



PRINCIPALS' DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' job commitment is vital for the achievement of set educational goals. This study examined principals' disciplinary practices as predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 7290 teachers in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample of the study consisted 547 respondents. Random sampling procedure was used for the study. The instruments for data collection were two sets of structured questionnaires by the researcher tagged; "Principals Disciplinary Practices Questionnaire (PDPQ)", and "Teachers Job Commitment Scale (TJCS)". The face validity of the instruments was established by three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The construct validity was established using Principal Component Analysis Approach. Cronbach Alpha procedure was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments, PDPQ yielded coefficient value of 0.84, and 0.79 for TJCS. This gave an average coefficient value of 0.81. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that principals' preventive disciplinary practices and corrective disciplinary practices were significant factors for predicting teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that principals should ensure that teachers are well informed about school rules and regulations, principals should ensure that teachers who disobey school rules are given appropriate punishment, Anambra State Post Primary School Service Commission should organize periodic training for principals on disciplinary practices. The study affirmed that the application of the assumption of Operant Conditioning Theory would expand the dimensions of use of disciplinary practices to improve teachers' job commitment. The study established that preventive, corrective, and progressive disciplinary practice are significant factors for predicting teachers' job commitment.

Keywords: Principals, Disciplinary Practices, Teachers Job Commitment, Public Secondary Schools.



Introduction

Education is a tool for inculcating requisite knowledge, molding attitudes and instilling confidence in individuals. It also plays essential roles in helping individuals acquire productive, creative and innovative skills to meaningfully contribute to economic, social and political development of the society. Nnebedum et al. (2020) asserted that education is an instrument for transmission of requisite skills and knowledge to individuals which would help them function effectively and contribute to the development of the society. Secondary education acts as a bridge between the primary and tertiary levels of education. Principals are at the helm of affairs in secondary education. They are in charge of all teaching and learning activities. Students can be inspired and engaged in learning through teachers' job commitment.

Job commitment is the devotion and the willingness to effectively discharge duties in an organization. Imam, et al. (2019) defined job commitment as an emotional attachment and involvement of an employee in executing tasks in an organization. Job commitment is the firm belief of a worker in an appreciation of the mission and values of his or her organization and a desire to exercise his or her own willingness to improve the organization. Korir and Kipkebut (2016) defined job commitment as an emotional state that exemplifies employees' relationships with an organization and the choice to stay in the organization. A high level of organizational commitment could lead to improvement in the performance and efficiency of an employee in accomplishing the organizational goals. Employees in different organizations are expected to be committed to their job including teachers.

In a school system, the achievement of educational goals and objectives may be difficult without committed teachers who are the main facilitators of teaching and learning. Bano, et al (2019) defined teachers job commitment as the extent of their involvement in the school with the desire to performing their job effectively and having no intent to resign. In the conceptualization of Aashiq (2017), teachers' job commitment is their feeling of dedication towards the teaching profession. This means that teachers' job commitment is the willingness of teachers to direct their effort into the teaching profession. Operationally, teachers' job commitment is the willingness of teaching staff to exert considerable effort in performing their duties. Teachers' job commitment is the active participation of teachers in the daily activities of the school. Teachers who are highly committed are likely to stay longer on the job, perform better, get actively involved in the work and school programmes and go extra miles to ensure that the school achieve its set goals and objectives.

Observation by the researchers revealed that teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State is poor. This is worrisome owing to the fact that teachers play pivotal role in the realization of set education goals. The poor disciplinary practices in secondary schools in Anambra State could probably be the reason for decline in teachers' job commitment. Ewim et al. (2020) also observed persistent lateness to work, absenteeism, gossiping instead of attending to their classes and other forms of misconduct among some public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. These seemed to put the capacity of principals' disciplinary practice in serious doubt.



