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PRINCIPALS' HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' JOB ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract
This study ascertained principals' human resource management practices as correlates of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The study was guided by four research questions and four hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlation design. The population of the study comprised 8,805 teachers in the 291 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for this study consisted of 750 public secondary school teachers. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in this study. A researcher-developed instruments titled Principals' Human Resource Management Practices (QPHRMP)" and Questionnaire on Teachers' Job Engagement" (QTJE) was used for data collection, it was validated by three experts, who are lecturers in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability co-efficient for QPHRMP and QTJE were 0.78 and 0.82 obtained respectively. The researchers together with eight research assistants collected data for the study using on-the spot technique and 97% return rate was recorded. Data analysis was done using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to answer the research questions and linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed among others that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement. The findings also indicates that principals' practices of involving teachers in decision-making contribute to improving teachers' job engagement, but it is not the sole factor. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals should actively seek to involve teachers in key decisions affecting the school, especially those related to curriculum development, teaching methods, and school policies.

Keywords: Principals' Human Resource Management Practices, Teachers' Job Engagement

Introduction
Education is perceived and recognized as the bedrock of individuals and societal development. It is also considered as a means of civilization, self-realization and actualization, social mobility, as well as economic and political advancement. The purpose of education is to equip the citizenry with skills and competence to reshape their society and eliminate inequality. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), there are basically four tiers of education; pre-primary (Early childhood), the basic education (primary and junior secondary education), post basic education (secondary school) and tertiary education. The focus of this study is secondary school.

The secondary school is an educational institution where full-time education is provided and directed at pupils between the ages of 11 – 18 years plus. The secondary level of education which is the focus of this study is the phase of education students receive after Basic education and before the tertiary level. Its importance lies in its position both as the bridge between the primary and tertiary education and as the agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society (Kamaldeen, Oluyemisi, Busayo and Abdulrafiu, 2020). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) enumerated the broad aims of secondary school education as preparing people for useful living in the society and for higher education. It is noteworthy that the achievement of these goals of secondary schools depends

on effective administration of instructional leaders.

Principals are instructional leaders and heads of secondary schools, and as such, they are managers and administrators of secondary schools. According to Olorunsola (2020), principals are the chief executive officers who apply appropriate administrative processes in the operations of a secondary school. The administrative processes include: planning, controlling, organizing, communicating, motivating, disciplining and directing among others. The role of principals in personnel management practices is essential for the overall success of the school and the well-being of the staff members.

Principals are responsible for creating a positive work environment for teachers and other staff members. They are tasked with training, selecting, and retaining qualified personnel, as well as providing them with the necessary support and resources to excel in their roles. Principals also play a key role in setting expectations, providing feedback, and evaluating the performance of staff members (Okpebru, Martha and Enueshike, 2019). In the context of secondary schools in Enugu State, principals are expected to be effective leaders who can inspire and motivate their members of staff to achieve the school's goals and objectives. They must possess strong interpersonal skills, communication skills, and decision-making abilities to effectively manage personnel within their schools (Ofoegbu, 2017). To further buttress the above discussion, it is expected that school principals possess requisite competence and experience in performing their personnel management roles.

Human resource management is the effective mobilization of human resources through appropriate recruitment, selection, training and placement of staff to achieve the organization's set-goals and objectives. It could also be defined as the effective utilization of human, material and financial resources in an organization through the management of people and related activities (Owojori and Asaolu, 2020). Human resource management is the administrative task of mobilizing, controlling and getting things done through the workforce of an organization, Onurah and Egbosi (2020) defined human resource management as an effective mobilization of human resources through appropriate recruitment, selection, training and placement to achieve the set goals and objectives of an organization. Human resource management practices such as monitoring, staff involvement in decision-making, staff training, and motivation are essential for improving teachers' job engagement in secondary schools. These practices are chosen because they are comprehensive and effective (Okpebru, Martha and Enuesshike, 2019; Asiegbu and Emegwa, 2024). The justification for the choice of these four personnel management practices is because they served all-encompassing to improving teachers' job engagement in secondary schools.

