4): 65-70.

Anyanwu, C. I. & Nnorom, C. C. (2020). Teachers' characteristics and instructional leadership practices: Implications for effective implementation of school curriculum in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Management Review*, 5(1), 1-12.

Ayoko, O. B. (2022). Leadership, ethics and corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Management & Organization, 28(1), 1-8.*

Bağrıyanık H., & Can, N. (2017). The relation between teachers' perception of ethical leadership, organizational justice and organizational cynicism. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 7(2), 122-131.

Cherkowski, S., Walker, K. D. & Kutsyuruba, B. (2015). Principals'moral agency and ethical decision making: Toward a transformational ethics. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership (IJPEPL),* 10 (5), 1-17.

Demirdağ, G. E. & Ekmekçioğlu, E. B. (2015). Influence of ethical climate and leadership on organizational commitment: Empirical research. Journal of Economic and Administrative Science, 17(1), 197-216.

Ezeugbor, C.O. (2015), Influence of principals' ethical leadership behaviours on teachers' level of commitment in secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos, NERDC.

Janiah, S., Suriansyah, A. & Effendi, R. (2023). The correlation of school principal communication, work ethic, and work motivation to teacher performance. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 6(1), 336-342.

Kaldick, J. (2020). Perceived influence of ethical school leadership behavior on teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis. *Journal of Educational Administration and Leadership*, 34(1), 45-59.

Kapur, R. (2018). *Teacher Effectiveness.* University of Delhi

Leithwood, K. & Riehl, C. (2015). Improving school leadership: How successful principals manage change. Sage.

Majeed, N. (2018). Ethical Leadership: The Heart of Leadership. Mastering Theories of Educational Leadership and Management. University of Malaya Press.

Naomy, W. W. (2015). *Principals' leadership behaviours and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools, Nairobi County, Kenya.* A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education of Kenyatta University.

Nwangwu, P. A. (2020). Correlation between teachers' perception of principals' ethical leadership behaviors and their commitment in state-owned secondary schools in Anambra State. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 25(4), 115-131.

Nwosu, J. C. (2021). Principals' communication strategies and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development,* 5(9)1-12.

Obiekwe, K. K & Ezeugbor, C. O. (2019). Perception of teachers regarding the level of principals' ethical leadership behaviours in state government owned secondary schools in Anambra State. The *International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies,* 7(8), 45-48

Obiekwe, K. K., Ogbo, R. N. & Igbokwe, I. C. (2020). Relationship between principals' communicative and decisional ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools Anambra State. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT).* 8(6), 1748-1756.

Obiekwe, K. K., Unachukwu, G. O., Ikedimma, I. F. & Mbonu, O. A. (2021). Ethical leadership practices adopted by principals for goal attainment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. European Modern Studies Journal, 5(1), 290-299.

Ugochukwu, A.V., Adaobi, A. B. & Vivian, A. A. (2021). Primary education administration in Nigeria: Challenges and strategies for improvement. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation,* 3(3), 101-105.

Yambo, A., & Tuitoek, M. (2014). Effects of the principals' ethics in decision-making in the management of private secondary schools in Kisumu District, Kenya. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 14(2), 67-83.