Discipline is closely related to encouraging good conduct and preventing misconduct through sanctions. It is an action that is in conformity with established rules and regulations governing an organization. Dauda and Saka (2022) opined that discipline is the ability of an employee to act in accordance with the laid down rules and regulations of an organization and also face the consequences of not abiding by the rules and regulations and punitive actions or measures are taken by an organization against erring workers. Discipline is management action that encourages and ensures compliance with laid-down rules and regulations, governing the smooth operation of an organization. It is any means of correcting or punishing misdeed in an organization. Correcting or punishing misdeed ensures orderliness, decorum and progress in school organization. Discipline can be action taken against a student for misbehaviour or a teacher for professional misconduct. The authors noted that the indicators of discipline include punctuality, adherence to school rules, standard of work and professional code of conduct. This means that discipline ensures obedience of organizational rules and norms. Similar to this, Azzahra, et al. (2019) noted that discipline is defined when employees always come and go home on time, do all the work well, and comply with company regulations and prevailing social norms. Discipline is an act of training workforce of an organization to behave in a professional manner.

Discipline is essential for promoting self-control, desirable behaviour and obedience to school's authority. Dewi and Hanif (2018) asserted that discipline is a tool used to improve and manage the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of employees as an influence to increase awareness and willingness of a person to comply with all organization's regulations and prevailing social norms. In some contexts, discipline is synonymous with punishment. Discipline can embody a punishment or penalty as a means of obtaining a desired result. It is a means of punishing individuals who violate rules or regulations. The notion of punishment as disciplinary action is to promote good job attitudes or work behaviour. It is a mechanism of correcting undesirable employees' behaviour. Priyandi et al. (2020) noted that with good work discipline from employees such as arriving on time, carrying out work in accordance with what has been set by the organization; obeying organization's regulations improve the commitment and performance of these employees which promote the attainment of organization's objectives. Personnel in school organization can be informed on what is right and what is wrong and the consequences through set of disciplinary practice. The principals regulate the behaviour of teachers and students to maintain orderliness and stability in the school system through disciplinary practices.

Disciplinary practices are means of correcting undesirable behaviour that is deteriorated to the success of the school organization. Tantua and Wopara (2019) noted that disciplinary practices are control strategies which ensure that members are conformed to the behavioural and performance standards determined by management as being necessary for the achievement of organizational objectives. It is the strategy for strengthening desirable behaviour and correcting misconduct among members of staff in the school system disciplinary practices as the strategies of monitoring and enforcement of obedience, and applying established rules so as to avoid occurrence of undesirable and unacceptable acts. There are some disciplinary practices to control the behaviour of learners and members of staff. These include preventive disciplinary practices, corrective disciplinary practices and progressive disciplinary practices (Nduka, et al. 2019, Okorie & Ikoro, 2019). The interest of this study was on preventive and corrective disciplinary practices.



Preventive disciplinary practice is the use of threats and rules to discourage violation of rules and misconduct in organizations. Okolie and Udom (2019) noted that preventive disciplinary practices are programmes and measures put in place to discourage or dissuade organizational members from coming late, absenteeism, redundancy, disobedience to superior officer, insubordination among others. Preventive disciplinary practice is geared toward averting misconduct among teachers and students. Preventive disciplinary practices are designed to prevent misconduct among members of staff. It is a technique of guiding actions to ensure standard conduct and avoid infractions. Preventive disciplinary practice are things that should be put in place to discourage violation of rules and misconduct in an organization such as: code of conduct handbook, rules and regulation (Usman, 2023). In other words, preventive disciplinary practice is meant to prevent deviation or violation of rules and regulations.

It is necessary to state the rules in simple and clear terms for easy understanding by the members of the organization. For preventive discipline to be effective, it is essential for managers to create an environment of openness and honesty, one in which employees feel comfortable sharing even negative information and are appreciated for doing so in a timely fashion. The preventive disciplinary practices are actions taken to encourage and control the behavior to comply with school rules, regulations and standard without infringement. However, when there is professional misconduct or infringement of school rules, regulations and standard, the school administrators apply the corrective disciplinary practice. Ikoya (2017) noted that the general implementation of the preventive disciplinary practice was low among principals. Violation of organization's rules and procedures after the implementation of preventive discipline leads to the application of corrective discipline.

