Principals' Procedural Justice and School Connectedness Behaviours as Correlates of Vice Principals' Work Behaviours in Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

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Abstract
The study examined principals' organizational justice and interpersonal relationship behaviours as correlates of vice principals' work behaviours. The purpose of the study was to examine how principals' procedural justice and school connectedness behaviours affect vice principals' organizational citizenship and absenteeism behaviours. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational design. The population of the study was 532 vice principals from the 266 public secondary school in the state. The census sampling technique was used to adopt the entire population of 532 vice principals, made up of 266 Vice Principals' Administration and 266 Vice Principals' Academics. Three instruments were used to collect data. The instruments were submitted to three research experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, for face validity. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained after administering them on 20 public secondary school vice principals in Enugu State. A Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. The researchers involved four research assistants for the instrument administration. A total of 532 copies of questionnaire were administered. 521 were completely filled and returned to the researchers. The simple regression analysis was used. The findings of the study showed that principals' procedural justice behaviours yielded a moderate predictive value to vice principals' work behaviours, while principals' school connectedness behaviours yielded a modest predictive value to vice principals' work behaviours. The values were shown to be significant to vice principals' work behaviours. It was recommended that principals behave in a just and caring manner towards vice principals to enhance vice principals work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Keywords: Principals' Procedural Justice, School Connectedness, Vice Principals' Work Behaviours.

Introduction

Secondary school principals are the most prominent members of the school organization whose behaviours affect every facet of the school life. Principals as key characters play an important role in influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the employees as well as the operation of the schools. Inceler and Guneyli (2021) affirm that the most important factor that can affect the health of the school is the behaviour of the principal as a teaching-leader. Principals and their behaviours are so important that they have been described as the greatest factor in public education, behind quality teachers (The Wallace Foundation, 2023) and the most significant impact on students' learning (People for Education, 2018). Nguyen (2023) corroborates that principals' behaviours determine the behaviours of other school members and the educational quality of the secondary schools. This implies that principals in secondary schools in Anambra State should embody good behaviours so that

other school members, especially vice principals will work collaboratively and effectively with them through their own behaviours.

Principals perform multiple and diverse roles in the schools which are geared towards the achievement of the school goals. They are the bridge between the visions and missions of the government, education ministry and the society's educational expectations and goal achievement. Principals' roles include creating a safe learning environment, evaluating personnel, practicing ethical leadership, creating a vision for learning, handling personnel conflicts/issues, complying with state national standards, handling disruptive students, utilizing resources, serving as curriculum leaders, handling and managing attendance issues (Cisler and Bruce, 2013), facilitating their schools' interaction with parents and others in the school community (Tairu, 2023). In fact, principals' roles appear to be innumerable. Thus, the multiplicity and complexity of principals' roles necessitated the appointment of vice principals as these roles could be very cumbersome for principals alone to fulfil.

Vice principals are school staff who rank next to principals in the schools. In public secondary schools in Nigeria, vice principals are teachers appointed by the government to assist principals in running the schools. Vice principals, like principals, perform multiple administrative/managerial and instructional roles in the schools (Bordia, 2022), while other areas of their lives are not listed in the job description (Western Government University, WUG, 2023). They act as principals in the absence of the principals, they assist the principals in the planning, organizing, staffing, leading, directing, coordinating and controlling of the school activities. In short, the roles of principals and vice principals are the same, except in the incumbency of position and delegation by principals. This means that vice principals can only act as delegated and directed by principals. It implies that principals must adopt positive organizational justice and interpersonal relationship behaviours while dealing with vice principals so that vice principals can get connected to the schools and perform their duties with zeal, enthusiasm and commitment.

Organizational justice behaviour is one of the dimensions of principals' behaviours which affect vice principals' and other school members' behaviours. Phiri, Hampopwe, Mutono-Mwanza and Mwange (2024) view organizational justice as workers' perception of fairness or unfairness of leaders in resource allocation, decision makings and interaction. It is employees' perceptions of their organization's behaviours, decisions and outcomes and how these influence the employees' own attitudes and behaviours (Rouch, 2023). Organizational justice behaviours are those behaviours principals exhibit towards school members which make them to see the principals as having treated them justly or unjustly.

