AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPALS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.

By

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Employing a correlational research design, the study targeted a population of 1,777 teachers across 95 schools in seven local government areas. A stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select the schools, while purposive sampling yielded a sample of 335 teachers. Data were gathered using a structured instrument titled *Principals' Emotional Intelligence and Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (PEITJSQ)*, which consisted of 18 items across three sections: demographic data, principals' emotional intelligence dimensions (self-awareness and relationship management), and teachers' job satisfaction. The questionnaire employed a 4-point modified Likert scale. Content and face validity were ensured through expert review by three professionals in Research, Measurement, and Evaluation. Reliability was established via a pilot study in Ikom Education Zone, resulting in a Cronbach Alpha coefficient ranging from .87 to .89, indicating strong internal consistency. Data analysis involved simple regression to address the research questions and ANOVA/t-tests to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance using SPSS version 26. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship

between principals' emotional intelligence (self-awareness and relationship management) and teachers' job satisfaction. This outcome suggests that emotionally intelligent principals contribute to a supportive and motivating school environment, which enhances teacher satisfaction. The study concluded that principals' emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of job satisfaction. It recommended that emotional intelligence be emphasized as a key criterion in recruiting, assessing, and promoting school principals to ensure school leaders possess the interpersonal skills essential for teacher support and retention.

Keywords: Principals, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness, Relationship Management, , Job Satisfaction, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Globally, education is recognized as a key instrument for developing human capital and advancing national growth. It is central to national progress (Nwokonko, 2024; Ayang et al., 2025). In Nigeria's educational framework, secondary education serves as a critical stage, positioned between basic and tertiary education. These schools are generally open to the public and strive to ensure fair access to education for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds (Egbo et., 2025). It provides formal learning opportunities after primary school and prepares students for higher education. Through teaching, innovation, and workforce development, secondary education contributes significantly to national development (Odoh et al., 2025; Obona et al., 2024). As Obona et al. (2025) assert, this level of education is essential for closing the gap between primary and tertiary education.

In addition to preparing students for higher education, secondary education is legally required to equip learners with essential foundational knowledge, moral values, and practical skills necessary for personal development, employability, and active participation in societal growth (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). A key component of the secondary school system is the teacher, who serves as a vital human resource for the efficient delivery of education in Nigeria (Obona & Etete, as cited in Obona et al., 2024). Teachers significantly influence students' academic progress, critical thinking abilities, and future career paths during their important developmental years. However, for teachers to be fully committed and effective, they must experience job satisfaction, which remains a fundamental element in the overall success and performance of any educational institution.

Teachers' job satisfaction refers to how content, fulfilled, and motivated teachers feel in their roles within the school setting. As central figures in the education system (Difoni et al., 2025), their satisfaction is shaped by emotional and psychological responses to various job-related factors such as remuneration, work environment, administrative support, relationships with peers, recognition, professional growth opportunities, and student conduct. According to Noor and Akhter (2010), job satisfaction emerges when individuals find their work meaningful in fulfilling personal needs, influenced by both internal and environmental factors. Studies have shown that high job satisfaction enhances teacher performance, reduces attrition, and promotes better student learning

outcomes (Kraft et al., 2016; Toropova et al., 2021; Difoni et al., 2025). Satisfied teachers typically perform more effectively than their dissatisfied counterparts.

Yucel (2012) supports this by noting that job satisfaction positively impacts affective, continuance, and normative commitment, while decreasing the intention to resign. Dave and Dharmesh (2014) categorized job satisfaction into affective and cognitive dimensions—affective satisfaction reflects positive emotions and enjoyment derived from one's job, while cognitive satisfaction relates to judgments about pay, work conditions, career prospects, and hours. Smith et al. (1983), as cited by Rachmawati and Suyatno (2021), outlined five components of job satisfaction: satisfaction with supervision, colleagues, salary, promotion opportunities, and the job itself. Teacher satisfaction is closely tied to various elements of their work setting (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Rachmawati & Suyatno, 2021; Toropova et al., 2021), making it a vital contributor to school productivity.

In secondary schools, satisfied teachers display their job contentment in several visible ways. They exhibit a strong commitment to their duties, often exceeding expectations to enhance student learning. They also build positive relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators, fostering a supportive and cooperative school culture. Regular attendance, punctuality, and high performance are further signs of their motivation and sense of responsibility (Obona et al., 2025). These behaviors reflect not only personal job satisfaction but also contribute to the overall effectiveness of the educational system.

