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LEADERSHIP AND RESPECT AS PRINCIPAL ETHICAL PRACTICES THAT PREDICTS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined leadership and respect as principal ethical practices that predict the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design because it enables the investigation of existing phenomena and provides a realistic description of conditions as they occur within the school system. The population of the study consisted of 7,184 academic staff, comprising 291 principals and 6,893 teachers in 291 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size was 720 respondents, representing 10% of the population, selected using the proportionate stratified sampling technique from six Local Government Areas across the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire titled “Leadership and Respect as Principal Ethical Practices and Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (LRPEPAPSSQ)”. The instrument was structured on a four-point Likert scale: Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2), and Very Low Extent (1). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, who ensured its face, content and construct validity. Reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, which produced a reliability coefficient of .862, indicating a high level of internal consistency. A total of 800 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 720 were retrieved and used for analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance, using 2.50 as the criterion mean for decision-making. The findings indicated that leadership and respect significantly predict the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study recommends that principals should consistently demonstrate ethical leadership and respect to enhance effective school administration.

Keywords: Leadership, Respect, Principal, Ethical Practices, Administration, Public Secondary Schools, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership and respect are fundamental ethical practices that influence the effectiveness of school administration. In the context of public secondary schools, principals serve as the central authority responsible for coordinating human and material resources, maintaining discipline, and ensuring that institutional goals are achieved. Ethical practices such as leadership and respect play a crucial role in determining how effectively principals perform administrative functions. When principals demonstrate ethical leadership and respect for stakeholders, they create a supportive environment that enhances teacher commitment, collaboration, and overall school effectiveness.

Leadership as a principal ethical practice involves the ability of school leaders to guide, influence, and inspires teachers and students toward the achievement of educational objectives while adhering to moral principles such as fairness, integrity, and accountability. Ethical leadership is characterized by transparent decision-making, responsible use of authority, and consistent adherence to professional standards. In educational institutions, principals who exhibit ethical leadership promote trust, justice, and collaboration among staff members. Such leadership behaviors are essential for creating a positive school climate and enhancing the overall administrative performance of schools. Studies have shown that ethical leadership practices among school administrators significantly influence teachers' motivation, organizational trust, and job satisfaction, which in turn contribute to effective school administration (Fernandez, 2026; Zhu et al., 2004).

Furthermore, ethical leadership enables principals to coordinate school activities efficiently and ensure that teachers and students adhere to institutional policies and values. Principals who demonstrate ethical leadership act as role models for staff and students, fostering accountability, professionalism, and discipline within the school system. Research conducted in public secondary schools indicates that principals' ethical leadership practices positively influence teachers' effectiveness and overall school performance (Akudo & Okoye, 2025). The implication is that school leaders that grounded in ethical values enhance their administrative effectiveness by encouraging teamwork, open communication, and shared responsibility among staff members.

Respect is another critical ethical practice that significantly predicts effective school administration. According to Ololube (2024), respect in educational leadership refers to the recognition of the dignity, opinions and contributions of teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in the school community. Principals who treat teachers and students with respect promote positive interpersonal relationships, mutual trust, and cooperation within the school environment. Respectful leadership also encourages participatory decision-making, where teachers are involved in planning and implementing school policies. Such collaborative relationships improve staff morale and strengthen institutional commitment.

Empirical studies (e.g., Msangya, 2025; Obiekwe & Ezeugbor, 2019) emphasized that respect is a foundational value in ethical school leadership because it fosters positive professional relationships and promotes a healthy organizational climate. When school leaders demonstrate respect, they create an atmosphere where teachers feel valued and motivated to perform their duties effectively. Respectful interactions between principals and staff members enhance collaboration and reduce workplace conflicts, thereby improving administrative efficiency and school productivity (Msangya, 2025). Similarly, ethical leadership characterized

by fairness, justice, and respect has been found to significantly influence teacher motivation and organizational commitment in schools (Obiekwe & Ezeugbor, 2019).