Organizational justice behaviours of principals in secondary schools in Anambra State is therefore, the manner in which principals relate with vice principals in their interaction with vice principals, allocation of resources of the schools and management of issues or conflicts between vice principals and other members of the secondary schools in Anambra State. In other words, employees' perceptions of organizational justice behaviours can influence their attitudes and behaviours for good or bad, which in turn will affect their performance, commitment and organizational success (Ajala, 2015). When principals display positive organizational justice behaviours, they create a working relationship and school environment where vice principals are valued and respected by other school members. When principals display negative organizational justice behaviours, they belittle the image of the vice principals and make them oblivious members of the schools. Thus, resulting to a poor interpersonal relationship between principals and vice principals.

Principals' interpersonal relationship behaviours are those things principals do which attract other school members to, or repel them from interacting actively with principals and working towards the achievement of the school goals. These behaviours include active listening, inclusion, communication, empathy, trustworthiness, problem-solving (Deer, 2020), resilience, integrity, delegation abilities, mentorship (Somanathan, 2024), cynicism, humour (Inceler and Guneyli, 2021, Tabak, 2020), respect, recognition, courtesy, honesty, hard work, sensitivity. Research studies have shown that principals' interpersonal relationship behaviours with the school members are the most crucial aspects of their leadership skills in the schools. In these relationships, Majestei (2023) emphatically states that the formation of principal-assistant principal partnership takes centre stage. This is because principals' actions and behaviours affect inclusivity with regards to vice principals' rights and needs (Khaleel, Alhosani and Duyar 2021). This implies that when principals' include vice

principals in their decision makings and actions, it is part of their granting vice principals' their rights and needs in the schools and impacting vice principals' work behaviours.

Principals' organizational justice and interpersonal relationship behaviours take different dimensions. In their study, Srivasta (2015) and Phiri et al. (2024) listed three dimensions of organizational justice behaviours, namely, distributive, procedural and interactional justice behaviours. The National School Climate Center acknowledges three crucial dimensions of interpersonal relationship which principals ought to exhibit in the secondary schools, namely, respect for diversity, school connectedness and social support (community partnership). This study will only focus on Principals' procedural justice and School connectedness as correlates of vice principals' work behavior.

Procedural justice behaviours of organizational leaders have been linked to many positive and negative employee behaviours in organizations. They have been linked to such positive behaviours as employee supportive behaviors, confidence and trust in colleagues, superior and organization (Kumasey, Delle and Hossaini, 2021), job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, innovative behaviours, job performance, commitment (Thompson and Unachukwu, 2020), affective commitment, job engagement, dedication and occupational health (Ho, 2024). In the secondary schools, procedural justice behaviours are associated with students' discipline, evaluation and wellbeing (Bonehead, Shecter and Ben-Ari, 2018), students' school connectedness, emotional intelligence and academic adjustment (Igweilo, Williams, Abubakar and Muhammed 2024), teacher professional community, teacher physical and emotional wellbeing (Moon and McCluskey, 2023), school leadership and organizational trust and staff school connectedness. It is negatively associated with school and work deviant behaviours, such as students' aggression, malicious envy and resistance to school rules (Xu and Chen, 2022), conflict at work, retaliatory behaviours, dissatisfaction, lack of trust and decrease in staff job performance (Azubuike and Wosu, 2021), sabotage, theft, withdrawal, vandalism, turnover (Pan, Chen, Hao and Bi, 2018) and unpleasant thoughts and feelings which may cause deviant behaviours (Dar, 2017).

It is also in agreement with Alev (2021) who reiterates that employees' perception of the methods and processes used in the allocation of resources matters more to them than the allocation of the resources itself. This suggests that principals' procedural justice behaviours in managing relationships between vice principals and other school members is crucial to the vice principals and the entire school system. When principals' procedural justice is fair, it forms part of principals' behaviours which lead to school members' school connectedness.

