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PRINCIPALS' SUPERVISORY BEHAVIOR AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TO WORK IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated principals' supervisory behavior and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria, with particular focus on the relationship between classroom visitation and instructional motivation. A correlational research design was adopted, which enabled the collection of firsthand data from teachers regarding how principals' supervisory practices influence their attitude to work. All the 18 public secondary schools in Cross River State, were involved in the study through census method. The population comprised 3,441 teachers across 18 public secondary schools in Cross River State. Using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 358 teachers was selected. Data were gathered using a structured 18-item questionnaire titled Principals' Supervisory Behavior and Teachers' Attitude to Work Questionnaire (PSBTAWQ), validated by three experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Calabar. Reliability was confirmed through a trial test using the Cronbach Alpha method, yielding coefficients of .81 and .85. The data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) at the 0.05 level of significance with SPSS Version 27. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between principals' classroom visitation and teachers' instructional motivation. The study concluded that effective supervisory behavior by principals enhances teachers' motivation and promotes a positive attitude to work. It recommended that principals engage in regular, supportive classroom supervision and professional feedback sessions to improve teachers' instructional performance and overall school effectiveness.

Keywords: Supervisory Behaviour, Classroom Visitation, Instructional Motivation, Teachers' Attitude, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Secondary schools in Nigeria constitute a vital component of the nation's educational structure, serving as the bridge between primary and tertiary education. According to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), secondary education aims to prepare students for useful living within the society and for higher education. It is designed to provide learners with academic, moral, and vocational skills necessary for national development and personal growth. These schools therefore play a key role in shaping students' intellectual capacity, values, and skills they will need to enhance their competence to live in today's society as well as become productive workers and full participants in their societies (Omorobi & Obona, 2018; Obona & Etete, 2021). It also includes equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for personal growth, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning (Odo et al., 2025). The effectiveness of secondary education, however, largely depends on the attitude of teachers who implement the curriculum and guide students. The attitude of teachers to work is crucial, as it directly impacts students' learning outcomes, classroom engagement, and the overall success of secondary education in Nigeria.

In the context of this study, teachers' attitude to work refers to the mindset and behavioral orientation that teachers display toward their professional responsibilities. Amagboruju et al. (2025) describe it as the mental disposition, outlook, and behavioral tendencies teachers exhibit in their interactions with their duties, colleagues, students, and the broader school environment. Similarly, Willie et al. (2025) view teachers' work attitude as the level of commitment and mental orientation they bring to their professional roles, which significantly influences instructional effectiveness and students' learning outcomes. This attitude is reflected in teachers' motivation, discipline, and dedication to their tasks (Appavoo, 2020). A teacher with a positive attitude to work is characterized by enthusiasm, commitment, openness to growth, and a willingness to exceed expectations, while maintaining supportive relationships with learners and colleagues (Pavitola, Latsone, & Bethere, 2021). Such teachers prepare lessons diligently, uphold high academic standards, persevere through challenges, and pursue continuous professional improvement (Pavitola et al., 2021). This constructive disposition enhances teaching efficiency, promotes job satisfaction, creates a stimulating learning atmosphere, and supports overall school effectiveness (Leonard, 2025). According to Uzu et al. (2025), teachers with the right attitude to work show exceptional dedication to their roles, often going beyond assigned tasks to improve student achievement. They also cultivate positive relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators, thereby fostering collaboration and contributing

meaningfully to the attainment of institutional goals.

The attitude of teachers toward their work plays a pivotal role in the effective attainment of educational goals. Willie et al. (2025) assert that teachers' attitudes constitute a critical factor in promoting motivation, respect, and achievement in the teaching and learning process. Despite its recognized importance, the prevalence of poor attitudes and low commitment among teachers has become a major concern in the education sector, drawing the attention of scholars, policymakers, and other stakeholders. This issue has been linked to the increasing number of out-of-school children in Nigeria (Obona et al., 2023; Iwogbe et al., 2025; Iyiegbuniwe et al., 2025). According to Difoni et al. (2025), the growing decline in teachers' work commitment continues to worry parents and education authorities, as it poses a serious threat to the realization of national educational objectives.