Corrective disciplinary practice is the use of punishment and sanction against violators of school rules and regulations. Corrective discipline is an action taken to address violations of the rules. Nduka et al. (2019) noted that corrective discipline is usually used as deterrent for staff that has already engaged in unacceptable behaviours. This means that the goal of corrective discipline is to correct and educate in order to avoid further violations among others. Under corrective practice, disciplinary action is taken against individuals who break organizational rules and regulations. Fermin (2023) maintained that corrective disciplinary practice is used to address and handle problems that arise in an organization and it involves the identification of the problem, developing methods of handling the issue and monitoring the progress of the method to guard against reoccurrence of the problem. This implies that corrective discipline serves two purposes which are to: reform or discourage further violation by sanctioning the violator and prevent future or forestall future reoccurrence of the undesirable behaviour among other employees (to serve as a deterrent). Corrective disciplinary practice involves punishing staff that violated the rules and regulations of the school.

Indiscipline in schools which is manifested in the forms of lateness to school, leaving the school premises before closing time, destruction of school materials and facilities, disobedience to school rules, indecent dressing, aiding of examination malpractices and other forms of misconduct among members of staff could be associated with failure of principals to apply disciplinary practices to control the behaviour of members of staff. Nwaozor and Thompson (2019) observed that most secondary school teachers in Nigeria exhibit nonchalant attitudes to teaching their



students, some even leave their places of work for other unofficial business during official hours while others that are around could stay idle in the staff- room chatting and gisting, leaving their students at the mercy of their own faith. Obviously, this negative attitude could be attributed to principals' poor disciplinary practices in secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

It is worrisome that secondary schools in Anambra State appear beleaguered with behavioural problems of secondary school teachers, such as dishonest conduct in examination matters, lateness to school, leaving office or school premises without permission and failure to complete work assignments. This ugly trend has generated serious doubt to disciplinary practices in secondary schools in Anambra State. Some principals seemed to fail to take appropriate disciplinary actions against professional misconduct among teachers in Anambra State. There appears to be cases where teachers who often go late to work, absent themselves from work and engage in professional misconducts are overlooked by principals. Teachers lack of commitment may result to decline in the academic outcome of students which will be affect the school, families and the society negatively. Are Principals in the State secondary schools still grappling with efforts to curtail teachers' indiscipline? Hence, this study examined principals' disciplinary practices as predictors of teachers' job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine if principals' disciplinary practices predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the predictive value of principals' preventive disciplinary practices on teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Examine the predictive value of principals' corrective disciplinary practice on teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of principals' preventive disciplinary practice on teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of principals' corrective disciplinary practice on teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals' preventive disciplinary practices are not a significant predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' corrective disciplinary practices are not significant predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



Method

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. Ifeakor (2018) defined Correlational research as the type that aims at establishing the relationship that exists between two or more variables. Correlational research design is appropriate for this study because the researcher sought to collect data from the given population of teachers to investigate principals' disciplinary practices as predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The population of the study consisted of 7290 teachers in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample of the study consisted of 547 respondents. The sample comprised 7.5% of the entire population of teachers from Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha Education Zones respectively. Random sampling procedure was used to draw the sample for the study. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significant. The instruments for data collection were two questionnaires structured by the researcher titled: "Principals' Disciplinary Practices Questionnaire (PDPQ)", and "Teachers' Job Commitment Scale (TJCS)". The first instrument which was titled "PDPQ" was structured by the researcher to measure disciplinary practices among principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument contained two sections A and B. Section A sought background data of the respondents such as gender and educational qualification. Section B contains 20 items spread in three clusters (1-2) to elicit information on disciplinary practices. Cluster 1 which focus on preventive disciplinary practice contains 10 items, Cluster 2 contains 10 items on preventive disciplinary practice. The questionnaire items were placed on a four-point rating of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE) with the scoring of 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively.