Despite these indicators, widespread dissatisfaction among teachers continues to concern educational stakeholders and researchers (Obona et al., 2023). Arop et al. (2019) observed that many teachers do not meet professional expectations, and Difoni et al. (2025) reported issues like inadequate syllabus coverage, frequent absenteeism, tardiness, truancy, and lack of lesson preparation. Madukwe et al. (2024) also highlighted declining student performance, while Oluwaseun (2016) emphasized that poor teacher output undermines both student achievement and educational leadership in Nigeria.

Low job satisfaction leads to diminished teacher commitment and negatively affects student outcomes. Nwogbo and Ugwuoke (2021) described this trend as a critical crisis in Nigeria's education sector. According to Oluwaseun (2016), such poor teacher performance hinders the development of competent future leaders. Etor et al. (2019) added that many students lack fundamental literacy skills and struggle with basic academic and social tasks, indicating serious systemic issues. Based on observations and feedback, the researcher found significant job dissatisfaction among public secondary school teachers in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State. Many teachers arrive late, leave early, spend little time on instruction, and instead engage in trading or personal conversations during school hours. In several schools, rather than engaging students in meaningful learning activities, some teachers focus on selling goods or chatting in staff rooms. This concerning trend calls for urgent intervention.

One major influence on teacher job satisfaction is principals' emotional intelligence (EI) which is their ability to understand, manage, and influence emotions, both their own and those of others. This includes interactions with teachers, students, and staff in a way that promotes a healthy school climate. Obona et al. (2024) stressed that the importance of human resources such principals in the school system cannot be overstated. Competent principals are essential, as they are regarded as the

backbone of secondary educational system (Obona & Etete, 2019). Their effectiveness directly affects student outcomes, and the school's overall performance (Odoh et al., 2025). Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined EI as the ability to perceive, utilize, understand, and manage emotions to enhance thinking and growth. Similarly, Salami (2010) described EI as the capacity to manage one's own and others' emotions, crucial for well-being, effective communication, and healthy relationships in schools. Emotionally intelligent school leadership significantly shapes school culture. It is crucial for administrative effectiveness, as it enhances overall institutional performance (Teli & Baba, 2017; Vein et al., 2024; Khokhar et al., 2023; Obona et al., 2024).

When principals create emotionally nurturing and inclusive school environments, teachers tend to feel appreciated and supported. This reduces interpersonal tension, fosters collaboration, lowers stress, boosts morale, and enhances professional satisfaction. It enables school administrators to operate more efficiently, with enhanced outcomes (Obona et al., 2024). This study, therefore, focuses on two core aspects of principals' emotional intelligence: self-awareness and relationship management. Principals' self-awareness, a core dimension of emotional intelligence, plays a crucial role in shaping positive teacher experiences, fostering job satisfaction, and enhancing overall school climate. Recent empirical studies increasingly emphasize the significance of principals' self-awareness—a central component of emotional intelligence—in shaping teachers' work experiences.

Jackman Ryan (2024) conducted a study involving 212 teachers and interviews with 15 principals to investigate how principals' emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness, affected teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The quantitative data showed a strong positive correlation between principals' self-awareness and teacher job satisfaction ($r = .47$, $p < .001$). Interview findings further revealed that principals who practiced self-reflection and actively sought feedback created environments where teachers felt acknowledged and valued, leading to increased job satisfaction and reduced intentions to leave. Swift (2018), in a mixed-methods study conducted across nine elementary schools in a rural district in the southern United States, surveyed 39 teachers to assess their perceptions of principals' emotional intelligence and its impact on their job satisfaction. Utilizing two validated online tools, Swift found that principals' self-awareness, defined as the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions and their impact on others, accounted for a significant portion of the variance in teacher job satisfaction ($\beta = .54$, $p < .01$). Regression and exploratory factor analyses supported a strong one-factor model that integrated perceived principal emotional intelligence and teacher satisfaction.