Evidence of poor teachers' attitude to work has been observed in public secondary schools across Cross River State. Observations confirmed reports that many teachers arrive late to school, leave before the official closing time, and spend limited time on classroom activities that enhance students' learning. Students have also complained that some teachers prioritize personal business during official work hours, neglecting their instructional duties. Such unprofessional behavior has far-reaching implications for the quality of education, as it contributes to the production of ill-prepared graduates. This deterioration is believed to have fueled social problems such as youth unemployment, moral decadence, disrespect for authority, and increased substance abuse. Nwogbo and Ugwuoke, as cited in Willie et al. (2025), describe this situation as an epidemic within the school system that demands urgent intervention. The attitude of teachers to work, however, can be significantly influenced by several factors—one of the most critical being principals' supervisory behaviour.

In recent times, instructional supervision has gained increased attention due to the critical role education plays in national development and the growing need to enhance its quality. According to Osakwe, as cited in Ekpoh and Eze (2015), supervision involves providing professional guidance and support to teachers and students to ensure effective teaching and learning within the school system. Difoni et al. (2025) describe it as a set of structured strategies and processes employed by school administrators—particularly principals and supervisors—to monitor, guide, and assist teachers in carrying out their instructional responsibilities. The primary aim of instructional supervision is to improve teaching standards by promoting the use of innovative instructional methods and offering constructive feedback. According to Igbineweka and Egbai (2017), to improve instruction, most types of supervision focus on teacher behaviour, with much emphasis on what the teacher says and does in the classroom.

As instructional leaders, principals provide professional support to teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills and effectiveness in lesson planning, use of instructional

materials, classroom management, and record keeping. Through supervision, principals offer meaningful feedback and direction that can significantly impact the quality of learning outcomes. Moreover, instructional supervision enables teachers to refine their professional competencies and stay abreast of modern teaching approaches that address diverse student needs. Difoni et al. (2025) further emphasize that effective supervision allows school administrators to identify instructional weaknesses, strengthen best practices, and cultivate a supportive learning environment where both teachers and students can achieve optimal educational outcomes. Consequently, it is essential that principals' supervisory behaviors be strategically directed to improve teachers' attitudes to work. This study, therefore, focuses on principals' supervisory behaviors such as classroom visitation and instructional motivation.

Classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work

Principals' classroom visitation refers to the practice where principals make unannounced visits to classrooms to observe ongoing teaching and learning activities. Difoni et al. (2025) describe classroom visitation as an essential instructional supervisory technique in which the supervisor observes both teachers and students during lessons to assess the effectiveness of instructional delivery. Igwe, as cited in Ekpoh and Eze (2015), explains that classroom visitation is a process through which an educational leader with experience and insight assists teachers in improving their instructional methods and enhancing students' learning outcomes. The central goal of principals' classroom visitation, therefore, is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Difoni et al. (2025) further highlight that the key aim of such visits is to provide constructive feedback, evaluate teaching efficiency, and promote teachers' professional growth. Nonetheless, Igwe in Ekpoh and Eze (2015) observes that many teachers often view supervision with fear and apprehension, making them less receptive to it. Hence, for classroom visitation to be effective, it should be carefully planned and thoughtfully implemented.

Classroom observation serves as an effective approach for improving teaching quality and assessing students' academic performance (Difoni et al., 2025). Studies that focus explicitly on teacher attitudes identify supervision —including classroom visitation— as a measurable predictor of teachers' attitudes to work when combined with training and appropriate placement. Arop et al. (2019) reported that supervision (alongside training and placement) significantly predicted teachers' attitudes to work, with supervision making a meaningful contribution even when other personnel-management variables were controlled for. This suggests that visitation practices that are supportive, developmental, and linked to professional growth can improve intrinsic and extrinsic facets of teachers' attitudes. In a related study, Ategwu et al. (2024) in a study found a strong positive relationship between supervisors' classroom visitation and teachers' job delivery

Sule et al. (2012) investigated the effect of principals' classroom visitation and inspection on teachers' job performance in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Findings analyzed using one-way ANOVA revealed that classroom visitation and lesson note inspections had a significant positive effect on teachers' job performance. Similarly, Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) studied the link between principals' supervisory strategies and teachers' job performance in Ebonyi State. Through Pearson correlation and t-test analyses, they found a strong positive relationship between classroom observation and teachers' performance. Ekpoh and Eze (2015) investigated the relationship between principals' supervisory techniques and teachers' job performance in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The results obtained revealed that a significant relationship exist between principals' supervisory techniques in terms of classroom visitation, workshop techniques and teachers' job performance. In another study, Reños and Pontillas (2024) examined teachers' perceptions of classroom observation as a tool for professional development. Their findings showed a significant positive correlation between classroom observation and professional growth across the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation stages.

Instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work

Motivation significantly influences teachers' attitudes toward their professional responsibilities. When teachers are well motivated, they exhibit enthusiasm, dedication, and a positive approach to instructional duties. On the other hand, insufficient motivation often results in low morale, reduced effort, and declining student achievement. Instructional motivation refers to the intentional efforts and techniques adopted by school leaders to encourage, guide, and empower teachers to achieve high levels of teaching effectiveness and commitment to educational goals. It entails fostering a supportive work environment that promotes enthusiasm, professional development, and dedication to improving learners' outcomes. Effectively applied motivation enhances teachers' efficiency and willingness to perform their duties diligently. Northouse (2016) emphasizes that when school principals demonstrate effective leadership through motivational practices, it enhances teachers' morale and productivity, thereby stimulating greater student engagement. As the central agents in the teaching–learning process, teachers' motivation directly affects the overall quality of education. Hence, principals' instructional motivation functions as a supervisory mechanism that supports, stimulates, and strengthens teachers' commitment, ultimately improving instructional quality and overall job performance. Instructional motivational strategies, therefore, consist of diverse incentive-based measures aimed at fostering and maintaining teachers' dedication to their professional roles.

Motivational strategies for teachers often encompass a range of benefits such as free healthcare, paid sick leave, vehicle and housing loans, vacation allowances, retirement and pension schemes, insurance packages, bonuses, and transportation or

housing support (Roeloelofsen in Amagboruju et al., 2025; Henderson, 2014). These incentives play a crucial role in improving teachers' welfare, ensuring financial stability, fostering job security, and enhancing their commitment and morale within the educational system. Hamza (2007), in a study conducted in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, found that fringe benefits have a significant positive effect on teachers' instructional effectiveness in secondary schools. Similarly, Adamu (2019) examined the link between fringe benefits, professional development, and job performance in Adamawa State, concluding that both factors significantly influence teachers' effectiveness. In Bangladesh, Prosenjit et al. (2021) reported that incentives such as insurance coverage, retirement plans, paid leave, opportunities for professional growth, and flexible working arrangements improved teachers' loyalty, with flexible hours contributing most significantly.

Ajani et al. (2018) observed in their study of Lagos State public schools that professional development initiatives enhanced teachers' instructional competence, thereby improving student outcomes. Similarly, Willie et al. (2024) in a study revealed that both school culture management and inclusive decision-making significantly relate to teachers' attitudes to work. In the same vein, Abazie (2020), in a study involving 619 teachers in Enugu State, found a strong positive relationship between participation in workshops, orientations, and conferences and teachers' job performance, emphasizing the importance of in-service training in educational success. Furthermore, Amagboruju et al. (2025) explored the relationship between headteachers' motivational strategies and teachers' work attitudes in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. Using a correlational design with a population of 598 teachers from 24 public primary schools, the study confirmed that headteachers' motivational practices significantly influence teachers' attitudes toward their work.

Nwogbo and Ugwuoke (2021) examined teachers' work attitude as a correlate of their job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was guided by one research question and tested one hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance, using a correlational research design. The population consisted of 6,396 teachers across 261 public secondary schools in the state. The findings revealed a positive correlation between teachers' attitude to work and their job performance. Similarly, Ochuko (2020) explored the relationship between motivation and work attitude among public secondary school teachers in Delta State, Nigeria, and reported a significant positive relationship between teachers' motivation and their work attitude.