The second instrument – "TJCS" was structured by the researcher to measure job commitment among teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This instrument is in Section C. The instrument contains 20 items which measured job commitment of teachers. The items of the instrument were placed on a four-point rating of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE) with the scoring of 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively.

The face and construct validity of the instruments were established. The face validity was determined by three experts who are lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations, two experts in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation all in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus. The construct validity of the instruments was measured through "factor analysis" with principle component analysis which used the rotated component matrix to factor the variables. The Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used as a measure of sample adequacy. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha procedure. PDPQ yielded coefficient value of 0.84, and 0.79 for TJCS. This gave an average coefficient value of 0.81. The researchers administered the instruments with the help of five research assistants through a direct approach. A total of 547 copies of the questionnaire were administered and 516 were properly completed and successfully retrieved indicating 94% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using Simple regression. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used for data analysis.



Results

The results were presented according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study

Research Questions 1: What is the predictive value of principals’ preventive disciplinary practice on teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Simple regression analysis of the amount of variation of teachers’ job commitment predicted by principals’ preventive disciplinary practice in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std Error of the estimate	Change change	R ²	Statistics F	df ₁	df ₂	Sig. F change
1	0.398 ^a	0.158	0.156	6.29283	0.158		21.002	1	514	0.000

a. predictor: (constant), principals preventive disciplinary practice

Result in Table 1 showed the regression analysis for the amount of variation in teachers’ job commitment that was predicted by principals’ preventive disciplinary practices. The result showed that when the responses of respondents on principals’ preventive disciplinary practices were correlated with teachers’ job commitment, a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.398 with associated coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.158 were obtained. This coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.158 denoted that 15.8% variation in teachers’ job commitment can be predicted by principals’ preventive disciplinary practices.

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of principals’ corrective disciplinary practice on teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Simple regression analysis of the amount of variation of teachers’ job commitment predicted by principals’ corrective disciplinary practice in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std Error of the estimate	Change change	R ²	Statistics F	df ₁	df ₂	Sig. F change
1	0.128 ^a	0.016	0.014	3.33182	0.016		8.555	1	514	0.004

a. predictor: (constant), principals corrective disciplinary practice

Analysis in Table 2 indicated the regression analysis for the amount of variation in teachers’ commitment that was predicted by principals’ corrective disciplinary practice. The finding showed that when the responses of respondents on principals’ corrective disciplinary practice were correlated with teachers’ job commitment, a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.128 with associated coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.016 was obtained. This coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.016 implied that 1.6% variation in teachers, job commitment can be predicted by principals’ corrective disciplinary practice.



Testing of Hypotheses

To confirm the decision on teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State based on principals’ disciplinary practices, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Hypotheses 1: Principals’ preventive disciplinary practices are not significant predictors of teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Regression ANOVA test of significance for the variation in teachers’ job commitment that can be predicted by principals’ preventive disciplinary practice in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	227.716	1	227.716	21.002	0.000	Significant
	Residual	5573.173	514	10.843			
	Total	5800.890	515				

Dependent variable: Teachers’ job commitment

Predictor: (constant), principals’ preventive disciplinary practice

Results in Table 3 revealed that the variation in teachers’ job commitment that was predicted by principals’ preventive disciplinary practice was significant (F (1,514) = 21.002, p = 0.00). This gave the fact that the associated probability value of 0.000 when compared with 0.05 level of significance at which the hypothesis was being tested was found to be significant because 0.000 was less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and the conclusion drawn was the principals’ preventive disciplinary practice was a significant factor for predicting teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypotheses 2: Principals’ corrective disciplinary practices are not significant predictors of teachers’ job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Regression ANOVA test of significance for the variation in teachers’ job commitment that can be predicted by principals’ corrective disciplinary practice in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	94.973	1	94.973	8.555	0.004	Significant
	Residual	5705.917	514	11.101			
	Total	5800.890	515				

