

# Relationship Between Principals' Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Teachers' Work Ethics in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*This study sought to establish the correlation between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teachers' working ethics in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study is a correlation research. The population of the study comprised 6,382 teachers from the 261 state government owned secondary schools in the state. The sample which is 10.8% of the population was made up of 689 teachers from 131 out of the 261 secondary schools. The sample was composed using simple random sampling technique. A researcher developed instrument titled "Principals' transformational leadership behaviours and teachers' work Ethics Questionnaire (PTLBTWE) which were validated by experts were used for data collection. Reliability indices of 0.82 and 0.84 respectively for the questionnaires were obtained using Cronbach Alpha. Out of 689 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 660 copies representing 95.8% return rate were duly completed, retrieved and used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation both for answering the research questions and to test the hypotheses. The result of the study indicated that there is a positive and significant correlation between principals' transformational leadership behaviours and teachers' working ethics. This suggests the need for principals to adopt transformational leadership style so as to improve and increase the leadership behaviours/ roles at school in order to make an improvement in work environment either for job satisfaction which will have effects to the improvement of teacher's attitude to work.*

**KEY WORDS:** Principal, Transformational Leadership Behaviours, Teachers' Working Ethics, Secondary schools.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is accepted world wide as a veritable instrument of change. It is the teacher that translates policies entailing such changes into action. Teachers have a very important role in determining the success of education. There is no substitute for teachers who are dedicated to their students. The maxim that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teaching

staff underscores the importance of teachers to national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN, 2013).

Teachers are the most influential component in the creation of quality educational process and outcomes. They guide learners towards acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, information, ideas and competences needed for purposeful living. It stretches onto moulding and guiding youths, monitoring students and promoting general character training. Given the big responsibilities of teachers and the conditions expected from the profession, a professional teacher requires a number of qualities such as high level interpersonal communication, seriousness, self-control, creativity, resourcefulness, good work ethics and conduct in self-development (Ihueze, 2021). Professional teachers are expected to produce quality graduates. Teacher professionalism as the spearhead in implementing the curriculum in the classroom needs attention. Thus, principals have both authority for leadership and management for ensuring that teachers are monitored to teach effectively and students were entertained in such a way that sound and quality education is impacted to all students in the school for the achievement of the objectives of secondary school education.

The school system especially secondary schools are geared towards excellence aptly supported by the national policy on education (FRN; 2004). Secondary education is expected to produce the best from individual students that can make them independent in life and the community or national leaders. Over the years, the realization of these objectives has been declining with increasing poor performance in external examinations (Wokocha, 2012). The researcher traces this malaise to teacher's poor attitude to work.

Teacher's attitude to work is the way or manner in which he attends to his duties. It can also be interpreted as the love or interest a teacher show to his work. For any teaching and learning to be meaningful, teachers must have the right attitude to work. Professional teachers require a number of good work ethics which include: commitment, dedication, regularity, cooperation, stays till work over, willingness to accept responsibilities, ability to conceal official secrets, honesty, good relationship with students (Nwite, 2017). Teachers have different levels of working ethics.

The level of teacher's working ethics in schools is mostly affected by intrinsic factors such as teacher's relationship with the principal, adequate authority, clarity of goals, empowerment, participative leadership, informative work environment and the degree of fulfillment in their work. The principal's transformational leadership is believed to be one of the supporting factors in improving the quality of teachers' performance (Hartono, 2019). Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended to do. They also tend to have followers who are more committed and satisfied. Transformational leaders empower followers and pay attention to their individual needs and personal development, helping followers to develop their own leadership potentials (Vitria, Sulaiman, Ahmad & Suhaimi, 2021).

The ability of the principal to successfully develop the crop of teachers with good work ethics is what makes for the achievement of school goals. An effective principal uses leadership styles to develop teachers' behavior and cultures that motivates both students and teachers hence leading to the creation of better teaching and learning. This implies that achievement of educational goals requires transformational leaders.

Transformational leadership has been globalised as the means by which heads of institutions can respond to the demands of reforms to achieve appropriate and effective learning outcomes through turning the school in a high reliability learning community. This implies that low performing schools suffer from leadership kwashiorkor. In line, Herfina and Rubbin (2015), argues that committed leaders who understand instruction and can develop the capacities of teachers of the schools are key to improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, the principal's transformational leadership not only pays attention to the need for self-actualization and appreciation but also raises awareness for leaders to do their best in running the leadership wheel by paying more attention to human factors, performance and growth of the school. This in line with research by Ameneh and Nooshin (2015), who concluded that transformational leadership, is one type of leadership that is always believed to have an influence in increasing the motivation of teachers to do more than they can do. The leader is highly visible and uses chain of command to get the job done. Thus, in an educational institution where this type of leadership prevails, high commitment, harmony, mutual trust, job satisfaction and high performance in students' achievement may be experienced.