The review of both theoretical and empirical literature in this section indicates that considerable research has been conducted on supervisory behaviour and teachers' attitude to work. However, there appears to be a dearth of studies specifically focusing on principals' supervisory behaviour—particularly in the areas of classroom visitation and instructional motivation—and

their relationship with teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. This reveals a noticeable gap in the existing literature. Most of the reviewed studies were conducted in other states, and their findings may not fully reflect the contextual realities of Cross River State. Furthermore, although related research exists, none of the previous studies have adopted the same sub-variables as those employed in the present investigation. Consequently, this study was undertaken to address these identified gaps, provide context-specific insights, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on principals' supervisory behaviour and teachers' attitude to work.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' attitude to work includes factors such as punctuality, commitment, lesson preparation, student assessment, teamwork, and professional dedication. A positive attitude enhances teaching effectiveness, student achievement, and school productivity, while negative behaviours like lateness, absenteeism, poor lesson delivery, and weak interpersonal relations undermine educational quality. In Cross River State, observations and complaints from parents and students reveal that many teachers in public secondary schools show reduced commitment through irregular attendance and poor instructional engagement, resulting in declining academic performance and lower educational standards. Despite government efforts—such as teacher training, improved salaries, and school supervision—the issue of poor work attitude remains unresolved. Scholars have suggested various ways to enhance teacher motivation and accountability, yet progress appears minimal. The researcher suspects that this persistent challenge may be connected to principals' supervisory behaviours, especially in classroom visitation and instructional motivation. Consequently, this study aims to investigate how principals' supervisory behavior relates to teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined principals' supervisory behavior and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether there is a relationship between Principals':

1. Classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State.
2. Instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Research hypotheses

1. Principals' classroom visitation does not significantly relate to teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State.
2. Principals' instructional motivation does not significantly relate to teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The study was conducted in public

secondary schools in Cross River State. The design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect first-hand information from teachers regarding the principals' supervisory behavior and how it enhances their attitude to work.

The population of this study comprises all 3,441 teachers in the 18 public secondary schools within Cross River State (Planning Research and Statistics Department Secondary Education Board, Calabar, 2025).

This study will employ census method to ensure that all public secondary schools are included in the study. The sample size was 358 teachers determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size at a 5% margin of error.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N=3,441 (population)
- e=0.05 (level of precision)

$$n = \frac{3,441}{1+ 3,441\ (0.05)^2} = \frac{3,441}{1+ 3,441\ (0.0025)} = \frac{3,441}{1+ 3,441\ (0.0025)} = \frac{3,441}{1+8.6025} = \frac{3,441}{9.6025} = 358$$

Data was collected using 18 items questionnaire designed by the researcher on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) titled: Principals' Supervisory Behavior and Teachers' Attitude to Work Questionnaire (PSBTAWQ). The instrument was divided into three sections: Section A contained demographic data of the respondents. Section B measured items on the independent sub-variables (classroom visitation and instructional motivation), and Section C contained items that measure teachers' attitude to work. The questionnaire items were submitted for review to three experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Calabar. The instrument's reliability was established through a trial test with 50 teachers found in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Using the Cronbach alpha formula, a reliability coefficient of .81 and .85 was obtained. The researcher and 10 well trained and motivated assistants administered the questionnaire after obtaining permission from the respective school authorities throughout the public secondary schools.

After a period of 5 working days, all the questionnaire copies were retrieved from the respondents, and sorted to ensure all items were properly responded to. It recorded 100% completion and return rate. The questionnaires were organized by according to the variables, with positively worded items scored on a 4-point scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1), and negatively worded items scored in

reverse. The scores were then transferred to statistical packages for analysis. Data analysis was based on the null hypotheses guiding the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to analyze the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. All data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. In testing the null hypotheses, if the p-value is equal to or greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. However, if the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The interpretation of the correlation coefficients followed the guideline recommended by Alsagr (2021).

Coefficient	Interpretation
.00 - .19	Weak Negative Relationship
.20 - .39	Fair Negative Relationship
.40 - .69	Moderate Positive Relationship
.70 - .89	Strong Positive Relationship
.90 -.99	Very Strong Positive Relationship
1	Perfect Relationship

Results

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis one: Principals' classroom visitation does not significantly relate to teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

The two variables in this hypothesis are principals' classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. Table 1 showed the correlation coefficient between principals' classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant for teachers' attitude to work ($r = .83$, $p<.05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis one is rejected. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between principals' classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Summary of correlation between Principals' classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State (N=358)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Sig.
Principals' classroom visitation	18.37	4.32		
Teachers' attitude to work	19.17	4.36	.83*	.000