In another investigation, Dela Cruz (2025) surveyed 253 public elementary school teachers to assess the relationship between school leaders' emotional intelligence and teacher job satisfaction. Employing a correlational research design, the study identified self-awareness as having the strongest positive relationship with teacher job satisfaction ($r = .562$, $p < .001$). Teachers who perceived their principals as self-aware reported more supportive work environments, improved clarity in expectations, and greater confidence in leadership, all of which enhanced their job satisfaction. Todd (2022) explored the topic through a narrative inquiry case study focusing on one secondary school principal. Using nine hours of interviews and focus groups with the principal and eight teachers, the study found that when the principal clearly articulated an understanding of

her emotional triggers and demonstrated transparency in decision-making, teachers reported higher levels of respect and job satisfaction (mean satisfaction score = 4.2 on a 5-point scale). The findings highlight how principal self-awareness influences daily interactions and contributes to teacher well-being.

Pretorius and Plaatjies (2023) conducted qualitative research across six secondary schools in Free State, South Africa, involving interviews with principals, deputy principals, heads of departments (HODs), and teachers (N = 19). While the study primarily focused on leadership development, several participants emphasized that principals' self-awareness enhanced teacher trust and satisfaction, making leaders appear more accessible and attentive to staff needs. Additionally, Bano et al. (2021) examined how dimensions of principals' emotional intelligence influenced job satisfaction among 312 teacher educators using a cross-sectional survey. Even after controlling for other emotional intelligence dimensions and demographic variables, self-awareness emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = .48$, $p < .01$). Their structural equation modeling demonstrated both direct and indirect effects of self-awareness on job satisfaction, mediated by improved communication and collaborative leadership practices.

Principals' relationship management, a fundamental element of emotional intelligence, entails the skillful and empathetic handling of interpersonal interactions. This competency plays a vital role in cultivating a positive school climate that supports teacher well-being and job satisfaction. A growing body of empirical evidence underscores the influence of relationship management on teachers' workplace experiences. Suyatno (2021) investigated the impact of principals' competencies on teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. The study found that principals' interpersonal skills—particularly those involving communication and relationship management—significantly contributed to enhanced teacher satisfaction and commitment. These findings highlight the value of principals' relational abilities in fostering a conducive work environment. In a related study, Bakar and Nordin (2024) examined the role of emotional intelligence in the job satisfaction of special education integration teachers. Results revealed that principals who exhibited strong relationship management and overall emotional intelligence significantly boosted teacher satisfaction, affirming the importance of emotionally intelligent leadership in supporting teachers' professional well-being.

Additionally, Zaman et al. (2020) analyzed the effect of leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction across diverse cultural contexts. Their findings showed that principals who employed transformational leadership approaches—characterized by strong relationship management—had a significant positive impact on teacher satisfaction. This reinforces the universal importance of relational competencies in school leadership. Akinnubi and Adeoye (2024) explored the connection between principals' intellectual stimulation—a dimension of transformational leadership—and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools. The study revealed that principals who encouraged critical thinking and innovation contributed positively to teachers' job satisfaction. These behaviors, closely linked to effective relationship management, foster collaborative and respectful school environments. Obonyo (2023) also examined how principals' leadership styles affect teacher satisfaction. The study found that transformational leadership, which includes individualized consideration and inspirational motivation, was positively associated with higher teacher satisfaction. Such leadership practices reflect a relational approach that values and acknowledges teachers' efforts and contributions. Similarly, Obona et al. (2025)

concluded that there is a statistical relationship between principals' social intelligence and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

While previous studies across various contexts and using both quantitative and qualitative methods have consistently highlighted the importance of principals' self-awareness and relationship management in promoting teachers' job satisfaction, many of these studies were conducted outside the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria, and often involved relatively small sample sizes. These limitations restrict the applicability of their findings to the local cultural and educational context. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research that specifically investigates the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone, using the exact variables adopted in this study. This gap underscores the need for the present research to provide context-specific evidence and contribute original insights to the literature.

Statement of the problem

Teachers' job satisfaction is a critical factor influencing student performance, and is often reflected in their commitment to teaching duties, such as timely lesson delivery, preparedness, and participation in school activities. Positive relationships with students, colleagues, and school leaders also serve as indicators of teacher engagement and well-being. However, in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, teachers are increasingly falling short of these expectations. Reports from stakeholders—alongside the personal observations—highlight issues such as teacher absenteeism, low instructional quality, and weakened teacher-student relationships. These problems are often linked to inadequate communication with school leaders, insufficient emotional support, and limited professional development opportunities. Despite government interventions like training programs, salary payments, and supervision efforts, teacher dissatisfaction remains widespread. This situation if not addressed squarely, can negatively affect the school climate, student achievement, and public trust in the education system. In response to these ongoing challenges, this study seeks to determine whether principals' emotional intelligence could be a key factor in improving teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools across the Calabar Education Zone.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined principals' emotional intelligence and teachers job satisfaction in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the relationship between:

1. Principals' self-awareness and teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.
2. Principals' relationship management and teachers job satisfaction.

