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PRINCIPALS' ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated principals' ethical leadership practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three specific purposes were formulated, three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 7,248 teachers in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for this study consisted of 726 teachers drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. ''Ethical Leadership Practices Questionnaire (ELPQ)'' and ''Teachers' Job Commitment Scale (TJCS)'' were used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts made up of two experts in Educational Management and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation, all from Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The construct validation of the instruments was determined using Factor Analysis. The internal consistencies of the instruments were determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded overall reliability indices of 0.79 for ELPQ and 0.82 for TJCS respectively. The instruments were administered by the researcher with the help of five research assistants and 98% return rate was recorded. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that ethical orientation and power-sharing practices have strong and significant relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also found that ethical guidance practices have moderate and significant relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Post Primary Schools Service Commission, Awka Anambra State should organize annual capacity building programmes for principals to up-date their skills and knowledge of ethical guidance practices to improve teachers' job commitment.

Keywords: Principals. Ethical, Leadership, Practices, Teachers, Job Commitment, Orientation, Guidance, Power-Sharing

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Introduction

Teachers are considered as one of the most productive resources that contribute to the success of education. It is the teachers that make use of the available resources to deliver instructions in classroom to achieve set objectives of secondary education. Thus, it might be difficult to attain education objectives without teachers' job commitment. Teachers could be provided with the needed supports and directions to effectively discharge their duties through application of ethical leadership practices by the principals. Ethical leadership practices could create favourable work environment which have potential of improving the job commitment of teachers.

Teachers' job commitment is the devotion of teaching staff toward carrying out the task assigned to them. In the views of Abbas et al (2023), job commitment of teachers is how well and how quickly teaching staff fulfill their duties. Teachers' job commitment is the willingness of teachers to devote their time and put substantial energy in engaging in work-related activities. Job commitment is the involvements of staff in work activities in an organization. Teachers demonstrate job commitment by their willingness to carry out their responsibilities in schools. According to Chime (2024, p.2), teachers' job commitment is the emotional bond and attitude that members of teaching staff demonstrate toward their work. Contextually, teachers' job commitment is the emotional attachment, loyalty, dedication of teaching staff toward their duties and activities of schools to achieve set goals.

Teachers who are committed to their job likely go to work daily, report to school on time, willing to accept responsibilities, prepare lessons, attend school functions and adhere to teaching professional code of conduct among others. Similarly, Ibezim (2024) maintained that teachers who are committed to their job are punctual to work, willing to prepare their lesson notes and plans, deliver instructions at the expected period, cover their scheme of works diaries before the end of every term, administer examinations and process the results of students at the appropriate time. Teachers' job commitment is also demonstrated through devoting time to teach students, accepting the values of the school, willingness to obey rules and engaging in co-curricular activities in secondary schools.

It seems that there are some laxities in job commitment of teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Ibezim (2024) noted that some teachers exhibit undesirable organizational behaviours such as frequent absenteeism, disengagement from official duties, departure from school before the closing hour and procrastination in teaching students which may indicate laxities in their job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Some teachers tend to report late to work, disrespect the principals, engage in constant tardiness, exhibit clique-like behaviour and manifest other lackadaisical work attitude in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Obionu et al (2024) asserted that some teachers come late to school, engage in irregular and unauthorized movement from schools, use the official hours for their private businesses, fail to exhibit zeal in performing assigned responsibilities and show poor level of commitment to daily activities in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thompson and Ofojebe (2020) also asserted the cases of absenteeism, persistent lateness and other forms of professional misconduct of some teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ethical leadership practices are the act of leading others by demonstrating integrity, uprightness, supportive and transparency in running the affairs of an organization. Chenga (2022) noted that ethical leadership practices are the demonstration of right and acceptable conduct and disposition in managing the affairs of an organization. The author added that

ethical leadership is concerned with being honest, democratic, supportive of participation, compassionate and empathetic. It is the exhibition of acceptable behaviour in running the affairs of an organization. Principals who engage in ethical leadership practices set clear moral standard of conduct and holding staff accountable for any professional misconduct. Ethical leadership practices is described by Arinze et al (2024) as the act of leading by behaving in accordance with moral principles, setting clear standard for conduct, showing fairness in dealing with others and considering the opinions of staff in running the daily affairs of schools for attainment of set goals. The authors added that it is the exhibition of fairness, trustworthiness, transparency and honesty in influencing the efforts of subordinates in the workplace. Ethical leadership practices are the behaviour and actions of leading and influencing the activities of others in morally right and commendable manner in an organization.