Among the most important transformational leadership variables are open communication, participative leadership, delegation, empowerment and clarity of goals (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015 & Marlina, 2019). When school members share common goals, know their roles and responsibilities have open method of communication, shared leadership and are motivated to perform, success is achieved. Actually, it's proven by hundreds of studies that specific and challenging goals can empower teachers and boost their performance (Agha, Nwakpa & Eze, 2017; Aslamiah, 2018; Hartono, 2019 & Ragaisis, 2018). Transformational leadership leads to teachers' willingness, sense of belonging, internal motivation, enhancement for positive behavior and independency in shaping and regulating activities and eventually leads to the success of the organization. Teachers want to be part of a team, participate in decision making process of the school, use their skills in ways that are valued, have freedom and opportunities to learn in their chosen profession. Prior to this, school principals should facilitate authentic participation by asking for the input of those affected by decisions, providing background information necessary for staff to weigh in on decisions and treating teachers as capable professionals whose insight are valuable.

Contrary to the behaviours expected of the school administrators, some studies carried out reveal that some school principals do not apply these behaviors to great extent (Ibara, 2011; Ikegbusi, 2016; Ofojebe & Chukwuma, 2015). Probably, this could be the reason for poor attitude to work among teachers. According to Awodumilla (2017); Agha, Nwakpa & Eze, (2017); Ike, Ezeh & Etodike, (2017), many secondary school principals in Nigeria have no serious or professional training in educational management and administration and are therefore bereft of the changing trends in administration of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, one of the significant problems facing those principals today is to identify what contributes to teachers' lack of commitment to duty and the type of leadership behaviour principals should employ to promote positive teacher's attitude to work.

From the observation of the researcher as a principal in the state, there is a tendency that not all teachers optimally engage in activities within their schools proving an initial assumption that teacher's working ethics among secondary school teachers in Anambra state still seems to be low. Salisu and Abudusalam (2015), posit that poor teacher's attitude to work in Nigerian

schools is at all-times high and this may be seen in the form of absenteeism, low morale and an attitude of don't ask me to do a single extra thing. This may be as a result of ineffective management style being practiced by some principals in those schools. Most principals isolate teachers from important administrative functions thereby asking them to wait for their own turn. Teachers on their own will likely neglect their duties and exhibit "I don't care attitude" towards educational improvement as shown by non-coverage of scheme of work, absenteeism, lateness to school and not-on-seat practices. To this end, this study therefore investigated the correlation between principals' transformational leadership behaviours and teachers' working ethics in secondary schools in Anambra state.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Two research questions guided the study. Namely:

1. What is the nature of relationship between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teachers' working ethics?
2. What is the nature of relationship between principals' open method of communication and teachers' working ethics?

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Namely:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teachers' working ethics.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' use of open communication and teachers' working ethics.

## **METHOD**

The study was carried out in Anambra state, Nigeria using the correlational design. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 6,382 teachers in the 261 public secondary schools in Anambra state. A sample of 689 teachers which is 10% of the population was involved in the study. This was

drawn from 131 out of the 261 secondary schools in the state using multistage sampling procedure. Two instruments namely; Principals’ Transformational Leadership Behaviours (PTLB) Questionnaire and Teachers’ Working Ethics (TWE) Questionnaire, validated by experts were used for data collection. International consistencies of the instruments were ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and these yield reliability coefficients of 0.84 and 0.85 for (PTLB) and (TWE) respectively. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis. Decision rule was that items with correlation coefficient of 0.4 to 0.6 would be regarded as having moderate relationship; items with coefficient of 0.80 to 1.00 would be regarded as having very high relationship while items with 0.3 to 0.5 would be regarded as having strong relationship. For the hypotheses testing, a hypothesis was not accepted if the probability (P) value obtained is less than the significance level of 0.05 where as a null hypothesis was accepted if the probability (P) value obtained is greater than the significant level of 0.05.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Summary of Correlation between principals’ transformational leadership behaviors and teachers’ working ethics**

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Transformational Leadership	660	.97	0.00	Sig
Teachers’ Work Ethics				

Data analysis in Table 1 shows that there is a very high significant positive relationship between principals’ transformational leadership behaviors and teachers’ working ethics,  $r = 0.97$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ .

