UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.17 (1); ***January-June, 2024*** https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 ***Impact Factor***: 5.156; ***2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;***
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. *Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the nature of relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided this study, and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population is comprised of 8.420 teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size of 1,200 teachers was drawn using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two instruments were used for data collection namely, Questionnaire on Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviour (QPELB), which was sub-divided into two clusters: Cluster 1 centered on principals' communicative ethics while cluster 11 centered on principals' ethics in decision making and Organizational Climax Index (OCI). The instruments were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha method. Reliability coefficient obtained from QPELB yielded coefficient of 0.74 for cluster I and 0.88 for cluster II. While OCI yielded a co-efficient of 0.82. Pearson Product Moment coefficient correlation was used to answer research questions and simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour; principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was recommended that Anambra State Ministry of Education and All Nigeria Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) should organize training on communicative and decision-making ethics for effective school organisational climate that will help them to manage the situations in their schools before adopting communication styles.

Keywords: Principal, ethics, leadership behaviour, school organisational climate, communicative ethics, decisional ethics.

Introduction

Leadership is a major and basic concern for all organisation and institutions (educational organisation inclusive) in various countries of the world of which

Nigeria, Anambra State precisely is not an exception. Different organisations across different countries around the world have been attempting to define and stress the importance of effective leadership behaviour in their organisational daily life activities, programs, and performance so as to ensure adequate realisation of organisational goals.

Adewalle (2014) defines leadership as the operational tool used in influencing people to strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of the organisational goals. While explaining the concept of leadership, Zulkafli, (2015) states that "a leader knows how to motivate better than anyone else. Through motivation, leaders channel workers' energy and professional potential in order to achieve organisational goals. According to Zulkafli, leading is not about talking and giving orders, it involves listening and creating a conducive environment for everyone in your team to realize their potential. This corroborates with the statement made by Duangjai and Saowanee, (2013) which opined that leadership is a pattern of behaviours used by those in authority to influence group members and make decision regarding objectives, strategies, and performance within the group activities. In other words, without these leadership behaviours, an organisation might not likely succeed.

Leadership behaviour is a series of attitudes, characteristics and skills used by leaders in different situations in accordance with individual and organisational goals (Naomy, 2015). In the opinion of Babalola (2016), leadership behaviour is seen as a process through which the leader influences others in a bid to attain the group goal. When the leadership behaviour in an organisation is effective, there is progress. However, when it is defective, the organisation dwindles and if not checked, it may go into extinction. Leadership behaviours have been identified as one of the major factors influencing the productivity of subordinates in any organisation and the secondary school system is not an exception (Babayomi, 2006). Operationally, leadership behaviour is therefore perceived as an important instrument in the initiation and implementation of organisational policies, including educational policies and philosophy of secondary school education.

However, the ability of secondary school education to achieve its stated goals and objectives, revolves around the proper management of human and material resources and at the same time monitoring of various school activities by the secondary school leader (principals). In other words, the desirability of achieving secondary school objectives lies on the leadership prowess exerted by secondary school principals. Igbokwe (2015) and The Wallace Foundation (2018) conceived the school principal as an ethical leader whose image reflects the values, organisation, instruction, spirit, and personality of the school. Principals as leaders in secondary school organisation are known to be bridge builders. Hence, they are meant to continue from where the primary school education stopped and prepare learners for successful transition to tertiary institution. That is why the position of the principal as a leader within the school cannot be over-emphasized.

A competent principal can initiate steps for school improvement, create favourable school climate for learners and friendly working environment for teachers and other school officials (Hanaysha, 2016). Wilson (2017) identified the

principal as a teacher and the leader of the school who is always dynamic and believes in change and has capacity to prepare future leaders and develop the skills they may need to succeed in the future. More so, the principals' roles in the administration of the school covers many areas such as, decision making, recruitment, delegation of duties and evaluation, student discipline, parents and host community relations, resource allocation, creating and maintaining a healthy school climate. To achieve these in secondary schools in Anambra State, principals need to apply the needed ethical leadership behaviour in administering and managing the material and human resources of the school.

While explaining the concept of ethical leadership behaviour, Agbim (2018) sees ethics as accepted principles of right and or wrong that govern the conduct of person, members of a profession or the action of organisation as a whole. Thus, ethical leadership behavior is defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and the promotion of such conduct in followers through a two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Hao, Maorhu and Qian 2015). A leader is said to be ethical or to behave ethically when he or she is honest, has respect for his followers and has the ability to communicate the dreams and aspirations of the organisation to his followers and exchanges ideas with them as regards to decision making. According to Demirdaz and Ekmekioglu (2015) cited in Obiekwe and Ezeugbor (2019), ethical leaders respect their employees' rights by treating them fairly and involving them in decision-making process.

