

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' ADAPTABILITY AND TEACHERS' JOB INVOLVEMENT

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools across Abia State. Principals' adaptability, a key component of emotional intelligence, plays a vital role in how effectively they respond to dynamic educational environments and manage staff relationships. Guided by a research question and a hypothesis tested at the 0.05 level of significance, the study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 16,650 secondary school teachers, from which a multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of 639 teachers (approximately 4% of the population). Data were collected using two instruments: the Principals' Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PEIQ) and the Teachers' Job Involvement Questionnaire (TJIQ), both of which were validated by experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.80 and 0.84 for the PEIQ and TJIQ respectively. Analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement. The study concludes that when principals are adaptable in managing challenges and interpersonal relationships, it positively influences teachers' commitment, engagement, and productivity. The study recommends continuous professional development for school leaders focused on emotional adaptability and people-centered leadership skills to enhance teacher effectiveness and overall school performance.

Keyword: Emotional Intelligence, Principals' Adaptability, Teachers' Job Involvement, Secondary Schools, Principals etc

Introduction

In educational organizations, efforts of all concerned in the administrative processes are geared towards achievement of the predetermined educational goals and objectives. Educational managers at various levels are bent on devising effective approaches in pursuit of educational goals ranging from exploring glaring opportunities, possible innovative approaches and strategic planning measures for efficiency and productivity. When progress is perceived through adequate engagement of teachers as well as efficient utilization of other educational resources, leadership is

believed to be active and functional. Obviously, numerous factors contribute to successful educational achievement and sustainability of the standard becomes a priority. Okwuoma (2019) pointed out that achieving educational goals and objectives are the major focus of principals and teachers in secondary schools. Efforts therefore revolve around effective administration by educational managers and proper engagement of the teachers through efficient leadership for enhanced productivity to keep striving.

As school administrators of secondary schools, all the administrative and managerial functions highlighted by Henri Fayol's management theory are deployed by efficient principals in their responsibilities to engage the teachers. Hence, principals are expected to adopt some intelligence skills to motivate teachers' active job involvement in school. For high teachers' job involvement to be achieved, principals are expected to put into consideration the attitudes that could have positive and negative effects on teachers' job involvement; considering the fact that teachers' job involvement increases and decreases depending on the extent to which principals meet the expectations of the teachers. Apparently, principals' emotional intelligence (EI) to a large extent is believed to play such a vital role in the process of administration. Teachers' job involvement in secondary schools like in other levels of education largely depends on the administrative skills of the head. Emotional intelligence (EI) of secondary school principals prompt towards a determining factor in encouraging teachers' job involvement. Rana (2019) concurred that job involvement of teachers are highly affected by intelligence dispositions of the principals. Principals' emotional intelligence (EI) seems to play an important role in determining productivity among teachers in schools. In view of all these, teachers' job involvement can be seen as the zeal of the teachers to participate actively in the schools academic programs and extracurricular activities dutifully for efficiency in the school system. Emotional intelligence, according to Goleman (2023), has five major components enumerated self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and adaptability. Each of the components are essential for any school manager who wishes to be emotional intelligent (Igbokwe, Egboka, Thompson, Etele, Anyanwu, Okeke-James and Uzoekwe, 2023). However, this study centred on adaptability as one of the major components in a growing digital world. Therefore, this work will focus on the relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Adaptability can be referred to as the ability to adjust one's personal thoughts and emotional responses to new, changing situations and circumstances. Adaptability as essential element of emotional intelligence (EI) can support administrative processes for effective engagement and involvement of subordinates in the workplace. Adaptability provides opportunity for resilience, managing unexpected situations and coping with uncertainty and challenges. Adaptability is a key source of mental resources and individuals with a high level of adaptability can reserve more psychological resources than individuals with a low level of adaptability. These psychological resources are especially important for newcomers who are encountering a totally new environment (Ployhart in Zhou and Li; 2016). This is more beneficial to a secondary school principal who has

been posted to a new school for transfer purposes. The adaptability skill of emotional intelligence will enable the principal to adjust and cope comfortably on assuming office in the new environments with new subordinates. In this study adaptability can be seen as the ability of the principal to adjust to changing situations and new developments in the school system. The ability to exhibit adaptability both in cognition and behavior can help the principal foster a positive school climate with the teachers for improved school performance.