In the context of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, leadership and respect as ethical practices are essential predictors of effective administration. Principals who exhibit ethical leadership provide clear direction, promote accountability and encourage collaborative decision-making. At the same time, the practice of respect strengthens relationships among stakeholders, improves communication, and fosters a supportive learning environment (Ololube, 2024). When these ethical practices are consistently demonstrated, they enhance administrative effectiveness by promoting discipline, staff commitment, and the achievement of educational goals. Consequently, leadership and respect remain indispensable ethical foundations for effective administration in public secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of school administration is largely dependent on the ethical practices demonstrated by school principals. In public secondary schools, principals are expected to provide sound leadership and demonstrate respect in their interactions with teachers, students, and other stakeholders in order to promote a conducive learning environment. Ethical practices such as leadership and respect are essential for fostering collaboration, maintaining discipline, encouraging teacher motivation, and ensuring the smooth implementation of educational policies. However, in many public secondary schools in Rivers State, concerns have been raised about administrative challenges such as poor coordination of school activities, ineffective communication, low teacher morale, and conflicts among staff and students. These challenges may be linked to weaknesses in the ethical practices of some school principals.

Leadership that lacks ethical direction may result in poor decision-making, favoritism, lack of accountability, and reduced trust among teachers and other stakeholders. Similarly, the absence of respect in principal-teacher relationships can lead to poor staff commitment, strained professional relationships, and decreased productivity within the school system. In spite of the recognized importance of ethical leadership in educational administration, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific ethical practices such as leadership and respect predict the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Therefore, this study sought to examine the extent to which leadership and respect as principal ethical practices predict the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine leadership and respect as principal ethical practices that predict the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

- Examine the extent leadership as principal ethical practice predicts effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Ascertain the extent respect as principal ethical practice predicts effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- To what extent does leadership as principal ethical practice predicts effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- To what extent does respect as principal ethical practice predicts effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses further guided the study:

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which leadership as principal ethical practice predicts effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which respect as principal ethical practice predicts effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Relations Theory

The human relations theory was propounded by Mary Packer Follet (1868-1933). Human Relations Theory states that in addition to finding the best technological strategies to improve output, it was beneficial for administration to consider the human elements in the organization. The theory was concerned with the human problems encountered in organizations such as welfare, motivation, retirement benefits among others and therefore concluded that such problems can only be minimized when there is co-operation among workers. Based on this, she developed four organizational principles, all of which centre on co-ordination: coordination by direct contact with the people concerned, coordination in the early stages, coordination as the reciprocal relation of all the factors in a situation, and coordination as a continuing process. The human relations theory has its central idea that the human factor is very important in the achievement of organizational goals. The proponent of this theory holds the view that workers will achieve better if their personal welfare was taken into consideration.

Human relations theory is relevant to this present study because it buttress the fact that the administrative arm of any organization especially the school should consider the welfare of the employees as utmost importance. Therefore, for effective secondary school administration in Rivers State to be actualized, the interest of teachers and other employees should be a priority by the way the school principal exhibit some ethical practices.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Leadership and Effective Administration of Public Secondary School

Leadership is the most important element of every organization such as the school (Chuang, 2018). It describes the characteristics of a leader, his/her qualities and behavior. The word leadership means the process of influencing people, so that their efforts are oriented toward achieving the goals of the organization. Leadership is the process of guiding others' behaviour towards achieving the stated objectives (Burns, 2018). It is the ability to influence others with exciting examples. An example, it encourages people to pursue goals that benefit the organization. In general, leadership involves creating a vision of the future of the organization, designing a strategy to achieve that vision, and communicating that vision to all members of the organization (James & Anthony, 2021).

Consequently, the question is "who is the leader in the secondary school?" and the most acceptable answer can be: The principal. He or she is the person who is saddled with task to influence individuals and groups within the school organization, help them in defining objectives, and guides them towards achieving these goals. Principal leadership transforms potentials into reality. It has to do with influencing people or personnel in the school and their potential for realizing school's goals. This is the maximum aspiration of ethical character, and high level of leaders (Horner, 2017; Ololube, 2017, 2021).