Ethical leadership practices are connected to sincerity, trustworthiness, openness, fairness and concern for the needs of staff in the workplace. Obiekwe et al (2021) maintained that an ethical leader is someone who can display trust, honesty, and integrity, fairness, concern, and respect for staff. It is through ethical leadership practices that principals could indulge in good conduct to encourage members of staff to act morally in secondary schools. Zhang and Dacanay (2024) noted that ethical leaders demonstrate noble moral values, standard behaviour which inspire and motivate teachers to behave well in the workplace. Ethical leaders comply with rules, take responsibilities and diligently discharge their duties in the workplace. Operationally, ethical leadership practices are the acts of influencing members of staff to exhibit good conduct and expected behaviour in carrying out their duties to achieve set goals.

Principals engage in different ethical leadership practices to exhibit good behavior, discuss morals, set standards of conduct, reward upright attitude and put disciplinary measures to control conduct of staff. Some authors outlined different ethical leadership practices to include: ethical people orientation, fairness, ethical power-sharing, ethical guidance and role clarification (Sabello & Oted, 2024; Vikaraman et al, 2021). The dimensions of ethical leadership practices adopted in this study are ethical people orientation, ethical power-sharing and ethical guidance.

Ethical people orientation practice is the act of showing concern towards the professional needs and welfare of teachers.Arinze et al (2024) noted that staff orientation is a dimension of ethical leadership in which school administrators show high concern for the professional needs of members of staff. Arinze et al added that staff ethical oriented school administrators accord necessary right to members of staff and fairly treat them. Ethical people orientation practice is demonstrated through paying attention to members of staff, according respect to them, showing compassion and empathy to them. Shahab et al (2021) noted that the ethical people-orientation component in ethical leadership reflects genuinely caring about, respecting and supporting subordinates as well as ensuring that their needs are adequately met. Furthermore, Shahab et al stressed that leaders who apply ethical people-orientation practices are approachable, good-natured, empathetic, understanding, helpful in protecting and developing their subordinates. The principals who apply ethical people-orientation practices show compassion, support, humility, make self-sacrifice and give priority to the well-being of staff. The principals could fairly treat members of staff and promote participative management through ethical power-sharing practices.

Power-sharing practices are means of promoting the participation of staff in managing the daily affairs of an organization. It entails providing opportunities to teachers to give their

opinions on school affairs. Vikaraman et al (2021) maintained that power-sharing practices is the act of empowering teachers to participate in crucial decision-making processes, spontaneously take their advice, fairly delegate tasks and give them opportunity to plan their goals and how to progress on their work. It is through power-sharing practices that principals get ideas from diverse perspectives to solve the problems in secondary schools. According to Abdullahi (2020), power sharing is a dimension of ethical leadership exhibited through delegation of authority, participative decision-making and share responsibility for the attainment of goals and objectives. Power-sharing practices provide opportunity for teachers to get involved in decision-making which strengthen trust, teamwork and collaborative work culture in schools. Power-sharing practices make teachers to be less-dependent on the principals and use their initiatives in performing their duties in secondary schools. Teachers who are delegated some tasks to perform could be provided with ethical guidance to enable them successfully execute the tasks.

Ethical guidance is the act of establishing norms and principles to form the basis of conduct among members of staff. Ethical guidance practices are concerned with explaining work principles and code of conduct to enable members of staff know the expected behaviour in the school. Reward and punishment are mechanisms for providing ethical leadership practices in secondary schools. Abun et al (2023) noted that ethical guidance is practiced by leaders who communicate and explain moral values to be followed by subordinates and reward those who behave well. Ethical guidance is exhibited through modeling the right behaviour in secondary schools. Mseti et al (2023) posited that ethical guidance is concerned with explaining integrity related codes of conduct, ensure compliance and state the consequences of possible unethical behaviour to subordinates.

