



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHERS' JOB INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE

By

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Abstract

Principals and teachers are expected to work hand in gloves in the school administrative process. Thus, this study investigated the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses tested at 0.05 significance level. Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of 16,650 teachers in secondary schools in Abia State. Multi-stage sampling techniques were used to draw a sample size of 639 teachers being 4% of the population, representing the entire population. The instruments for Principals' Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PEIQ) was adapted by the researchers and Teachers Job Involvement Questionnaire (TJIQ) were adopted based on the already existing inventory. The instruments were validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and the reliability to ascertain the consistency of the instrument was established using Chronbach alpha reliability index which yielded an aggregate coefficient of 0.78 for (PEIQ) and 0.84 for (TJIQ). Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was utilized for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that there was a high positive relationship between principals' self-management, self-relationship and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. The study also revealed that these principals' emotional intelligence components have significant relationships with teachers' job involvement. The findings of the study amongst others recommended that principals should be encouraged by all stakeholders in education to demonstrate relationship management behaviours to facilitate mutual interactions with the teachers.

Keyword: Emotional intelligence, self-relationship, self-management, teachers' job involvement, principals, secondary schools

Introduction

Principals are in charge of secondary school management; they direct the way things are done in the schools. Leadership in secondary schools hangs on the shoulders of the principals. Onuorah and Egbo





(2020), asserted that principals in secondary schools are the chief executive officers of the school and the head of the school management team hence should possess adequate administrative skills. Management of secondary school involves an efficient administrative process through effective coordination. Principals' leadership capabilities extend beyond academic expertise and administrative skills and cuts across all leadership dispositions and components including emotional intelligence (EI). Psychologists believe that humans are guided by emotions stressing that emotions define individuals' behaviour and control virtually every aspect of what one does.

Manikandi and Sasikumar (2017) described emotional intelligence (EI) as the ability, capacity, skill or a self-perceived ability, to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, others, and groups. Obiekwe and Ogbo (2020) viewed emotional intelligence as a person's capacity to understand his personal feelings and that of others and to manage emotions within themselves and in their relationships with others. Thus, emotional intelligence identifies the sensitivity of individuals and ability to predict one's behaviour in cognizance of the temperament. Therefore, principals' administration in secondary schools ought to involve the ability of recognizing and understanding emotions in oneself as well as emotions in others and to use the awareness to guide the thoughts and behaviors of teachers and the entire school. Sivakalai and Nalini (2017), observed emotional intelligence as a set of experiences, including self-awareness, mood management, self-motivation, empathy, and managing relationships. Goleman (2023) further listed some benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace to include; improved communication, conflict resolution, overall well-being in personal and professional contexts, enhanced Leadership Skills, improved teamwork collaboration, adaptability and resilience, increased empathy, stress management, increased job satisfaction, and career advancement.

In a different perception, Goleman (2023) enumerated self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and adaptability as core components of emotional intelligence which were adopted extensively in the study. Thus, emotional intelligence (EI) is one of such essential skills that stands out as a crucial element of a principal's successful leadership acumen. As such principals of secondary schools should possess a high level of emotional intelligence skills and dispositions that will be utilized effectively to motivate optimal job involvement of the teachers. To understand and properly devise means of motivating others, there is a need for understanding of oneself which can be obtained through self-awareness. Self-awareness is the understanding of personal dispositions of oneself at different situations and circumstances. Self-awareness is evident in leadership practices and by extension the knowledge of oneself to a greater extent facilitates self-management. Social awareness is evident with external recognition of oneself attitudes towards others. Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz and Fernández-Lasarte (2018) opined social awareness as the ability of an individual to enter and sustain interpersonal relationships satisfactorily with other people. Relationship management is an emotional intelligence component that helps the principals to foster effective communication, manage conflicts, facilitate teamwork, and encourage collaboration in the school environment to motivate teachers' job



involvement. Finally, Adaptability refers to an individual's ability, skill, disposition, willingness and motivation to change or fit the different tasks, social and environmental features (Kodden, 2020). This work will focus mainly on two important components of emotional intelligence in relation to job involvement: self-management and relationship management. That is, the relationship between principals' self-management and relationship management, and teachers' job involvement.

