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CORRELATE OF PRINCIPALS' ETHICAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS AND TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study determined the correlation between teachers' perception of principals' ethical leadership dimensions and their job commitment in state government owned public secondary schools in Anambra State. To this end, the study was guided by 4 research questions. The population consisted of 6,328 teachers in the 257 state government owned public secondary schools in the State. A sample of 672 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using two instruments; Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) which was adapted from Yilmaz (2006) and Teachers' Commitment Scale (TCS) adapted from Allen, Meyer and Smith (1993). The instruments were validated by three experts. Internal consistency reliability index of 0.75, 0.68, 0.71 and 0.74 were obtained for the four sections of ELS with an overall reliability index of 0.72 while 0.84 was obtained for TCM using Cronbach's alpha method. Data analysis was done using Pearson's correlation analysis for the research questions. P-value was used to determine the significance of the correlation. The findings revealed among others that a substantial positive correlation of 0.69 existed between teachers' perception of principals' communicative ethics and their job commitment, a substantial positive correlation of 0.78 existed between teachers' perception of principals' climatic ethics and their job commitment, a very high positive correlation of 0.84 existed between teachers' perception of principals' ethics in decision making and their job commitment. The study recommended among others that secondary school principals should constantly display ethical behaviours such as being

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selfless, humble, patient and just in their dealings with teachers in order to stimulate teachers' sense of belonging to the school.

Keywords: leadership; ethical leadership; commitment; job commitment

1. Introduction

For nations to rise to a standard worthy enough to compete favourably in the league of Nations, they first of all, should have manpower in adequate quantity and quality. Teachers are responsible for the education of this manpower in line with the expectations of the society. Teachers are employees who implement the educational policies of the state in the light of the country's goals. Balci (2001) sees the teacher as an instrument for learning, someone who prepares tests, enables discipline, and someone who is a defender and representative of middle class morality. To successfully carry out the roles associated with the teaching profession, the teacher needs to have positive attitudes towards the school as an organization. Studies have shown a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and teachers' efficiency (Strong, 2007), and teachers' commitment ranks very high among these relevant attitudes.

Commitment can be seen as the process through which people become willing to give their loyalty and energy to a particular social system (Mart, 2013). Teachers' commitment according Mart is the emotional bond between the teacher and the school. Teacher's commitment can be defined using what Douglas (2010) described as a teacher's identification with and involvement in a particular school. This commitment can be characterized by a strong personal belief in and acceptance of the school goals and values, a desire to exert oneself for the betterment of the school, and a strong will to remain with the school. Ezeugbor (2015) defined teacher's organizational commitment as the psychological identification of the individual teacher with the school and the intention of that teacher to maintain his membership of the school, and show all personal interest.

High level of teachers' commitment is essential for organizational success. Teachers with high level of commitment see themselves as an integral part of the school, what threatens the school endangers them as well, they do their best to perform their duties better, and work for the school as if it belonged to them (Oberholster & Taylor, 2009). In contrast, teachers with low level of commitment are less faithful to the school, see themselves as outsiders and are more concerned with personal success than with the success of the school as a whole.

For teachers' optimal commitment to their school, strong and value-based effective leadership in form of ethical leadership is required from principals. An ethical leader is someone who esteems ethical values, gives importance to assessment of employees' ethical behaviour as a key factor and can integrate leadership abilities with ethical behaviours (Aydın, 2010). Based on ethical principles in their conduct, ethical leaders respect their employees' rights by treating them fairly. Moreover, they make efforts to develop the sense of justice in the organization by including their subordinates in the decision-making process and helping them in improving their job vocational goal (Çelik, 2013; Demirdağ & Ekmekçiolu, 2015). Yilmaz (2005) in his study developed four ethical leadership dimensions which were adopted for the current study. They are: Climatic Ethics, Communicative Ethics, Behavioural Ethics and Decisional ethics.

Climatic ethics according to Bağrıyanık and Can (2017), is concerned with creating an enabling environment for staff to work, encouraging and motivating staff to do their job, establishing clear rules, genuinely caring about, respecting and supporting subordinates and where possible ensuring that their needs are met. Communicative ethics consist of behaviours such as accepting one's failures, not being selfish, being fair, being constructive in discussions, being patient, respectful, sincere and modest. Behavioural ethics consists of behaviours like self-awareness, being veracious, honest and courageous, protecting individual rights and being respectful for values (Yılmaz, 2005). Decisional ethics examines behaviours in terms of making morally correct decisions, to be able to differentiate what is correct and what is wrong, and being ethical in making decision in the management of the organization (Turhan, in Bağrıyanık & Can 2017).

