



Principals' social awareness and teachers' Job involvement in secondary schools

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 16,650 teachers, from which a sample of 660 was drawn using multi-stage sampling techniques, with 639 valid responses analyzed. Data were collected using the Principals' Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PEIQ) and Teachers' Job Involvement Questionnaire (TJIQ), both validated and tested for reliability. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. Findings revealed a high positive relationship ($r = 0.67$) between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement. The study further showed that this relationship was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that principals' social awareness plays a vital role in enhancing teachers' job involvement, thereby improving school effectiveness.

Keywords: Principal, teacher, social awareness, emotional intelligence, job involvement etc

Introduction

Since popularization of emotional intelligence in recent decades, there has been links to workplace performance and organizational structure and management. Integrating emotional intelligence into leadership skills and administrative strategies deemed necessary for efficiency. Studies have shown that there is a correlation between administrators with high emotional intelligence (EI) and positive workplace performance. Research also indicates that higher emotional intelligence (EI) leads to enhanced psychological wellbeing and higher rates of positive emotional states and it can develop meaningfulness at the workplace. There is also evidence that communication effectiveness and job satisfaction of the employees are related to their managers' emotional intelligence (EI). It becomes evident that managers who build effective interpersonal relationships with those in lower rank are using emotional intelligence which could lead to productivity, through active job involvement with increase in overall job satisfaction. Thus, principals of secondary schools are encouraged to embrace emotional intelligence skills in their daily engagement of teachers for effective utilization of their capabilities and job involvement in school activities.

According to Goleman (2023) ^[3] embracing emotional intelligence contributes to improved communication, conflict resolution, overall well-being in personal and professional contexts, and much more. The concept of Emotional Intelligence can be traced with discussions that began in the late 1930s, when renowned scholars and researchers tried to describe a non-intellective intelligence sometimes described as "social intelligence. Emotional intelligence itself was first defined in the early 1990s by Salvo and Meyers as "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Salvo and Meyers expanded their definition to include "the verbal and non-verbal appraisal and expression of emotion, the

regulation of emotion in the self and others, and the utilization of emotional content in problem-solving." Goleman (2023) ^[3] in another development observed that emotional intelligence (EI) first appeared in 1964 and gained popularity in the 1995 bestselling book Emotional Intelligence by science journalist Daniel Goleman. Goleman saw emotional intelligence (EI) as the array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance. Jovanovski (2020) ^[4] opined that some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim that it is an innate characteristic.

Kumar (2020) ^[5] referred to emotional intelligence as a set of experiences, including self-awareness, mood management, self-motivation, empathy, and managing relationships. Surret (2017) describes emotional intelligence as ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups. According to Wikipedia emotional intelligence (EI) was defined as the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions. Coleman concurred that people with high emotional intelligence can recognize their own emotions and those of others, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately and adjust emotions to adapt to environments. Lauren (2019) asserted that emotional intelligence (EI) is typically associated with empathy because it involves a person relating their personal experiences with those of others. Thus, emotional intelligence can be deduced as one's ability to apply a high cognitive discernment suitable at the appropriate time in response to peoples' mood, actions, scenarios and conditions.

Flynn and Kubala (2022) ^[2] in their view referred to emotional intelligence (EI) as a person's ability to understand and manage their emotions as well as recognize the feelings of others. Research shows it is a useful tool for navigating work life, relationships, education, and mental and physical well-being. Behavioral experts commonly refer to the five components of emotional intelligence which

involve behaviors such as a person's self-awareness and empathy for other people. Since the 1990s, though, psychologists have increasingly noted the importance of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence may be more important than IQ for predicting a person's efficiency at work, while some aspects of emotional intelligence may be genetic and closely related to personality type. Also learners can improve upon their levels of emotional intelligence with training and making positive changes to their daily routines. Emotional intelligence can help a person to work peacefully with others and also supervise other people. It can help to cope in the workplace and be more resilient to challenging situations. Research has shown that emotional intelligence can be important in many aspects of a person's life. It can improve work-related outcomes, teamwork, social relationship, management skills and overall job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence (EI) can also help to improve in stress management, general mood, self-expression and emotional understanding. Okwuoma (2019) opined that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence (EI) are generally more happy, sociable, and self-confident, as well as better at handling stress. Kumar (2020) ^[5] asserted that emotional intelligence (EI) can help students develop social relationships in school, which can positively impact their academic performance. However, people with lower levels of emotional intelligence (EI) are less able to regulate their emotions and more likely to engage in mood regulation strategies that negatively affect their overall health, this may likely result in smoking and alcohol as coping strategies and may be more at risk of self-harming behaviors and eating disorders. An emotionally intelligent principal in a school might enhance teachers' job involvement.

