



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS'
TRANSFORMATIONAL AND DIRECTIVE ETHICAL LEADERSHIP
BEHAVIOUR AND TEACHERS' JOB RELATED STRESS IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

The study investigated the relationship between teachers' rating of principals' transformational and directive ethical leadership behaviours and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested. The study utilized the correlation research design. The population of the study was 9764 teachers from the 330 public secondary schools in the state. A sample size of 1,380 teachers was used for the study. This was drawn from 66 out of the 330 secondary schools in the six education zones in Enugu State using the multistage sampling procedure which involved simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using two questionnaires entitled "Principals' Transformational and Directive Ethical Leadership Behaviour Questionnaire (PTDELBQ)" and "Teachers' Stress Inventory – Revised (TSI). The instruments were validated by three experts. The internal consistency of the instruments was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. This yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.81 and 0.86 for PTDELBQ and TSI respectively. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there is a low negative relationship between teachers' rating of principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress, and between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical behaviour and teachers' job-related stress. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that teacher

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training programmes should include training for teachers in the art of stress management and prevention as a requirement for certification in the teaching profession.

Keywords: principal, ethics, leadership behaviour, job stress

1. Introduction

The general aim of secondary education according to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) is to prepare citizens for useful living within the society and transition to tertiary education. This demands that the positions of principals as leaders in secondary schools for the achievement of these educational goals should be looked into. Teachers expect principals to behave in ways that will increase their performances without exposing them to physical and emotional disturbances otherwise known as stress. This calls for ethical leaders as principals in secondary schools, those in Enugu State, Nigeria inclusive.

Ethics according to Agbim (2018) refers to *“accepted principles of right and or wrong that govern the conduct of a person, the members of a profession or the actions of organisations.”* Thus, ethical leadership is defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct in followers through a two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Brown & Harrison cited in Hao, Maozhu & Qian, 2015). Ethical leaders are leaders who showcase trust, honesty and integrity, fairness, concern and respect for teachers. With such ethical leaders in place, teachers' constant complaints about their job can be reduced or even eliminated.

It can be deduced from the above that ethical school principals are rated by the teachers as those expected to see teachers not just as followers but as stakeholders and partners striving to achieve a common purpose. Ethical leadership behaviours according to Eboka (2016) are those leadership styles or behaviours displayed as leadership functions are carried out in the school system. There are different ethical leadership behaviours as there are different principals or educational leaders. Eboka (2016), Kooskora and Mägi (2010), described the behaviours as transactional and transformational behaviours. Contributing, Anastasiou and Papakonstantinou (2014) in line with the Path Goal theory by House and Mitchell (1974) posited a four fold classification of leader behaviours as directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented. For the purpose of this study, two dimensions of ethical leadership behaviour namely; transformational and directive leadership behaviours were adopted because of their importance in enhancing good working environment in the school system. These ethical behaviours are examined in relation to teacher job related stress.

According to Eboka (2016), transformational leadership behaviour emphasizes that the principals and teachers unite together to pursue higher order common goals such that both the principals and teachers are able to raise each other to higher levels of motivation. Transformational leadership behaviour according to Avolio and Bass (2004), include idealised influence, which is the behaviour of the leader that reflects the charisma

of the leader and the pride, respect, faith and admiration the leader instils in subordinates, and inspirational motivation. A teacher who is respected and trusted by the principal has the tendency to be satisfied with the job and puts in his best.

In the same vein, teachers cannot perform very well in an atmosphere where the principal is rated to be a dictator who leads through force. Here, the principal uses fear, threats, and authority to achieve his wish. In essence, teachers in such a situation have very little or nothing to say about the way things ought to be done in the school where they work. The principal tends to be generally unfriendly and impersonal in dealings with staff and thereby creates an atmosphere of mistrust and witch-hunting which may expose the teachers to high stress (Lambersky, 2016). Rather than be a dictator, a directive leader who provides the followers with task clarity and helps make goal attainment less ambiguous is highly needed in schools. In directive leadership behaviour, the leader knows exactly what must be done, how tasks must be performed and the deadline for such task. This means that he provides his employees with clear guidelines with regard to the processes and tells them what is expected of them and how best to carry out their tasks.