Good management and effective leadership displaced by the principal help to develop teamwork and the integration of individual and group goals. Principals in the school have to stimulate performance, and growing for the future with the staff in the school. While keeping eyes on performance indicators, principal's leadership should encourage creativity and innovation, risk taking and skills for effective administration of the school. Performance of all teachers and other staff has to be maintained and morale rebuilt (Okoroma, 2017). More so, it has been observed that when a principal display good leadership, it facilitates in many ways as managerial function for instance, by creating a shared vision for the school, by coordinating the school personnel or activities among units, communicating among school board, monitoring and controlling activities deviations, and motivating staff for higher performance for effective administration (Kahandawaarachchi, et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Okoroma (2017) reported that there is a significant relationship between leadership and school organizational administration. The scholar buttress that for school to be effective in administration, it up on the principal to choose a leadership style that is an indication of the type of change he or she wants to implement. The principal can increase the success of the school by exhibiting a good leadership style (Okoroma, 2017). The adoption of an appropriate leadership role enables the principal to have control over the teaching and non-teaching staff, and as well to avoid wastage of resources. It facilitates the ability of the principal to mobilize the school's resources and, in doing so, effectively address challenges facing the school (Sheard & Kakabadse, 2017).

In view of the above, Oluseyi and Ayo (2019) confirmed that there is a link between effective administration and leadership, by developing a model of charismatic/transformational leadership where the leaders' behaviour is said to give rise to inspiration, awe and empowerment to subordinates, resulting in exceptionally high effort, exceptionally high commitment and willingness to take risks. They concluded by noting that it has been widely accepted that effective administration required effective leadership. In other words, school performance and

administration will suffer in direct proportion if appropriate leadership in the school is neglected (Oluseyi & Ayo 2019). Teachers working in the school can perform or accomplish complex and simple tasks such as teaching, making of lesson notes, recording students' scores and performance, instilling discipline among students, going on field trips and many more only when the principal exhibit good leadership. When human efforts are effectively organized, it results in high productivity and quality service delivery, which would not be possible in an unorganized batch of individuals due to poor leadership (Hennessey, 2018). In other words, there is a synergy effect created by good leadership and people working together in an organized manner.

However, Folger (2020) opined that ethical practices like good leadership focus on moral values and fairness in decision making, consider the impact of organizational decisions on the outside world, and clearly communicate to employees how their actions at work contribute to the overall goals of the organization. In other words, a principal with good leadership will give meaning to their teachers' work and ensure that school decisions are based on sound moral values. Great leaders are always making efforts to incorporate moral principles in their beliefs, values and behaviour; they are committed to higher purpose, prudence, pride, patience, and persistence to ensure effective administration their organization (Suar, 2014).

Mitchelson (2016) identified six key attributes that characterized leadership as ethical practice. They include character, ethical awareness, community/people-orientation, motivating, encouraging and empowering, and managing ethical accountability. Besides, the characteristics of ethical leadership as identified by Stewart (2012) as cited in Monanu and Ekwochi (2019) are:

- The articulation and embodiment of the purpose and values of the organization by the leader.
- The leader focuses on organizational success rather than on personal ego.
- The leader finds the best people and develops them.
- He/she creates a living conversation about ethics, values and the creation of value for stakeholders,
- The leader takes a charitable understanding of others' values
- Make tough calls while being imaginative.
- Create stakeholder support and societal legitimacy.

Respect and Effective Administration of Public Secondary School

Respect as an ethical practice can be defined as consideration for self and of others (Balovich, 2017). Every employee needs to feel valued which is at the core of every human interaction (Khurana, 2017). Mutual respect is regarded as a value grounded in human relationships that requires attitudinal developments that are evolving, dynamic and involve acceptance, self-awareness of structural inequalities, open-mindedness, empowerment and ability to re-visit one cultural understanding of the world (Sheldon et al., 2014). A respectful school environment where teachers and other school personnel feel respected by the principal brings enormous benefits to the school, such that every staff are more satisfied with their jobs and as they are more grateful for their leader who is the principal, and also loyal to the school in ensuring effective administration (Rogers, 2018).

When a principal accord his staff respect, regardless of his position or status as the principal, it makes the staff acknowledge the fact that the principal sees him as a human, and that singular act motivates the staff to be up to his responsibilities (Douglass, 2017). The

establishment of respectful relationships in the school by the principal breeds a culture of continuous improvement. The culture of continuous improvement promises longevity and success, something that every school aspires to (Dames, 2016). Several literatures support the fact that workplace respect leads to important organizational outcomes such as greater organizational commitment, organizational effectiveness (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2016) and lower turnover intention (Jaramillo et al., 2019).