The role of the school principal cannot be overstated. According to Nwogbo (2021) ^[7], principals are instructional leaders who play a very important role in curriculum and instructional management by making plans, organizing, coordinating and controlling teaching and learning activities in order to achieve the desired school and educational goals within the stipulated time frame. Principals are timely planners and decision makers. A good principal has a very high acumen. Girgin and Tofur (2023) opined that the school principal leads the entire school community, including students, teachers, staff, parents and community partners. Principals are the liaison between the school and the community leadership. School principals manage all the administrative processes related to students, teachers and staff. Some school principals are often former classroom teachers who advanced in their careers by taking on the principal's leadership position. Eke and Ikpe (2023) affirms that principals possess wider experiences and are at the center of all progress made by a school. More so, they observed that the major responsibilities of a school principal vary depending on where the school is located, how many students it serves and what kind of funding it receives from the state and federal governments.

Okezie (2018) ^[8] asserted that principals are responsible for the attainment of effective, efficient functional teaching and learning experience for overall optimal operation of their schools. Okezie pointed out that the duties of the principals include monitoring instruction in order to help teachers improve their teaching skills, get adjusted to teaching and learning environment, providing teachers job involvement and job satisfaction. The roles of principals as overseers, managers and educational administrators are central to an

effective and functional secondary education system. Eke and Ikpe (2023) opined that a principal is regarded as the number one authority in any school. Principals of secondary school determine the process and take the lead then all other subordinates follow. They usually have a good standing for excellence in learning for students to perform to their full potential. However, principals cannot achieve their roles and duties single handedly, plans and visions for the school become reality through collective efforts. The supportive efforts of the teachers go a long way and principals can apply sound emotional intelligence skills to integrate them to action through a strategic teachers' job involvement approach. The job of a school principal revolves around both the school internal and external structures. The amount of responsibility for a school principal is high but with a diligent characteristic, the principal will know how to prioritize and delegate tasks.

Meanwhile, the desire of every teacher is to impart, inculcate and transfer knowledge successfully to learners to attain a desirable positive change in behaviour. Educational psychologists were of the opinion that when the learner has not learnt, the teacher has not taught; thus it becomes a major priority for teachers to ensure outstanding input in the process of teaching and learning for improved performance, enhanced academic achievement of students and highly productive educational institutions. According to the Ministry of Education, teachers are those who have an idea that must be explored for the interests of students and the society. Mgbodile (2015) described a teacher as a person who helps students to acquire knowledge, competence or virtue. Ideally, teachers transfer knowledge to learners. Nnaemeka (2022) asserted that teachers are those whose main role is to teach others in a formal setting such as at school. For schools to exist and function properly, there are competent teachers in such schools. The essence of schools is for formal teaching and learning and teachers are those who are professionally equipped, qualified and certified to take up the responsibility of teaching and learning processes in a formal setting.

Onuoha and Odo (2020) asserted that teachers are at the pivot of every school activity and should be actively involved in different jobs that revolve around school programs. Implementation of all school programs hangs around the teacher, if teachers are not in the school, schools will not be functional. Teachers and schools are synonymous in nature, they go hands in gloves. According to Obidike (2016) a teacher is a person whose occupation is teaching others, especially children; initiating activities and providing guidance that facilitate learning. In a related opinion. Obineme (2020) asserted that teachers are crucial inputs of any educational system possessing knowledge and skills to be imparted to the learners. Thus, teachers facilitate learning, impart knowledge and skills firmly as a profession. Foregoing, a teacher can be seen as an educational professional whose interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary focus lies on teaching learners how to explore, assimilate, interpret and advance in learning. Wokocho (2014) ^[10] asserted that professional educators provide quality services that have direct influence on the citizens which are geared towards the growth and development of the nation. Such services provided by teachers should be of the highest possible standard and as well exhibit conduct that places the profession in the highest possible esteem. In this respect, according to Wokocho, teachers need to pursue the truth,

devote efforts towards excellence, acquire more knowledge and observe democratic principles. Also, professional educators should maintain a high level of competence by engaging in continuous professional development.