Research question

These research questions guided the study
   1. To what extent does principals' self-awareness predict teachers' job satisfaction?

2. To what extent does principals' relationship management predict teachers' job satisfaction?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:
1. Principals' self-awareness does not significantly predict teachers job satisfaction.
2. Principals' relationship management does not significantly predict teachers job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The population comprised 1,777 teachers across 95 public secondary schools in seven local government areas. A stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select schools, while purposive sampling was employed to select a sample of 335 teachers. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled *Principals' Emotional Intelligence and Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (PEITJSQ)*, consisting of 18 items divided into three sections: demographic information, principals' emotional intelligence (self-awareness and relationship management), and teachers' job satisfaction. A 4-point modified Likert scale was used. The instrument was validated by three experts in Research, Measurement, and Evaluation, and its reliability was confirmed through a pilot study in Ikom Education Zone, yielding a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .87 to .89. Data were analyzed using simple regression for the research questions and ANOVA/t-tests for hypotheses testing at a 0.05 significance level, with SPSS version 26.

Results

Research questions one

To what extent does principals' self-awareness predict teachers' job satisfaction? Simple regression was used to answer the research questions. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Simple regression of the extent to which principals' self-awareness predicts teachers job satisfaction.

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.819[a]	.671	.670	2.521	Positive contribution

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' self-awareness

The analysis of data in table 1 revealed that the regression coefficients and regression square values were .819 and .671 respectively. The r-value of .819 implied that a positive significant relationship between principals' self-awareness and teachers job satisfaction. The r^2 of .671 meant that variable

of principals' self-awareness contributed 67.1% to teachers' job satisfaction while the remaining 32.9% was as a result of other external factors.

Research questions two

To what extent does principals' relationship management predict teachers' job satisfaction? Simple Linear Regression was used to answer the research question and the result presented in table 2.

Table 2: Simple regression of the extent to which principals' relationship management predict teachers' job satisfaction.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.773ª	.598	.597	2.786	Positive contribution

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' relationship management

The analysis of data in table 2 revealed that the regression coefficients and regression square values were .773 and .598 respectively. The r-value of .773 implied that a positive significant relationship between principals' relationship management and teachers job satisfaction. The r^2 of .598 meant that variable of principals' relationship management contributed 59.8% to teachers' job satisfaction while the remaining 40.2% was as a result of other external factors.

Hypothesis one

Principals' self-awareness does not significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction. The ANOVA and t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The result is presented in Table 3. The analysis showed that principals' self-awareness significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction. This is indicated by the simple linear regression coefficient (R) of .819 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .671. The R^2 value implies that principals' self-awareness accounts for approximately 67.1% of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction, while the remaining 32.9% may be explained by other variables not included in the model. The F-change value of 678.641, with a p-value of .000 (p<.05), indicates that the model is statistically significant. Furthermore, the unstandardized regression coefficient (B) for principals' self-awareness is .831. This means that for every one-unit increase in principals' self-awareness, teachers' job satisfaction increases by .831 units, as measured by the questionnaire. Based on these results, the null hypothesis which stated that principals' self-awareness does not significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This confirms that principals' self-awareness significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State.

Table 3: ANOVA and t-test associated with simple linear regression employed to analyzed how principals' self-awareness predicts teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Anova\u1d43

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	4311.895	1	4311.895	678.641	.000[b]	Rejected
	Residual	2115.788	333	6.354			
	Total	6427.684	334				

*Significant p<.05; R=.819; R^2=.671; Adj. R^2=.670

Coefficients\u1d43

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.944	.599		6.582	.000
	Self-awareness	.831	.032	.819	26.051	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers job satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Principal self-awareness

Hypothesis two

Principals' relationship management does not significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction. The two variables examined were principals' relationship management and teachers' job satisfaction. The ANOVA and t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The result is presented in Table 4. The analysis showed that principals' relationship management significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction. This is indicated by the simple linear regression coefficient (R) of .773 and a coefficient of determination (R²) of .598. The R² value implies that principals' relationship management accounts for approximately 59.8% of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction, while the remaining 40.2% may be explained by other variables not included in the model. The F-change value of 495.340, with a p-value of .000 (p<.05), indicates that the model is statistically significant. Furthermore, the unstandardized regression coefficient (B) for principals' relationship management is .867. This means that for every one-unit increase in principals' relationship management, teachers' job satisfaction increases by .867 units, as measured by the questionnaire. Based on these results, the null hypothesis which stated that principals' relationship management does not significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This confirms that principals' relationship management significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State.

