



Relationship between Principals' Staff Relations Practices and Teachers' Job Performance in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Gladys Uzoechina *

Department of Educational Foundations, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria

Isaac N. Nwankwo

Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the relationship between principals' staff relations practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state. The correlational research design was adopted. All the six education zones, namely Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha were studied. The population of the study comprised 6,342 secondary school teachers in six education zones of the state. The sample for the study was 634 public secondary school teachers in Anambra state representing 10% of public secondary school teachers in the six education zones of Anambra state. Researchers-developed instrument titled: Questionnaire on Staff Relations and Job Performance (QSRJP) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and the reliability of the instrument was established through a trial- test in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The reliability index of the instrument using cronbach alpha method was 0.82 and was deemed high for the study. The researcher administered the instrument directly on the respondents with the help of five research assistants. Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient was used in the data analysis. The findings of the study indicated that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals staff relation practices and teachers job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Accordingly, it was recommended among others that principals and teachers in the state should maintain harmonious staff relations in their schools in order to enhance school productivity.

Keywords: Staff relations; Teachers' job performance; Anambra State.

1. Introduction

Social support within the workplace is very important for better job performance. Undoubtedly, social support offers a means through which employees can better cope with the negative effects of high job demands. It can comprise both support received from managers or supervisor and that received from co-workers. In the same manner, unions can provide a form of social support. The engine that propels this social support in the workplace is staff relations.

Staff relations according to Omebe (2014), is the co-operation and support that exists in a work place. In the schools system, it is the relationship between the principals and the teachers to enhance school productivity. Omebe (2014) also noted that there must be a good communication network in the school for good staff relations and to enable teachers to be constantly informed of the progress being made in the school. Good staff relations need to be encouraged in order to enable the teachers to participate in planning and decision making in the school. Manduku (2016) also noted that effective communication improves good staff relations, productivity and workers job satisfaction while poor communication results to poor staff relations, low staff productivity and low employee commitment.

Staff relations can include not only contact with others in the workplace but also contact with customers or the general public. For employee performance, employees reporting unfair treatment by customers have lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of psychological distress (Sloan, 2012) and the result is poor or negative staff relations.

As for the role of principals, the absence of good relations with co-workers is unlikely to have the same implication as the existence of negative contact, such as bullying or aggressive behaviour. In line with the above, Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2003), found bullying is related to lower job satisfaction, greater anxiety and greater depression. It has been suggested that support from co-workers may be important in coping unfair treatment at work.

Staff relationship can also be determined by the personality type. Each personality type requires a specific way of communication that influences the personality (Sambe, 2005). In this regard, principals need to identify the personality of the workers under them in the school and relate with them accordingly and without compromising standards or mortgaging the interest of the school. Teachers themselves can do the same. A teacher cannot relate well with a fellow teacher unless they understand each other. This kind of understanding fosters staff relation in the workplace.

As suggested above, good staff relations can play an important role in counteracting negative effects from unfair treatment at work. Fair treatment at work is not solely connected with treatment by supervisors, though Fevre *et al.* (2011), found that managers and supervisors are the origin of the majority of unreasonable treatment. An employee, who feels they are being unfairly treated, or discriminated against, is likely to have low job performance and negative relationship with others in the workplace. Again, employees may also be sensitive to the fair treatment of their co-workers, even if they themselves are not experiencing unfairness. The fair treatment of employees is often considered in terms of two dimensions (Warr, 2007): distributional fairness, that is, whether employees feel the outcomes from their employer's actions are fair (so, for example, whether they feel that the amount of pay received is fair), and procedural fairness, which is concerned with whether the procedures that determine these outcomes are fair (for example, whether they feel procedures for pay-setting, and reviewing employee pay, are fair). Both distributional and procedural fairness have been shown to relate positively to good staff relations and job satisfaction; and negatively to job-related emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000). Disciplinary and grievance procedures are possibly one way in which employers can address issues of fairness in the workplace. All these point to the point that staff relations in the secondary schools are very important for teachers' job performance.

Teachers' job performance refers to extent which teachers are committed to pedagogical delivery and display of moral uprightness and Academic excellence in the teaching profession (Uko *et al.*, 2015). It is also measured in terms of the quality and standard of output being produced. Muraina and Muraina (2014) posited that the factors responsible for the poor teacher's job performance include but are not limited to the following. Staff shortage, inadequate funding, lack of employees, motivation, poor work environment and poor communication between the principal or school administrator and members of staff. Shahzad *et al.* (2008) explained that the main methods of evaluating employee performance based on:

1. Employee attributes which confirm characteristics or quality important to the firm.
2. Employee behaviours which are widely used for evaluating or defining employee behaviours necessary to complete a job successfully.
3. Employee achievements which show the extent to which specific objectives or aims have been met, exceeded, or not met.