The earlier concept of job involvement was originally developed by Lodahl and Kejner in 1965. In Lubakaya (2014)^[6] Khan and Nemati defined job involvement as the degree to which a person's self-esteem was influenced by his or her work performance. Sugiarti (2018) saw job involvement as the individual psychological identity of a particular task or work to the intensity and individual psychological identification of his or her work. Sugiarti further stressed that individuals with high levels of job involvement will place work as an important part of their lives. However, individuals with lower job involvement will not place their work as an important part of their lives. Lubakaya (2014)^[6] pointed out that the major factors that affect job involvement include motivation, personal factors, training and job characteristics. Operationally, job involvement can be referred to as the extent at which workers are engaged in job activities in the organization. It can also be seen as the degree of practical utilization of the workforce in assigning roles and responsibilities. An emotionally intelligent principal has increased social awareness which is one of its components.

Social awareness is evident with external recognition of oneself attitudes towards others. Stakeholders and subordinates can deduct managers' dispositions of temperament at work place through the knowledge of one's social awareness. Principals' social awareness positions form a solid administrative structure that enables them to motivate teachers to work, effectively engaging them for job involvement in school operational activities. Efficient utilization of teachers involves high skilled emotional intelligence (EI) which enables principals to integrate all efforts in the school for achievement of educational goals and objectives. Abdulla, Ahmad and Abdul (2021)^[1] opined that social awareness is the ability to comprehend and correctly respond to both wide issues of society and interpersonal struggles, stressed that being socially conscious of associates with understanding the setting and the situation at the moment as well as having the capacity to properly interpret the feelings of the folks connected, defines social awareness. With the knowledge of social awareness principals can read situations and circumstances and make informed decisions.

Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz and Fernández-Lasarte (2018)^[9] opined social awareness as the ability of an individual to enter and sustain interpersonal relationships satisfactorily with other people. Koroka, Idris, Bawa, Ahmad and Abdullahi (2023) concurred that social awareness emphasizes social relationships and social influence. Principals with good social abilities exercise better social interaction with others. Moreso, with good listening skills and effective communications, social awareness of principals properly employed for involving administrative processes. Social awareness enhances empathy towards others' feelings and emotions. Social awareness enables perception of things from others point of view facilitating strong connection that develops mutual understanding and effective management of social corporate relationships. Interestingly, this could help principals to perceive ideas from others' point of view to integrate meaningful opinions.

In a school administrative process where this is not observed, misunderstandings and disagreements without effective resolutions could occur and teachers feeling sidelined and discouraged in the job.

Research Questions

The research question below guided the study:

What is the relationship between principals' social-awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was formulated for the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant relationship between principals' social -awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Design

Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The correlation research design according to Nworgu (2015), seeks to establish relationships that exist between variables considered in a study.

Area of 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 State is made up of Seventeen (17) Local Governments Areas and has 925 public and private secondary schools in the state. The choice of Abia State for this study is justified by the desire of concerned Abia State renowned scholars to maintain enhanced educational administrative structure in the state for best standards in school leadership. More so to achieve cordial relationship between the principal and teachers through effective engagement and utilization for improved performances in secondary schools in Abia State.

Population of the Study

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. The data were from the official record of the planning, research and statistics of the Abia State Ministry of Education (2024).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

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.

Instrument for Data Collection

The two instruments for data collection are ‘Principals’ Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PEIQ) and Teachers’ Job Involvement Questionnaire (TJIQ). The PEIQ was adapted from an already existing inventory of Goleman (2023) [3], based on the information from the review of related literature. The first questionnaire PEIQ has section A, with background information and instructions. Section B is structured in 5 Clusters of 34 items, with each item 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. The first cluster has 6 items on Self Awareness, the second has 6 items on Self-Management, the third cluster has 6 items on Social Awareness, the fourth cluster has 8 items on Relationship Management and the fifth cluster has 8 items on Adaptability. In the same vein, 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.