*Significant at p<.05 df=356

Hypothesis two: Principals' instructional motivation does not significantly relate to teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are principals' instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. Table 2 showed the correlation

coefficient between principals' instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant for teachers' attitude to work (r = .83, p<.05). Since *p* (.000) is less than *p* (.05), hypothesis one is rejected. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between principals' instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of correlation between principals' instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State (N=358)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S. D	R	Sig.
Principals' instructional motivation	18.60	3.93		
Teachers' attitude to work	19.17	4.36	.76*	.000

*Significant at p<.05 df=356

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis of hypothesis one revealed that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between principals' classroom visitation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria (r = .83, p<.05). The result is not surprising because, it means in the study area, principals frequently engage in classroom visitations as part of their supervisory responsibilities, which helps ensure that teaching and learning activities are effectively carried out. This regular classroom visits by principals likely enhances teachers' commitment to their duties, improves lesson preparation, and promotes punctuality and enthusiasm toward instructional tasks. The finding implies that effective supervision through classroom visitation is a key determinant of teachers' positive work attitude in public secondary schools. It suggests that when principals actively participate in classroom observation and provide supportive feedback, teachers are more likely to exhibit higher levels of dedication, discipline, and instructional efficiency.

The finding aligns with previous studies that emphasize the supervisory value of classroom observation in enhancing teacher performance and motivation. For instance, Arop et al. (2019) found that supervision, alongside training and placement, significantly predicted teachers' attitudes to work, highlighting that supportive and developmental supervisory practices foster both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among teachers. Similarly, Sule et al. (2012) reported that principals' classroom visitation and inspection activities had a significant positive impact on teachers' job performance in Akwa Ibom State, suggesting that effective visitation encourages better lesson preparation and instructional commitment. In line with this, Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) also observed a strong positive relationship between classroom observation and teachers' performance in Ebonyi State, reinforcing the notion that regular,

constructive supervision enhances teachers' work habits and professional engagement.

The result of the analysis of hypothesis two revealed that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between principals' instructional motivation and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria ($r = .76$, $p<.05$). The result is not surprising because, in the study area, principals possibly adopted various instructional motivational strategies such as recognition, verbal praise, professional support, and the provision of teaching materials to inspire teachers toward better job performance. These motivational efforts create a positive working environment that enhances teachers' morale, satisfaction, and commitment to their duties. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm, punctuality, and dedication to instructional tasks. The finding implies that principals' instructional motivation plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' attitudes toward work. Therefore, by fostering a supportive and motivating school climate, principals can strengthen teachers' sense of belonging, boost their job satisfaction, and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

The findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing the critical role of motivation in enhancing teachers' performance and commitment. For instance, Hamza (2007) found that fringe benefits such as allowances and welfare packages significantly improved teachers' instructional effectiveness in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, underscoring the influence of motivation on job commitment. Similarly, Adamu (2019) reported that fringe benefits and professional development opportunities jointly contributed to teachers' effectiveness in Adamawa State, demonstrating that both financial and non-financial incentives boost work attitude. In a related finding, Amagboruju et al. (2025) established that headteachers' motivational practices were strongly linked to teachers' positive work attitudes in Calabar Metropolis. These studies collectively reinforce the present result, suggesting that when principals actively motivate teachers through recognition, support, and improved welfare conditions, teachers respond with higher morale, dedication, and enthusiasm toward their instructional responsibilities.

Conclusion

The study investigated principals' supervisory behavior and teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the relationship between classroom visitation and instructional motivation among teachers. Findings indicated a significant and positive correlation between principals' classroom visitation and teachers' instructional motivation. The study concluded that principals' supervisory behavior plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' attitude to work and enhancing instructional effectiveness in secondary schools across Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should regularly conduct constructive classroom visitations to monitor teaching practices, provide professional feedback, and motivate teachers toward improved instructional performance.
2. School authorities should integrate effective motivational strategies—such as recognition of outstanding performance, provision of teaching resources, and supportive feedback that will sustain teachers' enthusiasm and positive attitude toward work.
3. The Ministry of Education should organize periodic workshops and seminars to enhance principals' supervisory skills and behaviors with focus on supportive and motivational supervision rather than fault-finding.

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