**Table 2: Pearson’s on the relationship between principals’ use of open communication and teachers’ working ethics.**

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Open Communication	660	.92	0.00	Sig
Teachers’ Work Ethics				

Results on table 2 indicated that there is a very high positive relationship of 0.92 between principals' use of open communication and teachers' working ethics. This indicates that when principals create an open door policy, guide and encourage teachers by communicating important information, risks inside and outside the classrooms for effective functioning of the school.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study revealed that there is a very high positive and significant relationship of between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teachers' working ethics. This findings is natural because when teachers perceived their principal as being co-operative, visible, and open to change and exhibit transformational leadership behaviours, teachers will be happy to complete assigned tasks efficiently and effectively which is reflected on the development of the educational learning process. Again when principals create the foundation of confidence among the teachers by being sincere, fair and respectful to them and can guide and encourage them by being part of a team, teachers will be obliged to sustain membership of the school.

This finding concurs with previous studies (Aslamiah, 2018; Hartono (2019); &Susilawati (2021), who found out that a transformational leader is not only able to motivate himself for the betterment of the organization but is also able to motivate his followers and direct them to achieve increased performance more than they expected. When teachers receive intrinsic motivation from their principal, they represent a higher level of commitment to perform discretionally activities like helping over loaded teachers. The findings also agree with Marlina's research (2019), which found a relationship between the principal's transformational leadership and teacher performance. This is evidence by the results of the calculation of the R = value which shows that the direct relationship between the principals' transformational leadership and teachers working ethics is 0.98 with a percentage of 98%. This corroborates the

findings of Vitria, Sulaiman, Ahmad and Suhaimi (2021) who argues that a transformational leader is not only able to motivate himself for the betterment of the organization but is also able to motivate his followers and direct them to achieve increased performance more than expected.

The findings of this study further indicate that there is a very high positive and significant relationship between principals' use of open communication and teacher's working ethics. When school members share common goals, know their roles and responsibilities, have open method of communication and are motivated to perform, success is achieved.

The finding of high positive relationship between principals' use of open communication is not far from expectation because teachers' who work with a principal who gives them freedom to air their views in matters concerning organizational improvement has a positive impact on the students' academic achievement, while autocratic principals has negative one. Leadership is effective if it is helpful in enhancing academic achievement. Again, when principals create an open door policy, guide and encourage them by communicating important information, teachers will be obliged to take risks inside and outside the classrooms for effective functioning of the school (Ihueze, 2021).

This finding agrees with Ameneh&Nooshim, 2015 and Herfina& Rubin, 2015) who concluded that a principal who is available accessible, visible and cultivates connections and relationships encourage teachers willingness, sense of belonging, internal motivation, enhancement for positive behavior and independency in shaping and regulating activities and eventually leads to the success of the organization in line with transformational leadership has a key role for being part of fostering and stimulating information exchange for creation of highly satisfied teachers in

the school, which contributes to the accomplishment of the organization (Jyoti, &Bhaa, 2015). Furthermore, Hai&Juban (2016), argues that the optimistic behavior of leaders that forms the basis of transformational leadership can influence followers and produce positive results for the organization. It could therefore be argued that a principal who want to promote positive teachers attitude to work should create a culture that encourages teachers to go above and beyond the call of duty. However, it is concluded that the 21<sup>st</sup> century principals must be educational visionaries, change against, instructional leaders, community builders, curriculum and assessment experts so as to increase positive teacher's attitude to work.

## **Conclusion**

The major findings of this study revealed that there were positive and significant correlations between principals' transformational leadership behaviours and teachers' working ethics in secondary schools in Anambra State. Transformational leadership is a leadership perspective that explains how leaders change a team or organization by creating, communicating and modeling a vision for the organization and inspiring employees, teachers inclusive to strive to pursue that vision. From the analysis and interpretation of results, it is concluded that principals' transformational leadership behaviours are capable of bringing about positive teachers attitude to work. This implies that the 21<sup>st</sup> century school principals must be educational visionaries, change agents, instructional leaders, special program administrators, community builders, and curriculum and assessment experts.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Special training or workshop should be organized on principals' transformational leadership behaviours and their level of application as school principals.
2. Principals should adopt proper communication channel for communication of knowledge and information.
3. There should be regular monitoring, supervision and evaluation of schools and erring teachers should be sanctioned.

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