Self-management is the ability of an individual to have personal control over one's feelings and attitude. Self-management involves the efforts of one to plan, organize and coordinate oneself properly at every point in time. This is essential to administrative heads, especially school principals, to properly engage teachers to job activities and other subordinates. Bakker (2017) viewed self-management as how employees manage their behaviour, performance and discipline themselves when they do not reach necessary personal standards. Unsworth and Mason (2016) opined that self-management provides employees with strategies that improve performances without external intervention. Thus, it can be deduced that self-management enables principals to structure work processes, motivate and facilitate behaviours which enhances productivity in the school. It is very crucial for principals to create a supportive work environment that will motivate teachers to job involvement and keep them sustained. Through self-management, administrative roles can be coordinated selflessly, encouraging zeal from the teachers involved in operations to be effectively engaged and utilized in school activities.

Anyamene (2021) opined that self-management technique is cognitive behavioural skills used by individuals with the help of therapists to maintain self-motivation and achieve personal goals. In further expression, Anyamene pointed out that self-management technique represents an individual, exerting control over some aspect of decision making and selected behaviour. In other words, self-management encourages oneself, facilitates leadership skills and supports effective decision making. Dana, Ashley and Newman (2018), asserted that self-management is a skill that may be learned and when improved can lead to more self-dependence. Inner comportment of individuals through self-management gives a positive outward reflection of attitude towards others which are evident in interactions as such enhancing social awareness between superiors and subordinates at the workplace. In a secondary school administrative process where the principal could not relate to the teachers cordially in terms of managing personal emotions, it could result in chaos in the administrative system thus leading to disruption of school activities and demoralizing of teachers at school.

Relationship management is another essential element of emotional intelligence (EI) that enables managers to involve subordinates actively in operational activities. Principals in discharge of administrative duties can adopt this approach for effective teachers' job involvement, job satisfaction and achievement of educational goals and objectives. Relationship management can increase brand loyalty between principals and teachers. Through relationship management, more stakeholders can be attracted, conflicts minimized, conducive work environment and peaceful coexistence. Principals influence teachers to participate actively in school activities and engagement through relationship management



both in curricula and extracurricular activities, teachers are motivated to make meaningful contributions in administrative processes. Relationship management influences teachers' job involvement and job satisfaction for enhanced productivity. However, inefficiencies can also be spotted through relationship management as contributions are made and received in good faith.

Igbokwe, Egboka, Thompson, Etele, Anyanwu, Okeke-James and Uzoekwe (2023) defined relationship management as the ability to use one's own awareness of self- emotions to manage interactions with other people successfully. They further stressed that it is also a process of regulation. Deducted from their definition, relationship management can be viewed as a component of emotional intelligence (EI) that enables regulations of administrative activities for proper engagement and effective utilization of all involved for enhanced performances. Principals through professional relationship management can successfully assign roles to teachers for active job involvement that yields all-round productive education. When teachers are actively involved with complementary benefits, dedication and commitment are induced. Teachers are triggered to employ more effort and become more resourceful in the system, whenever they experience a positive social corporate social relationship from the school management. Relationship management is a vital tool in the hands of principals. In school administrative situations where relationship management is lacking, teachers and principals could hardly get along in working mutually and cordially for efficiency.

Teachers are at the center of any educational system. They play a vital role in shaping the minds of future generations. The quality of education is heavily dependent on the quality of teachers, as such teachers' job involvement is a critical component of any effort to improve educational outcomes. Onuoha and Odoh (2020) opined that teachers are the pillars of any educational system and should have adequate investment in their education. Teachers are very important in any educational system as no proper education can ever be achieved without adequately trained and motivated teachers. Teachers should be actively involved in all the activities in the school environment, because apparently every educational activity in the system revolves around them. Hence, teachers' job involvement becomes very crucial in the school administrative structure, process and system. Akudo (2021) asserted job involvement as an employee's job related significant behaviour which shows the degree to which an individual is personally involved with his job. Teachers' job involvement cuts across teachers' active participation in duties and responsibilities in the school system towards achieving the goals and objectives of the school. Sethi and Mittal (2016) described job involvement as the degree at which an employee identifies with a job, actively participates in it, and considers the job performance more important to self-worth. In all educational systems, the teacher's job involvement remains a major factor in determining school effectiveness and learning outcome.