Contrary to the behaviours expected of principals, some studies carried out in Nigeria show that principals do not apply these behaviours to a very great extent (Onwurah & Chiaha, 2008; Nwimo & Onwunaka, 2015). Probably this could be the reason for the poor administrative conditions observed in Nigerian secondary schools. According to Ikegbusi (2016) and Oluremi (2013) many secondary school principals in Nigeria have no serious or professional training in educational management and administration and are therefore bereft of the changing trends in administration of the 21st century. One of the significant challenges for principals today is to identify what contributes to teachers' job stress and the type of leadership behaviour principals should employ to reduce this stress.

Job or occupational stress refers to a mental and physical condition which affects an individual's productivity at the workplace, as well as the individual's effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. Teachers' work stress in this study includes exposure of the body to much work in which the body experiences difficulty to cope. This seems to be what teachers are experiencing in the course of carrying out their jobs as teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State. When a teacher is experiencing work stress, the following signs and symptoms are made manifest:- tension, faster heartbeat, anxiety, fear, need to urinate frequently, pale face, headache, insomnia, sweaty hands and feet, poor problem solving, reduced work performance, tense muscles, and impaired decision making (Pragya, 2017).

The state of secondary education in Nigeria in general, and Enugu State in particular, seems to be characterized by teachers who are not happy with the teaching profession because the environment is not giving them joy (Kalejaiye-Matti, Abdullahi, Garba, & Balogun, 2016, & Nwimo, 2005). This situation, according to the authors manifests in high rate of absenteeism, the exit of teachers for other jobs, constant request for transfers, and conflicts between the teachers and the principals. One then wonders if

the principals' behaviour in the school system is a contributory factor to the poor state of affairs, as there is a challenge for principals as school leaders to create an enabling working environment that will give teachers less stress on their jobs.

From the foregoing, it seems that by virtue of their profession, teachers, those in secondary schools in Enugu State inclusive, are constantly under stress. This necessitated this study which sought to empirically ascertain the relationship between teachers' ratings of principals' ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study ascertained the teachers' ratings of relationship between principals' transformational, directive leadership behaviours and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State.

2. Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study, namely;

- 1) What is the relationship between teachers' rating of principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State?
- 2) What is the relationship between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State?

2.1 Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance, namely;

- 1) There is no significant relationship between the teachers' ratings of the principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in public secondary schools in Enugu state.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between the teachers' ratings of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

3. Method

Correlation research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in Enugu state, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 9764 teachers in the 330 public secondary schools in Enugu State, a sample of 1,380 teachers were involved in the study. This was drawn from 66 out of the 330 secondary schools using multistage sampling procedure. Two instruments namely Principals' Transformational and Directive Ethical Leadership Behaviour Questionnaire (PTDELBQ) and Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI), validated by three experts were used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instruments was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.81 and 0.86 for PTDELBQ and TSI respectively. In line with Nworgu

(2015) who stated that if the correlation co-efficient obtained for an instrument is up to 0.70 and above, the instrument should be considered good enough to be used for a study, the instruments were deemed reliable. Direct administration method was used for data collection. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses.

The correlation coefficients for the research questions were interpreted using Best and Khan (2016). On the other hand, decisions relating to the test of hypotheses were made using the P- value. Thus, when the P- value is less than the level of significance, in this case 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, otherwise, it was not rejected.

4. Results

Table 1: Pearson's r on relationship between teachers' rating of principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress

Source of Variation	N	Transformational ethical behaviour	Teachers' job-related stress	Remark
Transformational ethical leadership behaviour	1352	1.00	-0.32	Low Negative Relationship
Teachers' Job-related stress	1352	-0.32	1.00	

The data analysis in Table 1 shows that there is a low negative relationship ($r = -0.32$) between teachers' rating of principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and their job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State. This implies that if Principals exhibit more transformational leadership behaviours, the job-related stress experienced by teachers will be reduced and vice versa.