In Anambra State, there has been improvement in teachers job performance for the past three years as this is evident in students performance in the external examinations such as WAEC and NECO, however, it appears that students performance in core subjects like Mathematics and English is not very encouraging, teachers commitment to their duties and instructional planning and delivery is still below expectations.

Nnadi and Falodun (2016), established that poor staff relations in Anambra State which in most cases manifested in teachers' non-compliance with the principals' directives. Where teachers fail to comply with the principals' directives, teacher indiscipline soar and students' learning are hindered. Where this situation applies, teachers and principals often clash and fail to achieve the school objectives. It thus appears that good staff relations for fostering good school climate have not been achieved in many secondary schools in the state and this may be a major reason why conflicts, anarchy and anti-social behaviours characterize most secondary schools in the school (Nwofia, 2016). It follows therefore that if good staff relations are to be fostered in the schools, principals and teachers need to communicate in a friendly manner in running the affairs of the school.

Management of some secondary schools in the state leave much to be desired in terms of cohesion and understanding. Some principals communicate with their staff as if the staff are slaves and not colleagues (Nwofia, 2016; Obi, 2004). Some molest staff about, shout at them, criticize them even in front of students and go to the extent of even abusing them out rightly. During supervision, many principals criticize and condemn teachers in front of the students. Nwofia further observed that some school heads hoard vital information from staff and use unclear statements in delegating tasks. The result is role ambiguity and role conflict that hinder school administration.

In a similar dimension, some teachers gossip against their principals. Rather than seek first hand information from principals, some staff prefer gathering what Bowra *et al.* (2012) called "painted information" from typists, messengers and grapevine. It is not rare to see teachers using rude words in response to principals' directives and even demanding resources from principals in defiant, rude and abusive languages (Nnadi and Falodun, 2016). These situations imply poor staff relations in the schools which is incapable of ushering in a school environment where observation, guidance, inquiry and interactions among staff would bring about desired instructional improvement. With all these inadequacies and problems surrounding schools, there exists a big gap between what the administrative position of principals of secondary schools ought to be and what it is currently in terms of staff relations. The main purpose of the study therefore was to ascertain the relationship between principals' staff relations practices and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

1.1. Research Question

One research question guided the study.

What relationship exists between principals staff relations practices and teachers job performance in secondary schools in Anambra state?

1.2. Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant relationship between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra state.

2. Research Method

This study was carried out in Anambra State and the correlational research design was adopted. All the six education zones, namely Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha were studied. The population of the study comprised 6,342 secondary school teachers in six education zones of the state. This comprised 830 teachers from Aguata, 1,694 teachers from Awka, 937 teachers from Nnewi, 989 teachers from Ogidi, 1,394 teachers from Onitsha and 498 teachers from Otuocha education zones respectively. The sample for the study was 634 public secondary school teachers in Anambra state. This represented 10% of public secondary school teachers in the six education zones of Anambra state. The choice of 10% is in line with the recommendation made by Eze (2005) that in a survey involving a population of few thousands, at least 5% of the population should be used as the sample size.

Researchers-developed instrument titled: Questionnaire on Staff Relations and Job Performance (QSRJP) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts: two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy while one expert was from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation unit). These experts are lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established through a trial- test in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The reliability index of the instrument using cronbach alpha method was 0.82 and was deemed high for the study.

The researchers administered the instrument directly on the respondents with the help of five research assistants. Pearson’s Product Moment correlation coefficient was used in the data analysis. Pearson’s product moment correlation is ideal for ascertaining the extent of relationship, association or co-variation between two or more variables (Nworgu, 2015). The coefficients (r) of the relationship were interpreted using the Best and Kahn (2003) criterion for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation:

Coefficient (r)	Relationship
.00 to .20	Negligible
.20 to .40	Low
.40 to .60	Moderate
.60 to .80	Substantial
.80 to 1.00	High to Very high

3. Presentation Results

3.1. Research Question

What relationship exists between principals staff relations practices and teachers job performance in secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table-1. Pearson’s correlation between principals staff relation practices and teachers job performance

Variables	N	Principals’ staff Relations practices	Teachers’ job Performance	Decision
Principals’ staff Relations practices	612	1	.545	
Teachers’ job performance	612	.545	1	Positive

As shown in Table 1, there is a moderate positive correlation between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance. This is shown by the size of the Pearson’s correlation Coefficient, r which is .545

3.2. Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra state.

The test for the hypothesis is presented in Table 2.

Table-2. t-Test of significance of relationship between principals’ staff relation practices and teachers’ job performance

Variable	N	Principals staff Relation practices	Teachers’ job performance	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals’ staff	612	1	.545			
Relations practices				16.31	1.96	Significant
Teachers’ job performance	612	.545	1			

Data analysis in table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance, $r=.545$. The t-cal value of 16.31 is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

4. Findings of the Study

- There is a moderate positive relationship between principals staff relations practices and teachers job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
- There is a significant relationship between principal staffs relations practices and teachers job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

5. Discussion of Findings

This study found a moderate positive correlation between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Regarding the finding of the hypothesis, it was found that a significant relationship exists between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance, which means that improve teachers’ job performance.