Principals' monitoring practices encompass a range of activities aimed at assessing and overseeing the performance of teachers within the school setting. According to Harris (2020), monitoring involves systematic observation and assessment of the performance and progress of teachers to ensure alignment with educational standards and goals. Principals use monitoring to improve accountability, enhance performance, and optimize teaching outcomes. They conduct observations, provide feedback, and identify areas for improvement (Bush, 2019). Hallinger and Murphy (2021) reiterated that monitoring also helps teachers understand their strengths, areas for improvement, and professional development needs, enabling targeted support and capacity building. Conversely, when principals adopt a more collaborative and empowering approach to monitoring, where they provide support and feedback rather than control, it can foster a culture of transparency and inclusivity that encourage staff to contribute their ideas and perspectives to decision-making discussions (Stronge, Richard and Catano, 2018).

Principals' staff involvement in decision-making encapsulates a range of strategies and initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration, empowerment, and shared decision-making among faculty and staff within the school community. This involvement can encompass a range of activities, such as participating in discussions on curriculum development, school policies, resource allocation, professional development opportunities, and other matters that affect the daily operations and overall functioning of the school (Servioganni, 2019). Furthermore, Louis, Marks and Kruse (2020) opined that staff involvement in decision-making process signifies a collaborative approach where teachers are given opportunities to provide input, share their perspectives, and contribute to the decision-making process alongside school administrators and other stake holders. When teachers feel empowered to participate in decision-making discussions, it can lead to increased job engagement, motivation, and a sense of ownership over the school's direction and success. In turn, principals who

prioritize staff involvement in decision-making are more likely to recognize the importance of investing in staff training and professional development opportunities.

Dimensions of measuring teachers' job engagement include; their regularity and punctuality to school, the discipline of students, classroom control and organization among others (Ikediugwu and Obiora, 2021).There seem to be lapses in secondary school teachers' job engagement in Enugu State State. This is why Nnebedum and Egboka (2017) and Eze, Eze, Ezenwaji and Nwabueze (2023) observed that there still exist evidences of teachers' failures and laxities in the discharge of their responsibilities. Laxities in teachers' job engagement may be attributed to inadequate human resource management practices of secondary school principals in Enugu State. This seems to be evident in teachers' absenteeism, lateness to school, inadequate preparation and delivery of the lesson, inadequate monitoring of student learning activities, truancy as in engaging in many other activities other than teaching, like engaging in mobile trading during school hours among others.

To buttress this, Eze et al., (2023) observed that the increased rate of truancy, lateness and general poor job engagement of teachers coupled with the overt negative attitudes of teachers are issues of major concern in secondary schools in Enugu State. Ezeugbor, Onyali and Okoye (2018) also observed that most often, secondary school teachers engage in other business while some remain in the staff room even during their lesson period discussing and chatting. This worrisome state of affairs prompted the study.

Statement of the Problem

In an ideal educational environment, principals regularly monitor teachers' performance through constructive feedback and support, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and engagement.Teachers are actively involved in decision-making processes related to curriculum, teaching methods, and school policies, which empowers them and increases their commitment to their roles. More so, it is expected of schools to provide ongoing, relevant professional development opportunities that help teachers advance their skills and stay updated with the latest educational practices, leading to increased job satisfaction and engagement.

In contrast, the current situation in public secondary schools in Enugu State reveals several challenges. The researcher observed that most public secondary schools in Enugu State, principals are often inconsistent when it comes to engaging in monitoring practices, thereby rendering it useless. Consequently, teachers therefore report feelings of isolation, frustration, and burnout, which diminish their enthusiasm for teaching and commitment to their students.