Adaptability refers to an individual's ability, skill, disposition, willingness and motivation to change or fit the different tasks, social and environmental features (Kodden, 2020). Considering the dynamic nature of man's environment, the ability to adjust to new and changing situations will enable the individual to function effectively and maintain a stress free condition. For a principal in a new school, the emotional intelligence skill of adaptability will support in adjusting plans and approaches to embrace efficiency. The activities and modus operandi in the former school may differ from the new school due to environmental and individual differences, the ability to adapt will foster flexibility in administrative and leadership style to carry everyone in the school system along. In the school administrative process adaptability helps the principal to build strong relationships by being responsive to others' needs. When principals consider the needs of the teachers in decision making, it is believed that there will be increased teachers' job satisfaction and yielding active job involvement of teachers in school activities and programmes.

Adaptability is considered to be a kind of personal resource that helps individuals to accommodate changing and challenging conditions (Zhou and Li, 2016). Adaptability provides opportunity for resilience, managing unexpected situations and coping with uncertainty and challenges. Secondary school principals with adaptability skills of emotional intelligence can effectively manage crises and find creative solutions to complex problems in the school. Through adaptability dispositions, the principal can also support teachers in adapting to new curriculum, new technologies and teaching methods boosting their willingness to be involved in the job. Principals can also effectively engage students by creating relevant learning experiences to enhance performances. Adaptability emphasizes on the importance of adjusting to changes in one's environment through self-regulatory processes for personal and situational resources (Holliman, Collie, and Martin; 2020). The increasingly modern changes in today's society demands the ability to adapt to new developments. Advancement in technology and digital innovations constantly requires managers to improve in their ability to adapt to innovative technologies and strategies. Thus, it becomes necessary for secondary school principals to effectively navigate the complexities of educational leadership and create a positive and productive school environment through adaptability skills. This will help them to implore appropriate cognitive and behavioral approaches to adjust in uncertainty situations especially when it concerns teachers for their active job involvement.

Job involvement is the degree to which a person's self-esteem was influenced by his or her work performance (Lubakaya, 2014). Sethi and Mittal (2016) observed teaching an extraordinarily complex activity involving a wide range of skills, perception, attitudes, involvement, knowledge

and sensitivity. Operationally, job involvement can be referred to as the extent at which workers are engaged in job activities in the organization. To make the educational institution inclusive, giving teachers a sense of job involvement becomes essential. Job involvement is significantly a job related behaviour. In the context of this study, teachers' job involvement is referred to as the extent or degree at which teachers are willing and dedicated to carry out the assigned responsibilities successfully in the school for an improved performance and productivity. Teachers' job involvement offers opportunity for improved creativity and a mindset to create inclusive, engaging, and student centered learning environments and teachers self-development and job satisfaction. When teachers are highly involved in their job, productivity can be assured, however if otherwise the school system will be unproductive. Principals in their manipulative skills can simultaneously employ self- awareness, self- management, social awareness and relationship management in leadership and administrative processes for successful working engagement, utilization and involvement of teachers.

Teachers with a high level of job involvement tend to be satisfied with their jobs and are highly committed to their duties. Njoku (2023) opined that teachers' job involvement is determined by the teachers' level of participation in the day to day running of the school. A teacher who is highly involved in a job will not show insincerity in the teaching task and other school responsibilities. High job involvement is reflected in attitudes towards work such as; coming to school early, seeking solutions to students' problems, planning activities that could enhance teaching and learning, deriving satisfaction in delivering one's assignment effectively, having more of intrinsic than extrinsic motivation, mastery of one's subject, being innovative, and putting extra time and effort in his job and considering his job central to his life among others. In concurrence, Nwachukwu (2017) highlighted factors which contribute to teachers' job involvement in school thus: clear goal expectations, supportive leadership, parents' involvement, positive school culture, conducive school environment, recognition and appreciation, empathy and understanding. When these factors are lacking some teachers otherwise exhibit low job involvement.

School principals who are not aware of their strengths and weaknesses face the risk of poorly emotional self and social awareness, leading to self struggle, mood swings, and emotional dysregulation. In some cases the school administrative processes are challenged with ineffective communication leading to ambiguity and misunderstandings in the school system. Personal observations showed that most teachers in Abia State experience a transfer of aggression from their principals out of pressure and stress, some school principals make uninformed decisions that don't align with values and goals of the school. This could be as a result of poor self-management and social awareness. Some schools also experience frequent misunderstandings and conflicts due to difficulties in building strong corporate relationships. empathy and understanding of others' perspectives and feelings. This has led to difficulties in forming and maintaining meaningful relationships. More personal observations also revealed that some principals in Abia State lack the ability to adapt to the changing situations. There are still struggles in embracing innovative

approaches and ability to implement change due to external pressures. This has resulted in limited opportunities for job involvement, career growth and development.