School connectedness behaviour is another aspect of principals' behaviours that affect the behaviours of vice principals, teachers, students, and other school members. School connectedness behaviours are those things school members do which make their peers and others to feel at home being in the schools. The NSCC (2012) sees school connectedness as students' feeling that their teachers and peers love and care for them and their wellbeing. It is students' belief that peers and adults in the school support, value and care about their individual wellbeing as well as their academic progress (American Psychological Association, 2023). Students are not the only ones who feel connected to the schools when they are loved and cared for, by teachers and peers. Adult school members (teachers, principals, vice principals, non-teaching staff, parents) also feel connected to the school when they are loved and cared for, even by the students. Nwoko, Emeto, Malau-Aduli and Malau-Aduli (2023) assert that teachers like students, must be cared for and supported so that they can do their jobs well in the schools. This is in agreement with Reig and Marcoline (2008), who almost two decades ago, buttressed that teachers like students, must feel the personal connectedness to the school system. They must believe that they are working for an organization that cares about them as persons first, then as employees (Reig and Marcoline). Thus, Wikins, Krause, Verlenden, Szucs, Ussery, Alken, Stinson, Michael and Ethier (2023) were right when they simply viewed school connectedness as the sense of being cared for, supported and belonging which is fostered by a caring and supportive environment. Vice principals' school connectedness in the context of this study is their feeling that principals in secondary schools in Anambra State make the secondary schools happy homes for them to be and work in.

School connectedness is associated with many positive and negative school behavioural outcomes. It is associated with teachers' emotional wellbeing (Moon and McCluskey, 2023), engagement, commitment, performance, staying longer in the school (Taherian, 2020), loyalty and

productivity. It is linked to reduction in students' delinquent behaviours, such as taking alcohol or drugs, early sexual initiation, gang involvement, school absenteeism, violence on school property, fights, theft (Marsh and Cumming, 2021). The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC (2023) opines that students' connectedness to the school is ensured and enhanced when they see school staff dedicating their time, interest, attention and emotional support for them. Taherian (2020) emphasizes that employees' connectedness to their organizations and their leaders makes them to stay longer and work better.

Organizational leaders make their employees feel connected to their organizations' visions and values as well as get connected to their coworkers and managers when they are recognized and rewarded, when their contributions to their organizations are valued, when their good work is recommended, when their growth and professional development are invested in (Allyson, 2023). Thus vice principals and teachers' feeling that they have the support of the principal makes them more engaged with their work, which is a factor that influences learning and teaching and thus, students' academic achievement and their behaviours (Koula, 2015). This implies that when principals in secondary schools in Anambra State support and care for vice principals, it leads to vice principals' feeling of belongingness to the schools which equally affects their work behaviours and productivity in the schools.

Work behaviours are those attitudes and actions employees display while interacting with their leaders/employers, colleagues and customers while performing their assigned roles in the organizations. Simhon (2024) sees work behaviours as the tasks employees do on the job and the way they act at work. They include the outward actions workers take and the attitudes behind such actions. Vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State is therefore the mental and observable (physical) behaviours and actions vice principals display while carrying out their roles and interacting with teachers, students, principals and other members of the school. Work behaviours can be positive or negative. Positive work behaviours include honesty, altruism, organizational citizenship, job performance, engagement, civility, respect, dedication. Negative work behaviours include sabotage, withdrawal behaviours (Dalley, 2024), rudeness, bullying, gossip, prejudices, stereotyping, discrimination (Fansworth, Clark, Green, Lopez, Wysocki and Kepner, 2020), sullenness, silence, aggression, defiance, connivance, physical fights, snobbery.

The many work behaviours exhibited by workers in organizations have been collapsed into four major types, namely, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, absenteeism and turnover. Srimulyani and Hermanto (2022) concur that employees who have lower perception of organizational justice and interpersonal relationship have a higher propensity for withdrawal from their job responsibilities. Withdrawal behaviours are simply a form of absenteeism. This implies that when principals firmly adopt procedural justice, coupled with good school connectedness behaviours, they increase vice principals' tendency for organizational citizenship and reduce or even eliminate their tendency for absenteeism, which includes withdrawal behaviours, lack of punctuality, observance of minimum working hours, spending more time on personal matters than the organization's.