Furthermore, preliminary investigations revealed that teachers are frequently excluded from decision-making processes that affect their work environment. This lack of involvement results in teachers feeling disempowered and disconnected from the school's goals, negatively impacting their job engagement and commitment.The consequences of this disengagement are profound, as it adversely affects the quality of education and student outcomes, creating a cycle of under-performance within the school system.

The motivation behind this study stems from the urgent need to address the gaps in understanding the relationship between principals' human resource management practices and teachers' job engagement. Despite the recognized importance of teacher engagement in enhancing educational quality, there seem to be a scarcity of research specifically focusing on how principals' management practices influence this engagement in the context of Enugu State. This research gap therefore informed the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the principals 'human resource management practices as correlates of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state. Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

1. Principals' monitoring practices as a correlate of teachers' job engagement .
2. Principals' staff involvement in decision making practices as a correlate of teachers' job engagement.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement?
2. What is the relationship between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement

Methods

The study adopted the correlation research design to investigate the relationship between principals personnel management practices and for teacher job engagement in secondary schools in Enugu State. This study was carried out in Enugu State. The population of the study comprised all the 8,805 teachers in the 291 public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size for this study consisted of 750 public secondary school teachers using a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Data for this study were collected by means of structured questionnaire after extensive review of literature. The first instrument was titled "Questionnaire on Principals' Human Resource Management Practices" (QPHRMP) while the second instrument was titled "Questionnaire on Teachers' Job Engagement" (QTJE). These two questionnaires were developed by the researcher and validated by three lecturers who are experts in education: two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one in the Department of Educational Foundations. The Cronbach Alpha Method was used to establish the instrument's reliability. The co-efficient for QPHRMP and QTJE were 0.78 and 0.82 were obtained respectively. This is consistent with Nworgu's (2015) recommendation that each research project should have a co-efficient value of 0.70 or higher. With the assistance of eight research assistants who were briefed and advised on the procedures for administering and collecting the questionnaire, the researchers were be able to administer copies of the instruments directly to the respondents. Out of 750 copies of questionnaire distributed, 733 copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. This means that the researcher had a 98% retrieval rate. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to analyse data related to answer research questions 1 – 4. The co-efficient "r" obtained was used to ascertain how each of the independent variables correlated the dependent variable. According to Agu (2018), the following real limits are used as interpretations for co-efficient "r" derived:

0.01 - 0.39	weak correlation
0.40 - 0.59	Moderate correlation
0.60 - 0.99	Strong correlation

In testing null hypotheses, linear regression analysis was employed to determine the test of significant correlation between two variables of interest. In interpreting the values of the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and when p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis was not rejected. All analysis were done with the application of a computer software programme: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state?

Table 1: Pearson r on relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement

Source of variance	N	monitoring (r)	Job engagement (r)	Remark
Monitoring practices	733	1.00	0.94	
				strong positive relationship
Job engagement	733	0.94	1.00	

Data in Table 1 revealed that a strong positive relationship of 0.94 exists between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state?

Table 2: Pearson r on relationship between principals' involvement of teachers' in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement

Source of variance	N	Decision-making (r)	Job engagement (r)	Remark
Decision-making	733	1.00	0.59	moderate positive relationship
Job engagement	733	0.59	1.00	

Data in Table 2 revealed that a moderate positive relationship of 0.59 exists between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state

Table 3: Linear regression on Pearson r on the relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement

Source of variance	Prof. dev. (r)	Job commitment(r)	Df	Cal. R	p-value	α	Decision
Monitoring prac.	1.00	0.94	731	7.299	0.00	0.05	significant
Job engagement	0.94	1.00					

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, calr$_{(1,731)}$ = 7.299, $p < 0.05$; this means that the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state

Table 4: Linear regression on Pearson r on the relationship between principals' involvement in decision-making practices and teachers' job engagement

Source of variance	Decision-making (r)	Job engagement(r)	Df	Cal. R	p-value	α	Decision
Decision-making	1.00	0.59	731	19.996	0.00	0.05	Significant
Job engagement	0.59	1.00					