It appears that some secondary school principals in Anambra State exhibit various forms of unethical practices. Obiekwe et al (2021) noted that there is dissatisfaction, resentment, and anger over the appalling state of moral decadence and backwardness which characterized some public secondary schools in Anambra State. They added that some principals in the state seem to arrogate powers to themselves, fail to carry the teachers along in decision making and seem not to genuinely support and show care for teachers to enable them to effectively discharge their duties in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Egboka and Onyeagba (2024) noted that some principals display hostile behaviour toward their subordinates, rebuking them in front of the students for little mistakes and rarely making out time to interact with them inpublic secondary schools in Anambra State. Continuing, Egboka and Onyeagba asserted that some teachers seem to resort to gossiping their principals, showing poor work attitude, performing below their job expectation and possibly even develop the tendency of engaging in conflict that hinder effective school administration in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Some principals appear to give preferential treatment to some teachers in assigning duties, making decisions and enforcing some rules to maintain ethical standard of conduct in public secondary schools in Anambra State. To buttress this, Ughamadu et al (2024) asserted that some principals seem to be bias in administrative practices which create distrust and unhealthy interpersonal relationships among others that hinder teamwork and good organizational behaviour. They further said that the teachers who perceive bias and unfairness in the workplace, tend to reciprocate by absenteeism, lateness and poor commitment to teaching secondary school students in Anambra State. This assertion is supported by the observation made by Arinze et al (2024) asserted that some teachers appear to be absent from school without fair reason, unavailable in classes to teach at the stipulated periods in the timetable which might lead to inability to and fail to cover their scheme of

work in public secondary schools in Anambra State. In the same vein, Obi, Ogbunude and Chukwudolue (2022) noted that there are incidences of unacceptable behaviours absenteeism, lateness to school, teachers doing private business at official time, drug addiction, and loitering of staff in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Some teachers tend to be unwilling to accept responsibilities, fail to prepare their lesson notes and cover their scheme of work/diary before the end of every term. It is against this background that this study examined principals' ethical leadership practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers play central roles in implementing school programmes to attain educational goals and objectives. The students' ability to acquire knowledge and skills required to develop their potentials is to some extent dependent on job commitment. It is worrisome that some teachers who if students depend on to acquire requisite skills tend to exhibit lateness to school, absenteeism, miss their lessons, leave school before the end of school hours and display other forms of professional misconduct which probably show laxities in their job commitment in secondary schools in Anambra State. It also appears that there are teachers who irregularly check and mark lesson notes, attendance and assignments of students in secondary schools in Anambra State.

This ugly trend has generated doubt as to the ability of the principals to control and manage the teachers through ethical leadership practices. Some principals seem to have failed in setting and ensuring that expected standard of behaviour are adhered by teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It seems that there are principals who disrespect and show favouritism in dealing with teachers in some public secondary schools in Anambra State. This tends to cause disharmony and mistrust which probably hinder smooth running of the activities of secondary schools in Anambra State. It is based on these problems that this study investigated principals' ethical leadership practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine principals' ethical leadership practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. ascertain the relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. find out the relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

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

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

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

Method

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. Barkha and Basnet (2023) defined correlational research design as the type that involves the examining the relationships between or among two or more variables in a single group, which can occur at several levels. Correlational design is appropriate for this study because the researcher collected data from the given sample of teachers to investigate principals' ethical leadership practices as correlates of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was conducted in Anambra State which is one of the five states in South-Eastern Nigeria. The choice of Anambra State for the study is informed by undesirable behaviour and laxities in job commitment of teachers probably due to unfairness, misconduct and incompetence of some principals to control their activities. The population of the study comprised 7,248 teachers in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for this study comprised 726 teachers drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique.