In Anambra State, principals' procedural justice and school connectedness behaviours have been linked to staff work behaviours in the schools. It has been empirically established that procedural justice and school connectedness behaviours of many principals in Anambra State are poor. Some principals tend to be biased in dealing with some teachers by excluding them from participating in crucial decision making matters, refusing teachers' to air their views on school affairs, refusing to delegate powers (Oshia, Chukwudi and Obionu, 2022). This attitude of teachers is a form of absenteeism which confirms Schnaidman (2020)'s position that a teacher who is not connected to the school may be physically present at their job but they may not be committed to their students or their schools. The rigid, unsupportive, unfriendly and dishonest attitudes of some principals lead to demotivation of staff from performing extra roles in the schools (Oshia, Chukwudi and Obionu, 2022). These are some of the procedural justice and school connectedness behaviours of principals which affect the organizational citizenship and absenteeism behaviours of many staff in the schools.

When principals are impartial in implementing school policies, rules and other school norms in their dealing with vice principals and other school members, it makes them to see principals decisions and actions as procedural justice behaviours that are fair and just. This could cause them to feel happy working in the schools and to stay longer in the schools. When principals' behaviours are

unethical and their decisions and actions are partial or biased, it leads to staff negative feeling of procedural justice and school disconnectedness. However, there is a dearth of empirical studies in Anambra State that have shown principal-vice principal relationship and its effect on vice principals' work behaviours. Specifically, no study has so far been conducted on how principals' procedural justice and school connectedness behaviours can impact vice principals' work behaviours, precisely, vice principals' organizational citizenship and absenteeism in secondary schools in Anambra State. This lack propelled the researchers to carry out this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine principals' organizational justice and interpersonal relationship behaviours as correlates of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study particularly sought to examine

1. principals' procedural justice behaviours as correlates of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. principals' school connectedness behaviours as correlates of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question

Two research questions guided the study as follows:

1. What is the predictive value of principals' procedural justice behaviours on vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of principals' school connectedness behaviours on vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were postulated as follows:

1. Principals' procedural justice behaviour does not significantly predict vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' school connectedness behaviour does not significantly predict vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Methods

The study employed the correlational research design. The population of the study was 532 vice principals. A sample of 532 vice principals, made up of 266 vice principals' administration and 266 vice principals academics was selected from the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State, using the census sampling technique. Three instruments, namely, Principals' Organizational Justice Scale for Vice Principals (POJSVP), Principals' Interpersonal Relationship Scale for Vice Principals (PIRSVP) and Vice Principals' Work Behaviours Scale (VPWBS) were used to collect data. The instruments were subjected to face validity by submitting them to three research experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The instruments were thereafter administered on twenty public secondary school vice principals (VP admin and VP Acads) in twenty public secondary schools in Enugu State. The Cronbach alpha reliability test was used to analyze the data collected on the twenty vice principals. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. With the help of six research assistants, the researchers administered the instruments directly on the population and it was an on-the-spot response approach. Participants who could not respond on the spot gave the researchers and their assistants dates and time to collect the instruments. 521 out of the 532 instruments administered were completely filled and returned, yielding a 98% return rate. The data were analyzed using simple regression analysis. Where: 0 - 0.1 = weak, 0.2- 0.3=modest, 0.4 - 0.5 = moderate, > 0.5 = strong prediction. For the null hypotheses, p-value was used to determine the significance of the prediction. Where the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. Whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where the calculated p-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05).

Research Question 1: What is the predictive value of principals' procedural justice behaviours on vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1. Summary of Simple Regression Analysis of Principals' Procedural Justice Behaviour as a Predictor of Vice Principals' Work Behaviours

	R	R^2	Adj.R^2	*B*	SE B	B
Constant				17.03	1.26	
Procedural Justice	.69	.48	.48	1.88	.08	.69

Data in Table 1 indicates that principals' procedural justice is a moderate predictor of vice principals work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State. This is shown by the regression coefficient (R =.69) and the coefficient of determination (R2 = .48).