Despite various interventions by the government to the teachers such as: payment of minimum wage, workshops and training, palliative payment, promotions and personnel appraisal to improve teachers' job involvement, there has been limited focus on the role of school leadership, particularly the





emotional intelligence of principals in influencing teachers' involvement and engagement in school activities and programmes. It seems that principals' inability to properly engage the teachers leads to low level of job involvement among secondary school teachers in Abia State. Perhaps, lack of emotional intelligence dispositions from the principals may be related to why teachers exhibit poor job involvement in their responsibilities. Thus, this situation necessitates the study to address this gap by examining the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study investigated the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia state. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the:

1. Relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.
2. Relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Method

Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The area of study is Abia State, Nigeria. Abia State is one of the thirty-six (36) States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the South-East geopolitical zone. The population of the study consisted of 16,650 teachers in the 925 secondary schools of the 17 Local Government Areas of Abia State, namely: Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Bende, Ikwuano, Isiukwuato, Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Ukwu East, Ukwu West, Obingwa, Osisioma, Ohaofia, Umuahia North, Umuahia South, Umunneochi and Ugwunagbo. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select 4% of the entire population comprising 660 teachers, representing sample





size of the study. Firstly, a random sampling technique by balloting was used to select 6 out of the 17 Local Governments Areas in Abia State. Secondly, 10 schools were selected from each of the local government areas through simple random sampling, totaling 60 schools. Thirdly, 11 teachers were selected from each of the selected schools consisting of a total number of 660 respondents. Justification for the use of 4% is according to Flyer (2023) who opined that in a very large population, 1-20% sample size can be considered as a fair representative of the entire population.

Meanwhile, two instruments were used for data collection, 'Principals' Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PEIQ) and Teachers' Job Involvement Questionnaire (TJIQ). The PEIQ was adapted from an already existing inventory of Goleman (2023) while TJIQ is an adopted questionnaire for measuring teachers' job involvement. TJIQ was structured in a 4-point scale whereby each item is assigned a four-point scale of: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. TJIQ contains 30 items on teachers' job involvement. The instruments were validated by three experts, two Lecturers from Department of Educational Management and Policy and one Lecturer from Department of Educational Foundation Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. It was obtained by administering a single test to 25 selected teachers from 5 secondary schools in Anambra State. The internal consistency of the items in each of the clusters were obtained using Cronbach alpha statistics. The reliability coefficients for the two clusters of the PEIQ were 0.82 and 0.78. These alpha (α) coefficient results showed an aggregate coefficient of 0.78. For the TJIQ, a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained for the instrument and was considered reliable. Therefore, the instruments were deemed reliable. The researcher administered the 660 copies of the instruments directly to the respondents with the help of six (6) research assistants. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions and hypotheses.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 1: Pearson r on the relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State

| Source of Variation | N | R | Remark |
|---------------------|-----|------|----------------------------|
| Self-management | 639 | 0.79 | |
| Job Involvement | | | High Positive Relationship |





Table 1 shows Pearson's $r=0.79$, indicating that there is a high positive relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 2: Test of significance of Pearson’s correlation between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State

| Source of Variation | N | r | p-value | Remark |
|---------------------|-----|------|---------|--------|
| Self-management | 639 | 0.79 | 0.00 | Sig |
| Job Involvement | | | | |

Analysis in Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. The calculated r (0.79) had P .value <0.05 . The 2nd null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 3: Pearson r on the relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State

| Source of Variation | N | R | Remark |
|-------------------------|-----|------|----------------------------|
| Relationship management | 639 | 0.68 | High Positive Relationship |
| Job Involvement | | | |

As shown in Table 3, there is a high positive relationship existing between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r , which is 0.68.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 4: Test of significance of Pearson’s correlation between relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State





| Source of Variation | N | r | p-value | Remark |
|-------------------------|-----|------|---------|--------|
| Relationship Management | 639 | 0.68 | | |
| Job Involvement | | | 0.00 | Sig |

Table 4 shows that there is a significant correlation between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. The calculated r (0.68) had P -value < 0.05 . The 4th null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