Table 4: ANOVA and t-test associated with simple linear regression employed to analyzed how principals' relationship management predicts teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Anova^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	3843.698	1	3843.698	495.340	.000[b]	Rejected
	Residual	2583.986	333	7.760			
	Total	6427.684	334				

*Significant $p<.05$; R=.773; R^2=.598; Adj. R^2=.587

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.977	.742		4.013	.000
	Principals' relationship management	.867	.039	.773	22.256	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers job satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' relationship management

Discussion of findings

The result of hypothesis one showed that principals' self-awareness significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone. This aligns with expectations, as self-aware principals are typically more attuned to their emotions, strengths, and limitations, allowing for more empathetic communication, responsible leadership, and supportive school climates. These factors contribute to teachers feeling valued and less stressed, which enhances their job satisfaction and professional commitment. The implication is that improving principals' self-awareness can foster a more positive work environment, boosting teacher morale and performance.

This outcome is consistent with prior research. For instance, Swift (2018) found that principals' self-awareness significantly explained variations in teacher satisfaction ($\beta = .54$, $p < .01$). Jackman and Ryan (2024) reported a positive correlation ($r = .47$, $p < .001$), supported by qualitative evidence that reflective and feedback-seeking principals fostered more respectful and satisfying work settings. Todd (2022) noted that principals who were transparent and emotionally self-aware helped create respectful environments, as reflected in a high satisfaction score (mean = 4.2/5). Likewise, Dela Cruz (2025) identified self-awareness as the strongest predictor of overall teacher satisfaction ($r = .562$, $p < .001$), emphasizing its foundational role in effective school leadership.

The finding of hypothesis two revealed that principals' relationship management significantly predicts teacher job satisfaction in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone. Principals who effectively build trust, manage conflicts, offer support, and encourage collaboration help establish positive school cultures that increase teacher morale and reduce burnout. Such environments contribute to higher motivation, professional fulfillment, and ultimately, greater job satisfaction among teachers. This highlights relationship management as a key leadership competency influencing both staff well-being and educational quality.

This result is corroborated by several empirical studies. Suyatno (2021) emphasized that principals' interpersonal competencies had a notable impact on teacher satisfaction and commitment. Bakar and Nordin (2024) found that relationship management, especially among special education leaders, significantly influenced teacher satisfaction. Similarly, Akinnubi and Adeoye (2024) observed that principals who stimulated innovation and critical thinking enhanced teachers' job satisfaction. Zaman, Alwi, and Shaiq (2020) also linked transformational leadership—which includes strong relationship management—to increased satisfaction among teachers. These findings collectively affirm that effective relationship management is vital for fostering teacher satisfaction and improving institutional outcomes.

Conclusion

This research explored the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. It focused on two key components of emotional intelligence: principals' self-awareness and relationship management. The findings showed a significant positive correlation between these emotional intelligence traits and teachers' job satisfaction. This suggests that emotionally intelligent leadership contributes meaningfully to creating a supportive work environment that promotes teacher satisfaction. The study therefore concludes that principals' emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of job satisfaction among teachers in the region.

Recommendations

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

1. The Ministry of Education should actively support secondary school management in organizing regular capacity-building and professional development programs for principals, with an emphasis on improving emotional intelligence. This will help principals create more emotionally supportive and inclusive school environments, thereby boosting teacher job satisfaction.
2. Emotional intelligence should be made a core requirement in the recruitment, evaluation, and promotion of school principals. Prioritizing this competency will ensure that school leaders have the interpersonal skills necessary to effectively support and retain teachers.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to educational leadership literature by empirically establishing that principals' emotional intelligence—specifically self-awareness and relationship management—significantly influences teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State. It highlights the importance of emotional competencies in school leadership and provides evidence that emotionally intelligent principals can foster a positive school climate, enhance teacher morale, and improve staff retention. The findings offer a contextual understanding of how emotional intelligence operates within Nigerian public secondary schools, thereby filling a gap in local research and offering practical insights for educational administrators and policy makers.

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