Table 2: Pearson's r on the relationship between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress

Source of Variation	N	Directive ethical behaviour	Teachers' job-related stress	Remark
Directive ethical leadership behaviour	1352	1.00	-0.26	Low Negative Relationship
Teachers' job-related stress	1352	-0.26	1.00	

The data analysis in Table 2 reveals that there is a low negative relationship ($r = 0.26$) between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State. This implies that the more Principals exhibit directive leadership behaviours, the less the job-related stress teachers will experience and vice versa.

Table 3: Test of significance of Pearson's correlation between teachers' rating of principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress

Source of Variation	N	Transformational ethical behaviour	Teachers' job-related stress	p-value	Remark
Transformational ethical leadership behaviour	1352	1.00	-0.32	.000	Sig
Teachers' job related stress	1352	-0.32	1.00		

As shown in Table 3, there is a significant relationship between the teachers' rating of the principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in public secondary schools in Enugu state. The first null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Table 4: Test of significance of Pearson's correlation between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress

Source of Variation	N	Directive ethical behaviour	Teachers' job-related stress	p-value	Remark
Directive ethical leadership behaviour	1352	1.00	-0.26	.000	Sig
Teachers' job-related stress	1352	-0.26	1.00		

The data analysis in Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between the teachers' ratings of principals' directive ethical behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in public secondary schools in Enugu state. The second null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study show that there is a low negative relationship between teachers' rating of principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State. It was also found out that there is a significant relationship between the teachers' rating of the principals' transformational ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in public secondary schools in Enugu state. This finding is expected because when teachers rate their principal as being honest, selfless and straight forward towards them, treating them equally and as having great deal of respect for them, teachers will correspondingly, feel happy. The implication of the negative relationship is that the more transformational the principal's rated leadership behaviour is, the lower the level of teachers' job stress. These findings are in agreement with Carla (2015) who found out that there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher work stress and the transformational leadership behaviour of principals. The findings of the study also supports Bağrıyanık and Can (2017) and Güzel and Ayazlar (2014) who found out that the display of behaviours covering ethics

and justice by principals will decrease teachers' possible negative attitude and behaviours and increase teachers willingness to stay with the school. The findings are consistent with Eboka (2016) who found out that there is a relationship between principals' transformational leadership behaviour and teachers' morale.

The findings of the study also revealed that there is a low negative relationship between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu State. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between the teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job-related stress in public secondary schools in Enugu state. From literature, it was revealed that teachers, who work with principals who possess and exhibit directive ethical leadership behaviour, stand to be guided on how best to carry out their tasks as teachers. In view of this, the result of this study is deemed proper and expected. The findings support Anit and Maayan (2006) who found out that directive leadership reduces teachers' stress. The findings are also consistent with Keys (2011) who revealed that directive Leadership increases follower's job satisfaction. Keys further found out that when directive leadership is combined with supportive leadership, it reduces stress amongst followers and this finding also tallies with the findings of this study.

The finding that there is a low negative relationship between teachers' rating of principals' directive ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job related stress in secondary schools is contrary to Wachira, Gitumu & Mbugua (2017) who found out that there was a weak positive correlation between schools where students and teachers are expected to comply with the principals' directives without fail.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore concluded that principals' transformational and directive ethical leadership behaviour as rated by teachers yielded negative relationships with teachers' job-related stress in secondary schools in Enugu state. Thus, if principals in secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria exhibit transformational and directive ethical leadership behaviour, teachers' job-related stress in these schools would be reduced and possibly eliminated.

6.1 Recommendations

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

- 1) The Ministry of Education and other agencies controlling secondary education in the state should pay attention to and strengthen through motivation the principals who exhibit transformational and directive ethical leadership behaviours in secondary schools in the state
- 2) Curriculum of tertiary institutions on teacher training programmes should be restructured to include training in the art of stress management and burnout

prevention as a requirement for certification and registration into the teaching profession.

- 3) The State government and agencies in charge of education such as the Ministry of Education, Enugu State Universal Basic Education Board, Post Primary School Management Board and Science Technical and Vocational Management Board, should as a matter of urgency organise regular seminars and workshops for principals in secondary schools in Enugu State on the need to be ethical in their leadership in schools so as to further strengthen a good relationship with their subordinates, especially teachers.

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