Two sets of instruments titled ''Ethical Leadership Practices Questionnaire (ELPQ)'' and ''Teachers' Job Commitment Scale (TJCS)'' were used for data collection. The two sets of the instruments were structured by the researcher based on insight gained from literature and consultation with experts. The instruments have Sections A, B and C. Section A focused on the demographic data of the respondents such as gender and age. Section B of the instrument ELPQ measured ethical leadership practices among principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument contained 30 items spread in three clusters A, B and C. Cluster A which focuses on ethical orientation practice contained 10 items, Cluster B contained 10 items on ethical power-sharing practice and Cluster C which centred on ethical guidance practice contains 10 items. Those items are placed on a four-point rating of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Section C of the instrument TJCS which was adapted by Oredein and Ebo (2021) was structured to measure job commitment among teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument contains 24 items placed on a four-point rating of four-point rating of Always (A), Seldom (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N), weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The face and construct validation of the instruments were determined. The face validation of the instrument was determined by three experts. The suggestions and comments of the experts were effected and incorporated in the final copy of the instrument. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach alpha method. The data used for computing the reliability indices were obtained from the copies of the three instruments administered and collected from 30 teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The choice of Enugu State was because school principals and teachers in Anambra State and Enugu State share similar characteristics and behaviour.

The data obtained were subjected to test for internal consistency using Cronbach alpha. It was considered appropriate in order to determine the level of homogeneity of the items in the clusters. This yielded co-efficient values of 0.82, 0.76 and 0.79 for clusters A, B and C of ELPQ with the overall reliability index being 0.79, while coefficient value of 0.82 was obtained for TJCS. Thus, the researcher considered the instruments to be reliable for the study.

Direct delivery method used by the researcher and five research assistants for data collection. A total of 726 copies of instruments were distributed and 715 copies of questionnaires were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 98 percent return rate. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses. For the research questions, the coefficient r and the size of the relationship was interpreted using the correlation coefficient recommended by Alsagr (2021), as follows

Coefficient	**Interpretation**
.00- .19	Weak Relationship
.20- .39	Fair Relationship
.40- .69	Moderate Relationship
.70- .89	Strong Relationship
.90-.99	Very Strong Relationship
1	Perfect

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if the exact p-value is equal to or greater than significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected but if exact p-value is less than significant value of 0.05, the null hypotheses was rejected. All data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.

Results

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

Table 1: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices and Teachers' Job Commitment

Variables	n	Ethical Orientation Practices	Teachers' Job Commitment	Remarks
Ethical Orientation Practices	715	1.00	0.841	Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Commitment	715	0.841	1.00	

Table 1 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.841 was obtained. This showed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicated that increase in principals' ethical orientation practices will strongly lead to teachers' job commitment.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Ethical Power-Sharing Practices and Teachers' Job Commitment

Variables	n	Ethical Power-Sharing Practices	Teachers' Job Commitment	Remarks
Ethical Power-Sharing Practices	715	1.00	0.736	Strong Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Commitment	715	0.736	1.00	

As shown in Table 2, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.736 was obtained. This showed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicated that improvement on principals' ethical power-sharing practices will strongly contribute to teachers' job commitment.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices and Teachers' Job Commitment

Variables	n	Ethical Guidance Practices	Teachers' Job Commitment	Remarks
Ethical Guidance Practices	715	1.00	0.612	Moderate Positive Relationship
Teachers' Job Commitment	715	0.612	1.00	

Table 3 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.612 was obtained. This showed that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicated that increase in principals' ethical guidance practices will moderately lead to teachers' job commitment.

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

Table 4: The Summary of Pearson (r) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Orientation Practices and Teachers' Job Commitment

Variables	N	Ethical Orientation Practices	Teachers' Job Commitment	*P*-value	∞	Remarks
Ethical Orientation Practice	715	1.00	0.841			
				0.000	.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Commitment	715	0.841	1.00			

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

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

Table 5: The Summary of Pearson (r) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Power-Sharing Practices and Teachers' Job Commitment

Variables	N	Ethical Power-Sharing Practices	Teachers' Job Commitment	*P*-value	∞	Remarks
Ethical Power-Sharing Practice	715	1.00	0.736			
				0.000	.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Commitment	715	0.736	1.00			

Result in Table 5 revealed that the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the *p*-value is less the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State

