



# Relationship between Principals' Communicative and Decisional Ethical Leadership Behaviour and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools Anambra State

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## Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between principals' communicative and decisional ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist all the 6,382 teachers in the six education zones of Anambra State. A sample size of 692 teachers were drawn using stage sampling technique. Two sets of researchers' -developed instrument titled Principals' Communicative and Decisional Ethical Leadership Behaviour Questionnaire (PCDELBQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), validated by three experts were used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instruments was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha method and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84 and 0.81 for PCDELBQ and TJPQ respectively. Data obtained from the field were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the study indicated that there is a medium positive and significant relationship between principals' communicative ethics, decisional ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that The Ministry of Education and other agencies controlling secondary education in the state should encourage and motivate principals who consistently exhibit ethical leadership behaviours in communication and decision making in their schools. The state government and agencies in charge of education such as the Ministry of Education and Post primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should constantly organize regular training and development programmes in form of seminars and workshops for principals on the need to be ethical in their leadership so as to foster a good relationship with their teachers.

**Keywords:** communication, decision making, ethics, ethical leadership, performance, job performance.

## Introduction

Teachers at all levels of education are the foundation and bedrock of quality education in the society. Teachers are very important in any education system as no proper education can ever be achieved without adequately trained and motivated teachers (Ogochi, 2014). Teachers, as stated by Panda and Mohanty (2003), and Mwangi, (2013) are the pillars of the society who help students to grow and shoulder the responsibility of nation building. Teachers are indeed the nation's human capital, and every effort needs to be made to ensure improvement in their job performance.

Performance may be described as an act of accomplishing or executing a given task. It could also be described as the ability to combine skillfully the right behavior towards the achievement of goals and objectives. Teacher job performance is considered as teacher observable behaviors related to outcomes which are relevant to educational goals (Cook, 2008). Teacher job performance can also be described as the duties performed by a teacher at a particular period in the school system towards achieving the goals of the school. Job performance is determined by the teacher's level of participation in the day to day running of school. There are factors which contribute to teacher's performance in the school. Some of such factors are (i) satisfying the learners through his teaching style and quality, (ii) apart from teaching, performance of other assignments as assigned by the principal and the department, (iii) management of class discipline, students' motivation and improvement of their achievement, (iv) performance of his duties in a regular way, and (v) interaction with students, parents, colleagues and high officials (Peretomode, 1996). According to Adepaju (1996), variables of job performance such as effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work and disciplinary ability are virtues which teachers should uphold effectively in the school system. In this regard, teachers' performance could be measured through annual report of his/ her activities in terms of performance in teaching, lesson preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject matter, competence, teachers' commitment to job and extra-curricular activities. Other areas of assessment include effective leadership, effective supervision, effective monitoring of students' work, motivation, class control and disciplinary ability of the teachers.

For teachers' high performance in school, strong and value-based effective leadership is required. George and Jones (2008) noted that leadership behaviour is the facilitator of greater organizational commitment which subsequently enhances performance. Caldwell (2011) argued that teachers who display high level of performance seem to view their principal as extra dependable.

In secondary school organization, the principal is the chief executive who gives the necessary leadership functions for the achievement of school goals. He is the leader and is responsible for that happens in the school. The principal is expected to perform leadership roles in order to achieve the goals of secondary education. The roles and behaviours of the principal and strategies as well as tactics he adopts play an important part in influencing the performance of staff towards the achievement of the prospective organizational goals and outcome in a coordinated

manner. Principal's behaviours perceived as ethical are considered as a source of motivation for teachers (Arslantaş & Dursun, 2008).

An ethical leader can be seen as someone who esteems ethical values, gives importance to assessment of employees' ethical behaviour as a key factor and can integrate leadership abilities with ethical behaviours (Aydın, 2010). Based on ethical principles in their conduct, ethical leaders respect their employees' rights by treating them fairly. Moreover, they make efforts to develop the sense of justice in the organization by including their subordinates in the decision-making process. Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, (2005), emphasised ethical leadership as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication and reinforcement. It can also reflect performing acceptable behaviours as an individual in interpersonal communication, supporting staff and making decisions (Hansen, 2011).

Yilmaz (2005), developed four ethical leadership dimensions. They are; Climatic Ethics, Communicative Ethics, Behavioural Ethics and Decisional ethics. This study will focus on two of the four dimensions which are Communicative Ethics and Decisional ethics. Communication is an inter-personal process that results in the exchange of information. This process serves a number of organizational functions as: the expression of emotions; the motivation of behavior and performance; the transmitter of technical information required for decision-making; and the control of organizations activities. Communication is the social process in which two or more parties exchange information and share meaning. Effective communication involves arriving at a shared understanding of a situation and in some instances a shared course of action. This requires a wide range of generic communication skills, from negotiation and listening, to goal setting and assertiveness, and being able to apply these generic skills in a variety of contexts and situations. Effective communication requires individuals and teams having access to adequate and timely information necessary to perform their role effectively and appropriately. Several studies have emphasize that effective communication can enhance organizational outcomes such as organizational performance (Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008; Pandey & Garnett, 2006).

Decision making has been observed to be the heart of administrative process and leadership in schools. According to Okumbe (2008), decision making is the process of specifying the nature of a particular problem and selecting among available alternatives in order to solve a problem. Duze (2011) defined decision making as a choice made from among alternative courses of action that are available, either towards the solution of a problem or the achievement of an objective. Decisional ethical behaviour examines principal's behaviours in terms of making morally correct decisions in the school, being able to differentiate between what is correct and what is wrong, and being ethical in school decision making (Turhan, in Bağrıyanık & Can 2017).