According to social exchange theory, employees in the workplace such as the teachers are involved in social exchange relationships with their leader who is the principal. The theory advocates around the reciprocity norms and contends that a service provided to one party creates a sense of reciprocity in the other party (Blau, 2019). When teachers and other school personnel are supported and treated with respect by the principal who is the manager of the school organization, they can be expected to reciprocate positive job experiences by developing a greater sense of commitment (Ullah et al., 2020) and identification with the school organization for effective administration. In the school, teachers who feel they are being respected by their principal have a greater level of status and self-esteem. A respectful atmosphere creates a positive work environment which echoes the belief of teachers and other member staff that they are valued by the principal and the school organization (De-Cremers & Tyler, 2015).

The school workplace respect as an ethical practice of principal has a number of positive outcomes. It can become a source for strengthening a teacher's self-esteems, is grounded in positive appraisal for teacher's participation by colleagues. A teacher's perception of being valued by the principal creates a strong relationship with peers which results in a stronger identification of being part of a collective school organization. Workplace respect between principal and teachers can be expected to lead to the development of trust among colleagues. Trust among colleagues gives a perception of respect within the school which is an important indicator of the quality of relationships in the school as a whole (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017). Teachers perceive that they are respected when their work experiences and interactions suggest that they are being treated in accordance with the standards defined by the principal. In contrast, teachers perceive that they are not respected when their principals or coworkers treat them in normatively inappropriate and non-inclusive ways (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This study examined leadership and respect as principal ethical practices that predicts the effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it examines an existing phenomenon with the aim of describing and explaining the situation as it occurs naturally. The descriptive survey design is also suitable for studies that involve collecting data from a sample drawn from a population in order to investigate prevailing conditions and generalize the findings to the wider population.

The population of the study consisted of 7,184 staff, which comprises of 291 principals and 6,893 teachers from all the 291 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This information was obtained from the Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Port Harcourt, Rivers State (2022). The sample size for the study comprised of 720 respondents, representing 10% of the total population. The sample was selected using the proportionate stratified sampling technique, which ensured adequate representation of respondents across six Local Government

Areas drawn from the three Senatorial Districts in Rivers State, namely Rivers South-East, Rivers West, and Rivers East.

The instrument for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled “Leadership and Respect as Principal Ethical Practices and Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (LRPEPAPSSQ)”. The questionnaire contained two sections: the first section elicited respondents’ demographic information, while the second section consisted of items designed to answer the research questions. The instrument was structured using a modified four-point Likert scale with the following response options: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE) = 3 points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point. Respondents were required to indicate the option that best reflected their opinions.

To ensure that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure, three (3) copies of the questionnaire were submitted to experts in measurement and evaluation for validation. The instrument was also subjected to a reliability test to determine its consistency. To achieve this, 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 30 respondents (6 principals and 24 teachers) from schools outside the study sample but with similar characteristics. The data obtained were analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of .862, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

800 copies of the questionnaire were distributed personally by the researcher with the assistance of two trained research assistants. This approach facilitated the efficient distribution and collection of the questionnaires. At the end of the exercise, 720 copies were successfully retrieved and found suitable for analysis.

Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions, while One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 served as the benchmark for decision-making. Respondents’ mean scores that equal to or above 2.50 were regarded as high extent, while mean scores below 2.50 indicated low extent.

RESULTS

Answer to the Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent does leadership as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of respondents answer to leadership and principal ethical practice

s/n	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Principal leadership help to develop teamwork and the integration of individual and group goals for effective administration of schools.	2.7250	1.26554	High extent
2.	Leadership displayed by the principal ensures discipline among the teachers and students for effective administration of schools.	2.9861	1.23456	High extent
3.	Effective leadership of principal ensures that teachers have the knowledge or mastery of their subjects in classrooms for effective administration of schools.	3.0583	1.26004	High extent
4.	Principal leadership enables him observe managerial principles of equity, justice, fairness and kindness for effective administration	2.9861	1.20145	High extent

	of schools.			
5.	Principal's leadership encourages creativity, innovation, risk taking and skills for effective administration of the school.	3.0556	1.14327	High extent
6.	Leadership role enables the principal to have control over the teaching and non-teaching staff for effective administration of schools.	3.0736	1.13062	High extent
Grand total		2.9807	1.20591	High extent