Eboka (2016) sees Ethical leadership behaviours as behaviours that are displayed as leadership functions are carried out in the school system. The author went further to state that, the ethical leadership behaviours of school principals enable them to adhere to a more universal standard of moral behaviours and to see their teachers not just as followers but as fellow stakeholders and partners striving to achieve a common purpose. Principals' display of ethical leadership behaviour would likely create an enabling school organisational climate that will encourage greater level of commitment among members of his staff.

According to Path Goal Theory by House and Mitchelle (1974), as cited in Eboka (2014), Anastasiou and Papakonstantinou (2016), ethical leadership behaviours are classified into four-fold which are: communicative ethics, ethics in decision-making, ethics in delegation of duties and ethics in instructional resource allocation. The current study focused on two out of these dimensions of ethical leadership behaviours they are: communicative ethics and ethics in decision-making. The choice of these dimensions of ethical leadership behaviour was based on the grounds that they are more applicable and feasible in the educational setting. Also, when applied to educational organisation, they play an important role in enhancing good working climate in the school system. These ethical behaviours are examined in relation to school organisationl climate.

Communicative ethics is one important ethical leadership behaviour among secondary school principals. Communicative ethics consist of behaviours such as accepting one's failures, not being selfish, being fair, being

constructive in discussions, being patient, respectful, sincere, and modest. According to Unachukwu and Osunka, 2017, communicative ethics helps principal to create opportunities for socialization as part of instructional activities and design teaching experiences that promote socialization and discussion; hold and communicate high behavioural expectations; use more positive than negative teacher-student's interactions; give teachers the opportunity to express their opinion and contribute ideas. Through communicative ethics, a school principal can achieve much with his teachers. It enables him to create a communication process that establishes meaningful bond with them based on genuine social interactions.

Another important dimension of ethical leadership behaviour is ethics in decision-making. Decisional ethics examines behaviours in terms of making morally correct decisions, to be able to differentiate what is correct and what is wrong and being ethical in making decision in the management of the organisation (Turhan, in Bağrıyanık & Can 2017). Another important aspect of ethics in decision making is involvement. Involvement in decision-making refers to a practice whereby both superiors and subordinates jointly sit together to discuss the way to run the organization. Involvement in decision-making is a typical characteristic of behavioural type of leadership which educational managers at all levels should imbibe in establishing objective, planning, communicating, organizing, directing, and controlling the education process. School administrators cannot administer well without involving subordinates when making decisions for themselves, their groups and the institutions as a whole. Thus, the art and science of ethical decision making are often associated with managerial expertise. (Umar, Salisu and Tahir, 2017).

It is important to note that at the secondary school level, one of the ways principals' ethical leadership behaviour could be exhibited is by creating an enabling school organisational climate for staff to work in, encouraging and motivating staff to do their job, establishing clear rules, genuinely caring about their employees, respecting and supporting subordinates and where possible ensuring that their needs are met. Unfortunately, contrary to the ethical leadership behaviorur expected of secondary school principals, some studies carried out in Anambra state by Nwimo and Onwunaka, (2015) cited in Osunka and Unachukwu, (2020) and Obiekwe (2019) show that some principals do not apply ethical leadership behaviour in their leadership practices. Thus, giving rise to unhealthy school climate. Probably, this unhealthy school climate could be one of the reasons for poor administrative conditions and academic performance observed in most secondary Schools in Anambra state.

Thus, school climate where principals perform or fail to perform their duties can lead to the success or failure of any school in terms of educational goals attainment. School climate represents all the constituent aspects of the school: the physical, social, academic, and affective life of the school. It is a set of dimensional characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behaviours of each member of the school community. According to Tableman and Herron (2014), school climate reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide

the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place.

School climate is a general concept that captures the atmosphere of a school. It is experienced by teachers and administrators, describes their collective perceptions of routine behavior, and affects their attitude in the school (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2012). School climate could be affected by material (external) or immaterial (internal) factors. According to Adeyanju (2012), external factors include location, size, student population, educational policies, and socio-economic changes. While internal factors include the interactive behaviours between administrators and principals, between principals and staff and between staff and students. An experienced principal is aware that school climate determines the rhythm of the day-to-day activities in the school. School climate has a lot of influence on the achievement of set goals or educational effectiveness in the education sector. The secondary school principal is known to be at the forefront of creating such enabling school climate.