Validation of the Instrument

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. Thereafter, their respective inputs and suggestions were incorporated to modify the instrument accordingly.

Reliability of Instrument

The 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. Therefore, the instruments were deemed reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered the 660 copies of the instruments directly to the respondents with the help of six (6) research assistants, who were secondary school teachers briefed to assist in the administration of the questionnaires in their respective schools. A letter of introduction was used to obtain permission from the principals of the schools to have access to respondents. Out of 660 copies administered, 639 were retrieved being 97% of the copies and used for data analysis. However, 21 copies being 3% of the copies were left out, 7 copies were not properly filled while 14 copies were lost.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to answer the research question and hypothesis. The significance of the correlation for the hypothesis testing was determined with p- value at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated p-value is greater than or equal to the significance value of 0.05, the null hypothesis will not be rejected. On the other hand, when the p-value is less than the significance value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question: what is the relationship between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?

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

Source of Variation N		R	Remark
Social Awareness	639	0.67	High Positive Relationship
Job Involvement			

Table 1 shows that there is a high positive relationship between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This is shown by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is 0.67.

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

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

Source of Variation N		r	p-value	Remark
Social Awareness	639	0.67	0.00	Sig
Job Involvement				

Table 2 shows that there is a significant correlation between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. The calculated r (0.67) had P-value <0.05. The 3rd null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study indicated that a high positive and significant relationship exists between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This finding is revealed that social awareness plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers’ job involvement. This is because by responding to teachers’ emotional needs, principals can build stronger relationships and improve teacher involvement. Principals ought to be sensitive with the external recognition of the attitude of towards others oneself to ensure effectiveness in interactions. This finding concurred with Abdulla, Ahmad and Abdul (2021) [1] who observed that social awareness facilitates the ability to comprehend and interpret the feelings of the folks connected in the group and responds to accommodate one another’s feelings.

Further findings also indicated that principals' social awareness has a significant relationship with teachers,’ job involvement. This means that principals social awareness is a motivator in getting teachers to be actively involved in their job. The findings of this study agreed with Kumar (2019) who opined that the impact of emotional intelligence of social awareness among individuals promotes understanding and compassion on others, enhances effective communication and increased empathy. This implies that principals' who apply emotional intelligence skill of social awareness will sustain interpersonal connections with the teachers in the school system. To this effect principals and teachers can relate mutual to effective job involvement.

Thus, there is a high positive and significant relationship between principals' social awareness and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study have several educational implications for secondary school principals and teachers. The finding also implies that principals who demonstrate strong social awareness such as empathy, understanding staff needs and recognizing group dynamics can positively influence teachers' job involvement. Therefore, incorporating social awareness training into educational leadership development programmes for principals can enhance school climate and foster greater teacher commitment and participation in school activities in secondary schools in Abia State. The finding also implies that effective management by principals such as conflict resolution, inspirational leadership and effective communication can positively influence teachers' job involvement. Educational stakeholders should integrate relationship building skills into leadership training programmes for principals. Strengthening principals' capacity to build positive interpersonal relationship can lead to a more collaborative and motivated teaching workforce in secondary schools in Abia State.

Recommendations

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

1. Educational authorities should organize regular training and workshops to improve principals' social awareness and emotional intelligence skills.
2. School principals should consciously develop empathy, effective communication, and interpersonal relationship skills to enhance teachers' involvement.
3. Government and stakeholders should incorporate emotional intelligence competencies, especially social awareness, into leadership training and principal selection criteria.
4. Schools should promote a supportive organizational climate that encourages mutual respect, collaboration, and active teacher participation in decision-making.

Conclusion

The study concluded that principals' social awareness has a significant and positive influence on teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. Principals who demonstrate empathy, effective communication, and sensitivity to teachers' needs are more likely to foster a supportive and collaborative work environment. Such an environment enhances teachers' commitment, participation, and overall productivity in school activities.

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