Management of organization such as the school by a leader with relevant moral values, norms, rules, integrity, and high sense of responsibility and discipline is important to ensure that teachers work in a harmonious and disciplined manner. According to Handford and Leithwood (2013), teachers are more dedicated to principals they perceive to be influenced by practices such as effective leadership, open communication, consistency, reliability, respect and integrity. Principals' display of these ethical behaviours would likely encourage teachers to be more committed to the school.

2. Statement of the Problem

Educational leaders such as the principals have the responsibility of creating effective learning communities, ones that are built and sustained by ethical practices such as honesty, tolerance, modesty, determination, righteousness and flexibility. However, the situation in secondary schools in Nigeria and indeed Anambra state shows that most principals appear to be characterised by various forms of unethical behaviours and practices. Principals in some cases fail to carry the teachers along by their failure to appreciate the personal worth of the teachers. Some principals have been accused of mismanagement of financial resources that were meant for school improvement. Allegations of principals collecting illegal levies from students in public schools in Anambra state are rampant. This appears to be why the state governor, Dr. Willie Obiano in October, 2016, ordered principals of public secondary schools in the state to return all illegal levies collected from students or risk being sanctioned. These series of unethical behaviours from principals are probably the reason most teachers are poorly committed to the school, as could be observed in their poor attitude to work,

absenteeism, lack of dedication to teaching and carrying out assignments, and unauthorized movement from duty posts.

Studies have also reported disciplinary cases in secondary schools in Anambra State. Indiscipline in school which is manifested in the forms of; lateness to school, cheating, bullying, insolence, failure to do assignments, insubordination, aggression, damage to school materials and facilities, failure to obey prefects, untidy dressing habits and other acts capable of disrupting school activities can be associated with teacherrelated factors, such as teachers' level of commitment. These situations made it imperative to determine the correlation between teachers' perception of principals' ethical leadership dimensions and their job commitment in state government owned secondary schools in Anambra state.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the correlation between teachers' perception of principals' ethical leadership dimensions and their job commitment in state government owned public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined:

- 1. The nature of correlation between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' commitment.
- 2. The nature of correlation between principals' climatic ethics and teachers' commitment.
- 3. The nature of correlation between principals' ethics in decision making and teachers' commitment.
- 4. The nature of correlation between principals' behavioural ethics and teachers' commitment.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research question guided the study

- 1. What is the nature of correlation between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' commitment?
- 2. What is the nature of correlation between principals' climatic ethics and teachers' commitment?
- 3. What is the nature of correlation between principals' ethics in decision making and teachers' commitment?
- 4. What is the nature of correlation between principals' behavioural ethics and teachers' commitment?

3. Method

A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. This design according to Nworgu (2015) is one which seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. The study was guided by four research questions. The study was carried out in Anambra state on a population of 6,382 teachers in the six

education zones of the state. The sample consisted 672 teachers drawn using multistage sampling procedure. Questionnaire instruments titled Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) and Teachers' Commitment Scale (TCS) were used to collect data for the study. The instruments were validated by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 and 0.84 were obtained for ELS and TCS using Cronbach's Alpha method. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

4. Results

Source of Variation	N	Communicative ethics r	Teachers' commitment r	P- value	Remark
Communicative ethics	651	1.00	0.69	0.000	Substantial Positive Relationship
Teachers' commitment	651	0.69	1.00		

Table 1: Pearson r on Principals' Communicative Ethics and Teachers' Commitment

Table 1 shows that, there is a substantial positive relationship of 0.69 existing between teachers' perception of principals' communicative ethics and teachers' commitment.

Table 2: Pearson r on Principals' Climatic Ethics
and Teachers' Commitment

Source of Variation	Ν	Climatic ethics r	Teachers' commitment r	P- value	Remark
Climatic ethics	651	1.00	0.78	0.000	Substantial Positive Relationship
Teachers' commitment	651	0.78	1.00		

Table 2 indicates that, there is substantial positive relationship of 0.78 existing between teachers' perception of principals' climatic ethics and teachers' commitment.