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

Table 6: The Summary of Pearson (r) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Ethical Guidance Practices and Teachers' Job Commitment

Variables	N	Ethical Guidance Practices	Teachers' Job Commitment	*P*-value	∞	Remarks
Ethical Guidance Practice	715	1.00	0.612			
				0.000	.05	Rejected
Teachers' Job Commitment	715	0.612	1.00			

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

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The possible reason for this finding is that principals who display ethical orientation practices treat subordinates with respect, honesty and fairness which could account for the strong relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This agreed with the finding of Geidam et al (2021) which showed that ethical orientation, practices had strong positive relationship with organizational commitment. This disagreed with the finding of Amoah et al (2022) which revealed that ethical orientation leadership practices had moderate positive with health workers' commitment level. The disagreement between the findings could be attributed to difference in geographical location. Teachers who are shown genuine care, valued and supported to ensure that their needs are met through ethical orientation practices reciprocate by strong job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals through ethical orientation practices treat all staff without favouritism which might contribute to the strong relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also found that there is significant relationship between principals' ethical orientation practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It is through ethical orientation practices that principals show genuine care for the welfare of staff and sympathizes with them when they have professional problems which possibly account for significant relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This supported the finding of Geidam et al (2021) which showed that ethical orientation practices had significant relationship with organizational commitment. This sustained the finding of Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) which showed that ethical people orientation practices had a statistically significant relationship with employees' job commitment.

The result of the study revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding could be explained by the fact that principals who engage in ethical power-sharing practices allow teachers to a say in decision making, listens and integrate their ideas in the final decisions which give them a sense of belongings and thereby contribute to strong relationship with their job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in disagreement with the finding of Mitonga-Monga et al (2023) which revealed that there was moderate relationship between ethical power-sharing practices and employees' job commitment in manufacturing company. The studies were conducted in difference geographical location using diverse participants which could account for the disagreement between the findings. Teachers who feel their opinions and contributions in formulating school rules are valued, have high tendency to adhere to the rules and thereby exhibit strong job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also showed that there is significant relationship between principals' ethical power-sharing practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in line with the finding of Geidam et al (2021) which showed that ethical power-sharing practices had significant relationship with organizational commitment. It is through ethical power-sharing practices that principals constitute committee to use as

platform in delegating authority to staff and run an open door policy that encourage them to make inputs on school affairs in which teachers reciprocate by significantly exhibiting job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

The finding of the study revealed that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The possible explanation for this finding is that principals' ethical guidance practices enable them formulate rules, expectations and rewards which might moderately contribute to teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This affirmed the finding of Shinwari et al (2024) which showed that ethical guidance leadership practices had a direct moderate relationship with job commitment. The similarity in time span of within a year could contribute to the agreement with the finding. This contradicted the finding of Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) which showed that ethical guidance practices had a strong relationship with employees' job commitment. The difference in time span of about nine years which could bring changes in ethical guidance practices could contribute to the agreement with the finding. Principals ensures that subordinates know conduct and responsibilities expected of them through ethical guidance practices which perhaps result in the moderate relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also discovered that there is significant relationship between principals' ethical guidance practices and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This upheld the finding of Shinwari et al (2024) which showed that ethical guidance leadership practices had a significant relationship with job commitment. It is through ethical guidance practices that principals develop and explain code of conduct to guide the behaviour of staff which might be connected to the significant relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conclusion

Following the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals' ethical leadership practices have positive and significant relationship with teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals' ethical leadership practices of orientation, power-sharing and guidance create supportive and peaceful environment that induce the job commitment of teachers. Teachers who are shown empathy, involved in managing school affairs, guided and respected by principals reciprocate by exhibiting positive job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

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

1. State Ministry of Education should develop policy to guide and help principals to improve ethical orientation practices for enhancing teachers' job commitment.
2. Principals should give top priority to ethical power-sharing practices to boost their morale of teachers for high job commitment.
3. Post Primary Schools Service Commission should organize annual capacity building programmes for principals to up-date their skills and knowledge of ethical guidance practices to improve teachers' job commitment.

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