Staff relations practices are crucial in managing relationship between employer and employees with ultimate objectivity of achieving optimum level of performance and productivity, (Michael, 2009). This finding agreed with those of Chaudhry et al. (2013) that found that employee relations practices impact positively on employee performance. The researchers also emphasized that employee relations can only have a positive impact only if best fit set of employee relations practices are adopted. The finding of this study was also in tandem with that of Conway (2007) who found that principals’ staff relations practices have positive correlations with teachers’ job performance. Principals that maintain high levels of positive interaction and support for their subordinates will increase teachers’ job performance.

6. Conclusion

From the data interpretation and discussion of results from findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that there is a moderate positive correlation between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance. Again, a significant relationship also exists between principals’ staff relations practices and teachers’ job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the literature and results of this study, the following findings were made:

1. Principals and teachers in the state should maintain harmonious staff relations in their schools in order to enhance school productivity.
2. The government should through the Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) and Ministry of Education organize regular inspection of schools to monitor the attitude of principals in relation to staff interpersonal relations for maximum school performance.
3. The Ministry of Education in the state should establish Staff Relations Offices in public secondary schools in the state and charge them to handle cases relating to staff interpersonal relationships in the schools.

References

Best, W. G. and Kahn, N. V. (2003). *Research in education*. Pearson, Education, mc; and Dorling Kindersley Publishing In: Chicago.

Bowra, Z., B., S., A., S. and Niazi, M. (2012). Impact of human resource practices on employee perceived performance in banking sector of Pakistan. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(1): 323-32.

Chaudhry, H., Sohail, R. and Raiz, J. (2013). *Human resource management in Australia: Strategy people performance*. 3rd edn: 1cGraw Hill Australia Pty Limited: Sydney.

Conway, E. (2007). Human resource management practices and commitment to change: An employee-level analysis. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(1): 72-89.

Einarsen, S. and Mikkelsen, E. G. (2003). *Individual effects of exposure to bullying at work*. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D.Zapf and C.L. Cooper (eds.) *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace*. Taylor & Francis: London.

- Eze, P. N. (2005). *What to write and how to write: A step-by-step guide to educational research proposal and report*. Pearl and Gold Press: Enugu.
- Fevre, R., Lewis, D., Robinson, A. and Jones, T. (2011). *Insight into ill-treatment in the workplace: patterns, causes and solutions*. In Bryson, A., Forth, S. & Stokes, I. (Eds.), *Does worker wellbeing affect workplace performance?* : Department of Business Innovation and Skills: London. 1-22.
- Manduku, J. (2016). Effects of performance management practices motivating and retaining employees in Kenyan secondary. *Education Research Journal*, 6(1): 13-24.
- Michael, A. (2009). *Handbook of human resource management practice*. 11th edn: Kogan page Limited: Philadelphia, United States of America.
- Muraina, M. B. and Muraina, K. O. (2014). School environment and teacher characteristics as factors predicting job performance among secondary school teachers in south western Nigeria. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 5(1): 92-101.
- Nnadi, I. and Falodun, A. B. (2016). *New approach economics*. Longman Nigeria Plc: Ikeja-Lagos.
- Nwofia, B. N. (2016). *Human resource utilization in post primary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State*. Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria Nsukka: Nigeria.
- Nworgu, B. G. (2015). *Educational research: Basic issues and methodology*. 3rd edn: University Trust Publishers: Enugu.
- Obi, O. A. (2004). Impact of organizational culture on human resource practices: A study of selected Nigeria Private Universities. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 5(4): 115-33.
- Omebe, C. A. (2014). Human resource management in education: Issues and challenges. *British Journal of Education*, 2(7): 26-31.
- Sambe, J. A. (2005). *Introduction to mass communication practice in Nigeria*. Spectrum Books Limited: Ibadan.
- Shahzad, K., Bashir, S. and Ramay, M. I. (2008). Impact of HR practices on perceived performance of university teachers in Pakistan. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 4(2): 302-15.
- Sloan, M. (2012). Unfair treatment in the workplace and worker-wellbeing: The role of co-worker support in a service work environment. *Work and Occupations*, 39(1): 3-34.
- Tepper, B. D. (2000). Consequences of abusive supervision. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(2): 178-90.
- Uko, E. S., Umosen, A. Q. and Caleb, E. E. (2015). Administrators' resource management practices and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Eket education zone of Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Education Research*, 3(2): 13-20.
- Warr, D. A. A. (2007). The characteristics of a high performance organization. *Emerald Group Publishing Limited*, 3(8): 179-85.