Table 3: Pearson r on Teachers' Perception of

Principals' Ethics in Decision Making and Teachers' Commitment					
Source of	Ν	Ethics in	Teachers'	Р-	Remark
Variation		decision making	commitment r	value	
Ethics in	651	1.00	0.94		
decision making	651	1.00	0.84	0.000	Very High Positive Relationship
Teachers'	651	0.84	1.00		
commitment					

Table 3 reveals that, there is a very high positive relationship of 0.84 existing between teachers' perception of principals' ethics in decision making and teachers' commitment.

Principals' Behavioural Ethics and Teachers' Commitment					
Source of	Ν	Behavioural	Teachers'	P-	Remark
Variation		ethics	commitment r	value	
Behavioural	651	1.00	0.77		
ethics	051	1.00	0.77	0.000	Substantial Positive Relationship
Teachers'	651	0.77	1.00	0.000	
commitment	031	0.77	1.00		

Table 4: Pearson r on Teachers' Perception of

Table 4 indicates that, there is substantial positive relationship of 0.77 existing between teachers' perception of principals' behavioural ethics and teachers' commitment.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study as indicated in Table 1 shows that there is a moderate positive relationship of 0.69 existing between teachers' perception of principals' communicative ethics and teachers' commitment. This finding is natural because when teachers perceive their principal as being selfless and sincere towards them, treats them equally and accord them the respect which they deserve, correspondingly, teachers will be happy with the school and will feel a great sense of belonging. This will make them support the leadership and the goals of the school which will help the school in achieving desired objectives. Again, when principals create the foundation of confidence among the teachers by being sincere, fair and respectful to them, and can guide and encourage them by communicating ethical principles through their behaviours, teachers will be obliged to sustain membership of the school.

The finding of this study is consistent with the results obtained from previous conducted studies. For instance, Van den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen, and Six, (2009) in their study found that employees' perception of their leader's moral values had a potential impact on the level of employees' commitment. In line with this, Becerra, (2010); Othman and Wanlabeh, (2012) and Vogel, (2012) emphasised that an ethical leader that is sincere in maintaining the well-being of teachers, caring and considerate, will encourage teachers to feel more committed to the school and feel the values of togetherness with their employer. The finding is also in line with that of Shafer, (2009) who found that employee's commitment is higher when the climate is perceived as benevolent based on the observation that the employees will feel more attached to an organization that supports values such as caring and respect for employees and community. The finding also supports that of Bağrıyanık and Can (2017); Güzel and Ayazlar (2014) who found that the display of behaviours covering ethics and justice by principals will decrease teachers' possible negative attitude and behaviors and increase teachers willingness to stay with the school.

The finding displayed in Table 2 shows that there is a substantial positive correlation of 0.78 existing between the teachers' perception of principals' climatic ethics and teachers' commitment. Climatic ethics is concerned with being fair, constructive in discussion making, creating a conducive and friendly environment,

motivating and rewarding the achievement of staff. An increase in teachers' perception of principals' exhibition of these behaviours will increase teachers' willingness to continue working for the school and vice versa. This finding is in tandem with the finding of Khoza (2004). Khoza identified in his study that managers and school leadership such as principals of secondary schools can motivate workers' commitment by providing a work environment that satisfies workers inner needs while achieving objectives of the organization. Also researchers such as Becerra, (2010); Klein (2012); Othman & Wanlabeh, (2012), Ezeugbor (2015) found that ethical leadership behaviour of school leaders greatly influence teachers organizational commitment.

The finding of this study is also in congruence with the findings of Toor & Ofori (2009), they found that ethical leadership is more likely to bring about leader's effectiveness, willingness of employees to put in extra efforts, employees' job satisfaction, and an atmosphere for ethical leadership to flourish; which will ultimately lead to increased employees' willingness to stay with the organization. In line with this finding, Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger (2010) suggests that leaders with strong ethical commitments can have impact on the willingness of employee to stay with the organization. When followers perceive top manager's good moral image, enthusiasm about the organization and the willingness to carry everyone along, this perception may be translated into a strong appreciation of top management by employees within an organization (Ruiz, Ruiz, & Martinez, in Sofia, Ahmad, & Djumilah 2017).

The finding of this study is also similar to that of Bağrıyanık and Can (2017). According to the result of their study, when school leaders display ethical leadership behaviors in higher level, teachers feel less anger and anxiety, thereby leading to higher organizational commitment. Bağrıyanık and Can further indicated that when teachers' ethical leadership perception of their principal increase, not only organizational commitment level but also its subcategories also increases. Güzel and Ayazlar (2014) also found similar results. Their results indicate that performance of behaviours covering ethics and justice by school leaders will decrease teachers' possible negative attitude and behaviors and increase teachers willingness to stay with the school.