The finding of the current study shows that there is a high positive relationship between principals' self-management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This highlights the importance of principals' ability to regulate their emotions, maintain focus under pressure, to exhibit reliability in promoting a committed and motivated teaching staff. This finding concurred with Anyamene (2021) who opined that self-management technique represents an individual, exerting control over some aspect of decision making and selected behaviour. Anyamene observed that self-management techniques are effective treatment techniques for reducing aggressive behaviour tendencies in school. This implies that principals' who observed self-management to regulate their actions will be able to engage the teachers effectively in the school system for improved teachers' job involvement. Self-management can facilitate self-regulatory behavior such as consistency, emotional control, and a proactive approach which are more likely to foster school cultures that promote teacher empowerment, ownership, and involvement.

The finding of this study is also revealed that self-management related to teachers' job involvement. It enables school principals to create a supportive work environment by managing personal emotions that could interfere with the school administrative activities and policy. This finding is in support with Dana, Ashley and Newman (2018) who noted that self-management gives a positive outward reflection of attitude towards others, evident in interactions. This could enhance awareness between the principals and teachers in the school system. The opinion of Anton (2025) also support the findings. Anton agreed that self-management as an emotional intelligence skill is a deciding factor in the quality of principals' leadership and management practices which helps them to coordinate their personal thoughts and feelings especially in time of pressure and stress.





Relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State

This study found that there is a high positive relationship existing between principals' relationship management and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This finding underscores the importance of school principals' relationship skills in fostering teacher motivation and engagement for job involvement. Relationship management as one of the key component of emotional intelligence influence inspirational leadership, facilitates conflict management and workplace collaboration. When principals actively and skillfully manage their relationships with teachers, they establish trust, encourage shared vision, and create a collegial environment that supports teachers' psychological involvement in their work. The findings of this study agreed with Obuh and Onuosa (2025) who noted that social awareness enhances decision making, empathy, and inclusivity and compliments relationship management in improving interpersonal relations, trust building and teamwork. The study also showed that emotionally intelligent principals with relationship management skills, lead to maintain a supportive school environments, which directly influence teacher involvement and commitment.

The findings also indicated principals' relationship management has a positive significant relationship with teacher's job involvement. This means that principals who manage their relationship with the teachers cordially are capable of involving the teachers in the job effectively. Their findings confirm that leadership behaviors like mentorship, supportiveness, and effective communication foster a sense of belonging and job involvement. This finding concurred with Kurmar (2020) who noted relationship management enhances the ability to manage interpersonal relationships, fostering positive team dynamics, promotes cooperation and collaboration in administration. This implies that teachers can work in synergy with the principals in pursuit of the stated goals and objectives of the school and get actively involved in the job to attain success and maintain efficiency.

Recommendations

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

1. Educational authorities, including Abia State Ministry of Education and Abia State Post Primary School Service Commission should organize regular leadership development programs for principals that are focused on emotional intelligence, reflective practice, and self-assessment techniques as such trainings will assist the principals to understand their own behaviors, attitudes, and decision-making patterns, which in turn will improve their interactions and involvement of teachers in the job.





2. Abia State Ministry of Education and Abia State Post Primary School Service Commission and other stakeholders should prioritize self-management training programmes for principals. Workshops, seminars, and continuous professional development courses should be designed for the principals. These will help them to acquire basic self-management skills that will facilitate ability to control pressure and stress and make informed decisions aligning with goals and objectives of the school.
3. Principals should be encouraged by all stakeholders in education to demonstrate relationship management behaviours to facilitate mutual interactions with the teachers. This will help to build positive human relations and empathy with the teachers and minimize mood swings and conflicts in the school system. This will motivate the teachers to be actively involved in their job.

Conclusion

The study established a significant and positive relationship between principals' emotional intelligence—particularly self-management and relationship management—and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools across Abia State. These findings underscore the importance of emotional competencies in school leadership, reinforcing the notion that emotionally intelligent principals foster a collaborative and motivating school environment conducive to teacher engagement. The empirical evidence highlights the need for targeted professional development initiatives that enhance principals' emotional intelligence skills. Strengthening such competencies will not only improve teacher involvement but also enhance overall school performance. In sum, emotionally intelligent leadership remains critical for promoting a supportive, committed, and productive teaching workforce.

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