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of principals' school connectedness behaviours on vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2. Summary of Simple Regression Analysis of Principals' School Connectedness Behaviour as a Predictor of Vice Principals' Work Behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State

	R	R^2	Adj.R^2	*B*	SE B	B
Constant				25.83	1.29	
School Connectedness Behaviour	.54	.29	.29	1.31	.08	.54

Table 2 shows that the simple regression coefficient (R) is .54 while the coefficient of determination (R^2) is .29. This indicates that principals' school connectedness behaviour is a modest predictor of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1: Principals' procedural justice behaviour does not significantly predict vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Principals' Procedural Justice Behaviour as a Predictor of Vice Principals' Work Behaviours in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Predictor	*R*	R^2	*F(1,542)*	*p*-value	Decision
Procedural Justice behaviour	.69	.48	493.48	.000	Significant

Table 3 shows that principals' procedural justice behaviour is a significant predictor of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State., R = .69, *F (*1,542) = 493.48 and *p*-value <0.05. Since the obtained *p*-value was less than stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Principals' School connectedness behaviour does not significantly predict vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Principals' School Connectedness Behaviour as a Predictor of Vice Principals' Work Behaviours

Predictor	*R*	R^2	*F(1,524)*	*p*-value	Decision
School Connectedness Behaviour	.54	.29	221.51	.000	Significant

The simple regression result displayed in Table 4 shows that principals' school connectedness behaviour is a significant predictor of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State, R = .54, *F (*1,524) = 221.51 and *p*-value <0.05. Since the obtained *p*-value was less than stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The Predictive Value of Principals' Procedural Justice Behaviour on Vice Principals' Work Behaviours in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

In table 1, the result of the study shows procedural justice behaviour of principals as a moderate predictor of vice principals' work behaviours. This prediction is significant as shown in Table 3. It means that procedural justice behaviour of a principal is vital to school members' participation in the school goal achievement. When principals consistently and firmly implement procedural justice between vice principals and other school members, it boosts vice principals' feeling of fair treatment and commitment to the schools. The finding however, disagrees with Srivasta (2015) who found out that procedural justice had no significant prediction on organizational commitment. The disparity in the two studies could be as a result of the difference in the population and location. Srivasta's study was conducted on health personnel in India, while this study was conducted on education personnel in Anambra State, Nigeria. The result agrees with Moon and McCluskey (2023)'s finding that school leaders' inconsistency in the implementation of procedural justice in handling issues or cases of victimized teachers is responsible for their negative emotional wellbeing, which affects their work behaviours. The result corroborates Tyokusu, Emakwu and Ejoha (2019)'s position that principals' objective implementation of procedural justice matters more to staff than any reward they can get from the school. This means that vice principals' negative work behaviours in Ananbra State will change when principals implement procedural justice with objectivity and impartiality.

The Predictive Value of Principals' School Connectedness Behaviour on Vice Principals' Work Behaviours in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows that principals' school connectedness behaviour is a modest predictor of vice principals' work behaviours. This prediction is an evidence of the significance of school principals' connectedness behaviours to vice principals' work behaviours. The result disagrees with Ocheho, Oke and Babalola (2019) and Igweilo, Williams, Abubakar and Muhammed (2024) who found no relationship between school connectedness and students' learned helplessness and students' emotional intelligence and academic adjustment respectively. The difference in the findings of the studies could be as a result of the difference in the population and area of study. Ocheho, Oke and Babalola (2019) and Igweilo, Williams, Abubakar and Muhammed (2024)'s study were conducted on students of tertiary institutions, while this study was conducted on principals and vice principals. Meanwhile, the result agrees with Pate, Maras, Whitney and Bradshaw (2017)'s finding that school connectedness is significant in predicting students'/ adolescents' emotional distress and educational achievement. The result supports Nwoko, Emeto, Malau-Aduli and Malau-Aduli (2023) whose study confirms that teachers must be loved, supported and cared for, to enhance their work behaviours. The result also corroborates Reig and Marcoline (2008)'s study, which almost two decades ago found out that staff, like students, must feel the personal connectedness to school if the principals must expect them to exhibit positive work behaviours, get committed to and engaged in the school programmes. The result consolidates the researchers' opinion that NSCC (2012)'s definition of school connectedness be extended to other school members because they all need to be connected if they must show interest in the schools' operations through their work behaviours.

Conclusion

Principals' procedural justice and School connectedness are moderate predictor of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State. Also, Principals' procedural justice and School connectedness significantly predict vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

1. Seminars should be organized for Principals to improve on their procedural justice and school connectedness in order to promote\predict vice Principals' work behaviour.

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