Research question one states that “To what extent does leadership as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria”? The aim of this research question was to determine the extent leadership as a principal ethical practice predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Data in Table 1 revealed that principal style of leadership help to develop teamwork and the integration of individual and group goals for effective administration of schools; leadership displayed by the principal ensures discipline among the teachers and students for effective administration of schools, and effective leadership of principal ensures that teachers have the knowledge or mastery of their subjects in classrooms for effective administration of schools. Respondents additionally asserted that principals leadership enables him or her observe managerial principles of equity, justice, fairness; their leadership encourages creativity, innovation, risk taking and skills for effective administration of the school and leadership role enables the principal to have control over the teaching and non-teaching staff for effective administration of schools. The grand mean (2.9807) and standard deviation (1.20591) supports to a high extent that leadership as a principal ethical practice predicts that administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: To what extent does respect as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents answer to respect and principal ethical practice

s/n	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
7.	The establishment of respectful relationships by the principal breeds a culture of continuous improvement in school activities for effective administration of schools.	2.3792	1.37810	High extent
8.	Respect encourages staff compliance with administrative policies by the principal for effective administration of schools.	2.4375	1.40394	High extent
9.	Respect leads to staff commitment and lowers turnover intention for effective administration of schools.	2.3917	1.31829	High extent
10.	Teachers who are respected by their principal have a greater level of status and self-esteem for effective administration of schools.	3.0458	1.30873	High extent
11.	Mutual respect between principal and teachers lead to the development of trust among colleagues for effective administration of schools.	2.8542	1.28416	High extent
12.	Respect displayed by the principal kindles loyalty from the teachers for effective administration of schools.	2.8236	1.26941	High extent
Grand total		2.6553	1.32710	High extent

Research question two states that “To what extent does respect as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria”? the reason for this research question was to determine the extent respect as a principal ethical practice predicts the

administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The statistics in Table 2 demonstrates that the establishment of respectful relationships by the principal breeds a culture of continuous improvement in school activities for effective administration of schools; respect encourages staff compliance with administrative policies by the principal for effective administration of schools, and respect leads to staff commitment and lowers turnover intention for effective administration of schools. The respondents agreed to a high extent that teachers who are respected by their principal have a greater level of status and self-esteem for effective administration of schools; mutual respect between principal and teachers lead to the development of trust among colleagues for effective administration of schools and respect displayed by the principal kindles loyalty from the teachers for effective administration of schools. The information from the grand mean of 2.6553, with a standard deviation of 1.32710, expresses that respect as a principal ethical practice predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which leadership as a principal's ethical practices predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 3: ANOVA Analysis of difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which leadership as a principal's ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.485	1	5.485	4.215	.040
Within Groups	934.293	718	1.301		
Total	939.778	719			

The One-way-analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics computed as shown in Table 3 above, using status (principals and teachers) as independents variables on items 1-6 of section B of the instrument as dependents variables shows that both principals and teachers have no significant difference between their mean scores on the extent to which leadership as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 4.215 and a Sig. of .040, illustrations that both principals and teachers hold that significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which leadership as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Thus, hypothesis one was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which respect as a principal's ethical practices predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis of difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which respect as a principal's ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.965	1	8.965	5.244	.022
Within Groups	1227.467	718	1.710		
Total	1236.432	719			

The One-way-analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics computed as shown in Table 4 above, using status (principals and teachers) as independent variables on items 7-12 of section B of the instrument as dependent variables shows that both principals and teachers have no significant difference between their mean scores on the extent to which respect as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 5.244 and a Sig. of .022, demonstrates that both principals and teachers embrace that significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which respect as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Accordingly, hypothesis two was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Leadership as a principal ethical practice predict and the administration of public secondary schools

Evidence from this study's analysis shows that the grand mean (2.9807) and standard deviation (1.20591) supports to a high extent that leadership as a principal ethical practice predicts that administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 4.215 and with a Sig. of .040, illustrations that both principals and teachers hold that no significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which leadership as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. these means that both the principals and teachers to high extent agree that leadership as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools.

These results are in line with Chuang (2018) study when he found that Leadership is the most important element of every organization such as the school. Leadership is all about the process of influencing people so that their efforts are oriented toward achieving the goals of the organization. Leadership is a process of guiding others' behaviour towards achieving the stated objectives (Burns, 2018). Leadership involves creating a vision for the future of the organization, designing a strategy to achieve that vision, and communicating that vision to all members of the organization (James & Anthony, 2021).