Management of secondary schools by a principal with good communication and decision making behaviour is important to ensure that teachers work in a harmonious manner. According to Handford and Leithwood (2013),

teachers are more dedicated to principals they perceive to be influenced by behaviours such good decision making, effective leadership and open communication. These behaviours would likely encourage teachers to perform better in discharging their duties.

The situation in secondary schools in Anambra State shows that most principals seem to be characterized by various forms of unethical behaviours and practices. Complaints by teachers in secondary schools in the state appear to point in this direction. These complaints range from harshness by school heads and not being involved in important administrative decision making in the school. Moreover, personal observation of the researchers revealed that most principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State make administrative decisions almost by themselves rather than involving teachers. In situations where school administrative decisions are made independently by principals, teachers' commitment and performance towards achieving educational goals is not guaranteed.

In addition, principals (and quite a good number of them) appear also to lack the knowledge of good communication skills and strategies. According to Okafor (2003), achievement of excellent performance in the school can be hindered if the educational system is saddled with poor, and faulty communication skills and strategies. In this line, Joe-Onyali (2007) and Ikediugwu (2008) observed that some principals fall short of communication skills, thereby creating communication gaps of one form or the other between the principals and staff. This gap therefore limits teachers' performance and involvement in school activities. These situations necessitated the study which sought to empirically ascertain the relationship between principals' communicative and decisional ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study determined the relationship between principals' communicative and decisional ethical leadership behaviour and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. The relationship between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. The relationship between principals' decisional ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

2. What is the relationship between principals' decisional ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' decisional ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Method

Correlation research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in Anambra state, Nigeria. 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 257 public secondary schools in the state, a sample of 672 teachers was drawn for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure. Two instruments namely Principals' Communicative and Decisional Ethical Leadership Behaviour Questionnaire (PCDELBQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), validated by three experts were used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instruments was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84 and 0.81 for PCDELBQ and TJPQ respectively. Data obtained from the field were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The correlation coefficients for the research questions were interpreted using Nwargu (2015). On the other hand, decisions relating to the test of hypotheses were made using the P- value. Thus, when the P- value is less than the level of significance, in this case 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, otherwise, it was not rejected.

## Results

**Table 1: Pearson r on principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance**

Source of Variation	N	r	Remark
Communicative Ethics	652	0.59	Medium Positive Relationship
Job Performance			

Table 1 shows that there is a medium positive relationship of 0.59 between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that an increase in principals' ethical behaviour in communication will lead to a medium increase in teachers' job performance.

**Table 2: Pearson r on principals' decisional ethics and teachers' job performance**

Source of Variation	N	r	Remark
Decisional Ethics	652	0.47	Medium Positive Relationship
Job Performance			

Table 2 shows that there is a medium positive relationship of 0.47 between principals' decisional ethical behaviour and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that an increase in principals' decisional ethical behaviour will lead to a medium increase in teachers' job performance.

**Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson r on communicative ethics and teachers' job performance**

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Communicative Ethics	652	0.59	0.00	Significant
Job Performance				

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.  $r=0.59$  and  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ .

**Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson r on principals' decisional ethics and teachers' job performance**

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Decisional Ethics	652	0.47	0.00	Significant
Job Performance				

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between decisional ethical behaviour and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.  $r=0.47$  and  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ .

## Discussion

The findings of this study as indicated in Table 1 shows that there is a medium positive and significant relationship between principals' communicative ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding is expected because teachers' performance increases when they are communicated with timely information that is necessary to effectively carryout their duties. Clear communication may result in more realistic expectations which can enhance employee performance. The finding of this study is consistent with the results obtained from earlier studies. For instance, Allen, (1992) and Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found that organizational communication was highly correlated with employee satisfaction and performance. This result is also supported by Rajhans, (2012) who found that organization communication has a direct impact on employee performance. These findings are similar with that of Anchor, (2009); Muchlas, (2012); and Kibe, (2014). The results of these studies affirmed that employee performance is positively correlated with different measures of effective communication.

The findings of the study also revealed that there is a medium positive and significant relationship between principals' decisional ethical behaviour and teachers' job performance. This finding is in line with that of Quagraine (2010) and Kuye and Sulaimon (2011) who in their study found that employee involvement in decision making contributes to effective decision implementation and also creates an enabling environment for creativity and growth as employees see themselves as stakeholders and owners of the decision-making implementation strategy. When employees perceive themselves as not being part of the decision-making process, they become discontented which may adversely affect their performance. Teachers' participation in decision making process makes them to assume that results from work done is not just management reward but theirs' also. This assumption will probably spur them to perform higher and that aggregates to higher organizational performance.

The finding of this study also supports that of Markey, (2006), he argued that employee involvement in decision making contributes to organisational efficiency because it has the capacity to improve the quality of decision making by increasing the inputs and promotes commitment to the outcomes of the decision making process in the workplace. These findings are consistent with that of Verplanken and Holland (2002) who affirmed that employees who enjoy decision making participation also feel secure in their jobs and will be indirectly motivated to provide the best possible performance in their job.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that principals' communicative and decisional ethical leadership behaviour yielded medium positive and significant relationships with teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra state. Thus, if principals exhibit effective communication and make morally correct decisions as well as involve teachers in decision making, teachers' job performance will be improved.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. The Ministry of Education and other agencies controlling secondary education in the state should encourage and motivate principals who consistently exhibit ethical leadership behaviours in communication and decision making in their schools.
2. The state government and agencies in charge of education such as the Ministry of Education and Post primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should constantly organize regular training and development programmes in form of seminars and workshops for principals on the need to be ethical in their leadership so as to foster a good relationship with their teachers.

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