The finding of this study in Table 3 shows that there is a very high positive correlation of 0.84 existing between the teachers' perception of principals' ethics in decision making and teachers' commitment. This means that the more principals display behaviours such as making morally right decisions, being systematic and open minded in decision making and allows teachers participate in decision making, the more teachers will always want to remain part of the school. The finding of this study corroborates with the findings of other scholars. For instance, Kim, Tavitiyaman, and Kim (2009) conducted a study on hotel employees in Thailand and found that hotel managers who practice power sharing with employees are likely to encourage their employees to provide better service to the organization as well as improved commitment. In the school context, the finding of this study is related to that of Abg Hut (2005), Zulkafli (2008) and Mihelic, Lipicnik and Tekavcic, (2010). They found that

the level of power sharing between the leaders of the school with teachers remained at a low level and have an impact on the decline in the level of commitment of teachers.

The finding is also in agreement with the findings of Ezeugbor (2015), she found that teachers perceived the four sub-scales (communicative ethics, climatic ethics, ethics in decision making and behavioural ethics) of principals' ethical leadership behaviours as having a positive influence on their commitment. Zhu, Norman, Peng, Riggio, & Sosik, (2012) summarized that ethical leadership behaviour has a positive effect on increasing the organization's commitment to a higher level. The finding is also consistent with studies conducted by Becerra, (2010); Klein (2012); Othman and Wanlabeh, (2012). These researchers found that ethical leadership contributed greatly to the organizational commitment. The finding also supports that of Sofia, Ahmad and Djumilah (2017) who found that positive behavior of leaders result to employee affective commitment to the organization, and sharing the same values with the organization.

In Table 4, the finding showed that there is a substantial positive correlation of 0.77 existing between the teachers' perception of principals' behavioural ethics and teachers' commitment. This finding indicates that when teachers perceive their principals as being truthful, knowledgeable, kind and honest in their leadership, it will inspire teachers to enjoy their relation with the school, in terms of increasing their confidence and willingness to work towards achieving the goals of the school. Principals' demonstration of a reliable, fair and egalitarian behaviour in the school will led to positive changes in teachers' continuance commitment. This finding agrees with Eroluer and Yılmaz cited in Ghamrawi, (2011), they found that employees' positive perception of ethical leadership positively influenced the organizational climate and their job commitment. They also suggested that an employee-oriented and egalitarian leadership behaviour in the organization positively affect the employees' thoughts on the working atmosphere of the organization.

The finding is in tandem with Ezeugbor (2015), her study confirmed that administrators' acceptance of faults, exhibition of selflessness, love, humility, justice, open decision making among others, inspires teachers to be more emotionally attached to the school as well as invoking the consciousness of investing more time with students and doing the right thing at the right time. This finding also agree with results of earlier studies, such as Mihelic, Lipicnik & Tekavcic, (2010); Pucic (2011), and Eslamieh and Davoudi (2016). These studies indicated that ethical behaviours of school leaders created a positive atmosphere for organizational commitment of teachers. These findings support Khunita and Suar's (2004) findings, that ethical leadership is positively related to commitment in India.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study presented, analyzed and discussed, the study concludes that there is a significant positive correlation between teachers' perception of principals' ethical leadership dimensions and their job commitment. This indicates that

an increase in teachers' perception regarding principals' display of ethical leadership behaviours will result to a significant increase in their job commitment level.

7. Recommendations

From the finding of the study the following recommendations were made:

- 1. Secondary school principals should constantly display ethical behaviours such as being selfless, humble, patient and just in their dealings with the teachers in order to stimulate teachers' sense of belonging to the school.
- 2. The study also recommends that principals should constantly create an atmosphere of confidence within the school by being sincere, fair and respectful to the teachers, they should always communicate ethical principles to the teachers through their behaviours. This will help in motivating the teachers to show obligation in achieving the goals of the school.
- 3. Principals should at all times be fair and constructive in making decisions in the school, they should create a conducive and enabling environment for teachers to work and also reward the achievement of teachers. This will inspire teachers' willingness to continue working towards the achievement of the goals of the school.
- 4. The study also recommends that for teachers to sustain their membership of the school and work to achieve the goals of the school, principals should constantly motivate them by communicating ethical principles through their behaviours.

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