In such aforementioned situations, administrative skills of the principals, especially emotional intelligence dispositions, becomes vital in management of the school administrative process to influence effective engagement and job involvement of teachers. These poor dispositions of principals are the likely reasons for decline in teachers' job involvement. These situations therefore make it imperative to determine the relationship between principals' emotional adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

This research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypothesis

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

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State.

Methodology

Research Design

Correlation research design was used for the 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.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consist of 16,650 teachers in the 925 secondary schools of the 17 Local Government Areas of Abia State.

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.

Instrumentation

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), 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.

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. The validators were given a copy of the purpose of the study, research questions, research hypotheses and the instruments for vetting, validation and suggestions in terms of content coverage, face validity, clarity, relevance and appropriateness in addressing the purpose of the study. 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 choice of schools in Anambra State was based on the same geopolitical zone and proximal location to the researcher. Moreover, Anambra state has a similar education policy and administrative structure with the area of study. The internal consistency of the items were obtained using Cronbach alpha statistics. The reliability coefficients of the PEIQ was 0.80. For the TJIQ, a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained for the instrument. According to Okoye (2015) it was stated that if the correlation coefficient obtained in an instrument is up to 0.70 and above the instrument should be considered good enough to be used for a study. 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 questions and hypotheses. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation is deemed fit for the study because it was considered appropriate in ascertaining the extent of relationship between two or more variables in a study (Nworgu 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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

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

Source of Variation	N	R	Remark
Adaptability	639	0.72	High Positive Relationship
Job Involvement			

As shown in table 1, there is a high positive relationship existing between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r , which is 0.72.

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

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

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Adaptability	639	0.72	0.00	Sig
Job Involvement				

Table 2 shows that there is a significant correlation between adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. The calculated r (0.72) had P -value < 0.05 . The 5th null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

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

The study revealed that principals' adaptability has a high positive relationship with teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This finding showed that emotional intelligence

skills of principals' adaptability help them in adjusting their personal thoughts and emotional responses in new and changing situations. The study also revealed that adaptability skills offer the principals the opportunity for resilience, managing unexpected situations and coping with uncertainty and challenges. This finding concurred with Kodden, (2020) who noted that adaptability facilitates the individual's ability, skill, disposition, willingness and motivation to change or fit the different tasks, social and environmental features. This implies that principals who apply adaptability skills in administration are capable of functioning effectively and maintaining a stress free condition in school. Also principals with adaptability skills of emotional intelligence can effectively manage crises and find creative solutions to complex problems in the school administrative process.

Further findings of the study also indicated that there is a significant relationship between principals' adaptability and teachers' job involvement in secondary schools in Abia State. This means that adaptability is a tool that helps principals to adapt to new situations and also adjust to changing conditions. Based on the findings, principals' adaptability can be quite beneficial in embracing innovative approaches and engaging teachers for job involvement. This is in line with Zhou and Li (2016) who noted that adaptability is a kind of personal resource that helps individuals to accommodate changing and challenging conditions. In a similar opinion, Holliman, Martin and Collie (2018) affirmed that adaptability helps educators to understand how to manage transition and adjust with new developments. Therefore, adaptability skills will help the principals to adapt with changing processes and coordinate teachers for effective teachers' job involvement.

Implications of the Findings

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, it was recommended that the State Ministry of Education should encourage the principals to develop adaptability skills. This will enable them to adjust their personal thoughts, emotional responses and embrace modern and innovative approaches. This will help them to cope with uncertainty, challenges and unexpected situations that may arise in the school administrative system. Also, a continuous professional development for school leaders focused on emotional adaptability and people-centered leadership skills should be encouraged to enhance teacher effectiveness and overall school performance.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the critical role that principals' emotional adaptability plays in fostering teachers' job involvement in secondary schools across Abia State. A strong and statistically significant correlation was established between the emotional intelligence of school leaders—particularly their ability to manage relationships—and the degree to which teachers engage with their responsibilities. This suggests that emotionally adaptable principals are better equipped to build trust, communicate effectively, and create supportive environments where teachers feel valued and motivated.

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