Consequently, the principal is saddled with task to influence individuals and groups within the school organization, help them in defining objectives, and guide them towards achieving these goals. Principal leadership transforms potentials into reality. This has to do with influencing people or personnel in the school and their potential for realizing school's goals (Horner, 2017).

In the same vein, Kahandawaarachchi et al. (2016) and Okoromw (2017) found that good management and effective leadership displaced by the principal helps to develop teamwork and the integration of individual and group goals. Principals in the school have to stimulate

performance, and growing for the future with the staff in the school. While keeping eyes on performance indicators, principal's leadership should encourage creativity and innovation, risk taking and skills for effective administration of the school. Performance of all teachers and other staff has to be maintained and morale rebuilt. More so, it has been observed that when a principal display good leadership, it facilitates in many ways as managerial function for instance, by creating a shared vision for the school, by coordinating the school personnel/activities among units, communicating among school board, monitoring/controlling activities deviations, and motivating staff for higher performance for effective administration.

Respect as a principal ethical practice predict and the administration of public secondary schools

The evidences from the information from the grand mean of 2.6553, and a standard deviation of 1.32710, expresses that respect as a principal ethical practice predicts the administration of public secondary schools, and the between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 5.244 and a Sig. of .022, demonstrates that both principals and teachers embrace that no significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which respect as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Accordingly, both the principals and teachers to a high extent agree that respect as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools.

This study's findings are in line with that of Balovich (2017) and Khurana (2017) found that Respect as an ethical practice is consideration for self and of others. Every employee needs to feel valued which is at the core of every human interaction. Mutual respect is regarded as a value grounded in human relationships that requires attitudinal developments that are evolving, dynamic and involve acceptance, self-awareness of structural inequalities, open-mindedness, empowerment and ability to re-visit one cultural understanding of the world (Sheldon et al., 2014). A respectful school environment where teachers and other school personnel feel respected by the principal brings enormous benefits to the school, such that every staff are more satisfied with their jobs and as they are more grateful for their leader who is the principal, and also loyal to the school in ensuring effective administration (Rogers, 2018).

In the same vein, Douglass (cf., 2017) found that when a principal accord his or her staff respect, regardless of their position or status as the principal, it makes the staff acknowledge the fact that the principal sees them as a human, and that singular act motivates staff to be up to their responsibilities. The establishment of respectful relationships in the school by the principal breeds a culture of continuous improvement. The culture of continuous improvement promises longevity and success, something that every school aspires to (Dames, 2016). Several literatures support the fact that workplace respect leads to important organizational outcomes such as greater organizational commitment, organizational effectiveness (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2016) and lower turnover intention (Jaramillo, et al., 2019).

To Rogers and Ashforth (cf., 2017), found that the school workplace respect as an ethical practice of principal has a number of positive outcomes. It can become a source for strengthening a teacher's self-esteems, is grounded in positive appraisal for teacher's participation by colleagues. A teacher's perception of being valued by the principal creates a strong relationship with peers which results in a stronger identification of being part of a collective school organization. Workplace respect between principal and teachers can be expected to lead to the

development of trust among colleagues. Trust among colleagues gives a perception of respect within the school which is an important indicator of the quality of relationships in the school as a whole. Teachers perceive that they are respected when their work experiences and interactions suggest that they are being treated in accordance with the standards defined by the principal. In contrast, teachers perceive that they are not respected when their principals or coworkers treat them in normatively inappropriate and non-inclusive ways.

CONCLUSION

This study examined leadership and respect as principal ethical practices that predict the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings highlighted that ethical leadership is significant in enhancing the effectiveness of school administration. Principals who demonstrate strong leadership qualities such as vision, accountability, fairness, and transparency are better able to coordinate school activities, motivate staff, and achieve educational goals. In addition, respect for teachers, students, and other stakeholders encourage positive school climate that promotes cooperation, trust and mutual understanding. When principals treat members of the school community with dignity and consideration, it strengthens relationships and improves commitment to institutional objectives. The study therefore concluded that leadership and respect are critical ethical practices that significantly influence the quality of school administration. It is recommended that principals consistently demonstrate ethical leadership and uphold respect in their interactions to promote effective administration and improved performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following were put forward as result of the findings from this study:

- Principals should be strengthened to embrace effective leadership as an ethical practice that predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Respect as a principal ethical practice should be emphasized for the effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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