Dependent variable: Teachers’ job commitment

Predictor: (constant), principals’ corrective disciplinary practice

Table 4 revealed that the variation in teachers’ job commitment that was predicted by principals’ corrective disciplinary practice was significant (F (1,514) = 8.555, p = 0.004). This associated probability value of 0.004 when compared with 0.005 level of significance at which the



hypotheses was being tested was found to be significant because 0.004 was less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypotheses were rejected and inference drawn was that, there is a significant variation in teachers' job commitment that was predicted by principals' corrective disciplinary practice in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of findings

Results of the research indicated that when the responses of respondents on principals' preventive disciplinary practice were correlated with teachers' job commitment, a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.398 with associated coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.158 were obtained. This coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.158 denoted that 15.8% variation in teachers' job commitment can be predicted by principals' preventive disciplinary practice. The test of hypothesis 1 revealed that the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 level of significance at which the hypothesis was being tested which meant that the null hypothesis which states that principals' preventive disciplinary practice is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State was rejected. Therefore, principals' preventive disciplinary practice was a significant factor for predicting teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that the use of preventive disciplinary practices by principals are useful because they enhance teachers' job commitment to a great extent. In other words, the application of preventive disciplinary practices by principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State is a strong predictor of teachers' job commitment. This is in line with Ikoya (2017) who found out that the use of preventive disciplinary practice by principals will improve quality discipline and effective teachers' job commitment and improved learning output. The reason for the similarity in the findings could be because the study was conducted in secondary schools in the same country and there has not been much improvement in the use of preventive disciplinary practice by principals in public secondary school from the time the study was conducted till the present study.

Results of the study showed that when the responses of respondents on principals' corrective disciplinary practice were correlated with teachers' job commitment, a correlation coefficient ((R) of 0.128) with associated coefficient of determination ((R^2) of 0.016) were obtained. This coefficient of determination ((R^2) of 0.016) implied that 1.6% variation in teachers, job commitment can be predicted by principals' corrective disciplinary practices. The test of hypothesis 2 revealed that the variation in teachers' job commitment that was predicted by principals' corrective disciplinary practices was significant ($F(1,514) = 8.555, p = 0.004$). The p-value of 0.004 was less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.004 was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses which stated that principals' corrective disciplinary practices are not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State was rejected.

Hence inference drawn was that there is a significant variation in teachers' job commitment that was predicted by principals' corrective disciplinary practices in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that corrective disciplinary practices are a predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The job commitment of teachers in public secondary schools where principals who make use of corrective disciplinary is most likely



to be enhanced because taking correction will make them to direct their best effort towards improving their job commitment. This finding is in line with Fermin (2023) and Crooks (2022) which depicted that the use of corrective disciplinary approaches in any organization can lead to desired outcomes and improved productivity. Study by Owan and Okpe (2019) also showed that the use of warning and suspension in schools helps to make teachers to take their job more seriously and be more committed. Even though the studies differ in geographical location, research design and population with the present study, there is still agreement in their findings. The agreement in the findings could be as a result of the closeness of the period when the studies were conducted and also probably because principals in those schools have not started using corrective disciplinary practices to enhance teachers' job commitment.

Conclusion

The result of this study showed that principals' preventive disciplinary practices were significant factors for predicting teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that 1.6% variation in teachers' job commitment can be predicted by principals' corrective disciplinary practices and that principals' corrective disciplinary practices was a significant factor for predicting teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was deduced from the result of the study that preventive disciplinary practices, corrective disciplinary practices, are significant factors for predicting teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Using the right disciplinary practices by principals in the school is important for enhancing teachers' job commitment and realization of educational goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Principals should ensure that teachers are well informed about school rules and regulations and policies guiding the teaching profession to prevent them from misbehaving in the school by providing copies of school rules and work ethics in the school library as well as in staff rooms.
2. Principals should ensure that teachers who disobey school rules are sanctioned to correct them so that others will not misbehave.
3. Principals should ensure that paper on the importance of maintaining discipline in schools should be presented from time to time during staff forum which is organized every term in schools.

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