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, calr$_{(1,731)}$ = 19.996, $p < 0.05$; this means that the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principals' involvement in decision-making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

1 Principals' monitoring practices as a correlate of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

2 Principals' staff involvement in decision making practices as a correlate of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

Principals' Monitoring Practices as a Correlate of Teachers' Job Engagement in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu state

This finding revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It means that as principals increasingly monitor and support teachers' work through practices like

regular evaluations, feedback, classroom observations, and professional development, teachers tend to be more engaged in their jobs. This finding is in line with the study of Ndungu, Gathu and Bomett (2015) that teachers feel more motivated and engaged when principals provide constructive feedback and engage in frequent classroom observations. This involvement encourages a positive school culture where teachers feel supported and valued, enhancing their engagement in their roles. This finding also supported that of Yamoah (2014) that leadership practices focused on improving teaching and learning. For example monitoring and feedback, were more effective in promoting teacher engagement than administrative or managerial tasks. Their study highlights that principals who prioritize instructional leadership contribute significantly to higher levels of teacher engagement.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state. This means that the way principals monitor and oversee teachers' work has a meaningful impact on how engaged teachers are with their jobs. This implies that changes in principals' monitoring practices are associated with changes in teachers' job engagement. For example, if principals regularly provide constructive feedback, set clear expectations, and support professional development, this may lead to higher levels of motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm among teachers. This finding opposed the finding of Ndungu (2015) that teachers who have more autonomy in their classrooms are more likely to be engaged and satisfied with their jobs. If principals' monitoring practices are too restrictive, they can undermine teachers' sense of autonomy, leading to lower engagement. The difference between in both findings could be as a result of varying responses of the respondents based on geographical location.

Principals' staff involvement in decision making practices as a correlate of teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state

This finding revealed that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state. This finding indicates that principals' practices of involving teachers in decision-making contribute to improving teachers' job engagement, but it is not the sole factor. Other elements may also play crucial roles in determining how engaged teachers are in their work. This finding supported that of Eris et al. (2017) that when teaches are actively involved in decision-making, they experience higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement. The involvement fosters a sense of inclusion and accounts that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It means that as principals increasingly monitor and support teachers' work through practices like regular evaluations, feedback, classroom observations, and professional development, teachers tend to be more engaged in their jobs ability, making teachers feel more connected to their work. conversely, this finding was opposed that of Monjong and Titanji (2016) that principals make most decision without consulting teachers and do not adequately encourage teachers to participate in making important decisions among others. The difference between in both findings could be as a result of varying responses of the respondents based on geographical location.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' involvement in decision-making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu state. This means that the way principals involve teachers in making decisions has a meaningful and measurable impact on how engaged those teachers are with their jobs. This finding was in line with the finding of Eris et al. (2017) that there was significant difference between teachers and administrative staff views on teachers participation in decision making process.

Summary of Findings

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

1. There is a strong positive and significant relationship between principals' monitoring practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. There is a moderate positive and significant relationship between principals' involvement of staff in decision making practices and teachers' job engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the critical role that effective leadership and management play in fostering teacher engagement. It was concluded that principals' personnel management practices such as monitoring practices, staff training practices, and motivational practices are positive and significantly correlated with teachers' engagement in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Recommendations

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

1. To sustain the positive impact of monitoring on job engagement, it should be embedded into the school's culture. This means creating an environment where monitoring is seen as a regular and valued part of the educational process, rather than as an occasional or punitive measure.
2. School principals should actively seek to involve teachers in key decisions affecting the school, especially those related to curriculum development, teaching methods, and school policies. This could be achieved through regular meetings, committees, or focus groups where teachers' opinions and ideas are solicited and considered.
3. In addition to training, principals should provide teachers with the necessary support and resources to implement what they have learned. This could include access to teaching materials, technology, and mentorship programs that help teachers apply new skills in their classrooms.

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