Interactions with some teachers in Anambra State revealed that their school climate is not motivating. For instance, some of them complained that they are not trusted by their principals and sometimes, they are not involved in decisions concerning the students or the school as a whole. The fact is that, when teachers are not carried along in decision making due to lack of trust, the implementation of such decisions becomes difficult since teachers are the primary enforcement agents of most decisions in the school. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2010) agreed that school climate can be one that cultivates trust which motivates teachers to work extra mile. Dunklee (2010) holds the opinion that the differences in students' behaviour and academic outcomes are influenced by principal's ethical leadership behaviour which enables them to create effective school climate. The success or failure of any school is influenced directly or indirectly by the school climate. While school climate is a product of principal's leadership behaviour.

It is therefore noted that the principles of school climate seem to hinge on the level of principals' ethical leadership behaviour. This is why some parents tend to arrogate the blame of low academic performance of students in secondary schools in Anambra state to the school principals. This corroborates the view of Okorji, Igbokwe and Ezeugbor (2016) that the principal is expected to accept responsibility for whatever students and staff do both by word and action, create a school climate that facilitates effective teaching and learning.

It is therefore against this background that the researcher is motivated to correlate principals' ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisation climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the nature of relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-

making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

2. There will be no significant relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Method

The correlational survey design was adopted for this study. The correlational survey design is one which seeks to establish the relationship that exists between two or more variables (Nworgu, 2015). The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consist of 8,420 teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra state. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to draw 1200 teachers as sample for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection namely: Questionnaire on Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviour (QPELB) and Organisational Climate Index (OCI). The instruments were validated by three expert. QPELB is sub-divided into two clusters: Cluster I centered on principals' communicative ethics while cluster II centered on principals' ethics in decision making. The internal consistency of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha method.

Reliability coefficient obtained from QPELB yielded coefficient of 0.74 for cluster I and 0.88 for cluster II. While OCI yielded a co-efficient of 0.82. Pearson Product Moment coefficient correlation was used to answer the research questions and simple linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses. For the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship was interpreted using the interpretation of a correlation coefficient (Nworgu, 2015). P-value was used to determine the significance of the relationship. Where the calculated p-value is less than or equal to the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis was not upheld. Whereas the null hypothesis was upheld where the calculated p-value is greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). The analysis was done with the application of a computer software programme: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Presentation of results:

Research Question 1: What is the nature of relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson (r) on principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisation climate

Source of variance	N	Comm. Ethical behaviour (r)	School climate (r)	Remark
Comm. ethical behaviour	1096	1.00	0.81	strong positive relationship
school climate	1096	0.81	1.00	

Table presented in Table 1 reveals that a strong positive relationship of 0.81 exists between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 2: What is the nature of relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson (r) on principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate

Source of variance	N	Decision-making (r)	School climate (r)	Remark
Decision-making	1096	1.00	0.19	weak positive relationship
School climate	1096	0.19	1.00	

Table 2 reveals that a weak positive relationship of 0.19 exists between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 3: Simple Linear regression on the relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate

Correlation coefficient (r)	N	df	Cal. R	p-value	α	Decision
.81	1096	1094	38.311	0.000	0.05	Significant

Table 3 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 1094 df, the calculated r 12.11 with p-value 0.000 which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is not upheld. Therefore, it means that there is a significant relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Simple Linear regression on the relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate

Correlation coefficient (r)	N	df	Cal. r	p-value	α	Decision
.71	1096	1094	24.909	0.000	0.05	Significant

Table 4 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 1094 df, the calculated r 21.01 with p-value 0.000 which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is not upheld. Therefore, it means that there is a significant relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between principals' communicative ethical leadership behaviour and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also shows a weak positive and significant relationship relationship between principals' ethical leadership behaviour in decision-making and school organisational climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

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

1. Anambra State Ministry of Education and All Nigeria Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) should organize training on communication ethics for effective school organizational climate of school principals that will help them in situations in their schools before adopting communication styles.

2. Principals should create quality time for collaborative goal-oriented and knowledge driven discussions to get teachers' inputs in decision making as principals' experience alone could not ensure effective school organizational climate and instructional task performance. They must understand the condition under which decisions are to be made as well as being sensitive and clarify situations where and when decisions need to be taken.

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