



INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AS PREDICTORS OF PRINCIPALS' JOB SATISFACTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *This study investigated interpersonal relationship and institutional environment as predictors of principals' job satisfaction in Imo State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. It was a correlational study that involved all the public secondary school principals in the six education zones in Imo State. The School Principal Survey (SPS) and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) modified by Mogaji for Nigerian professionals were used to collect data. Three research experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka validated the SPS. The JDI was not submitted for validation as it is a standardized instrument whose validity had been established by Smith, Kendal and Hulin (1969) and Mogaji (1997) for Nigerian professionals. The two instruments were administered on forty public secondary school principals in Abia State. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an overall reliability of 0.77. Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient was used to analyse data administered on the principals in Imo State. The findings of the study showed that principals' interpersonal relationship and the institutional environment they work in Imo State public secondary schools had low positive relationships with principals' job satisfaction. This is an indication that the low positive relationships are associated with principals' low job satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other that principals in Imo State public secondary schools should improve their interpersonal relationship with their fellow principals, students, teachers and other school members*

Keywords: Interpersonal Relationship, Institutional Environment, Principals, Job Satisfaction

Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the most extensively researched topics in educational management and other organizations because of its importance to the overall well being of the individual worker, the entire organization and the society. Taylor (2017) subscribed that being able to understand the causes of job satisfaction will help to understand what causes job dissatisfaction which harms the individual, the entire organization and the society. Job satisfaction has been variously defined by different individuals because of its multi-faceted nature. The commonest definitions are the ones given by Edwin Locke and Paul Spector who

viewed job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appreciation of one's achievement or facilitating the achievement of one's job values (Locke, 1976) and the extent to which people like their job (Spector, 1997). This suggests that people feel happy and satisfied when their expectations on the job are fulfilled and this fulfillment determines how much they enjoy doing the job. Suleman and Hussain (2018) defined job satisfaction as the pleasure and excitement with one's work. In the context of this work, job satisfaction is a feeling of fulfillment and contentment principals have in their job in Imo State secondary schools.

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Job satisfaction is very crucial in every human organization as it serves as a buffer to the physical, social, emotional and psychological aspects of the worker. A worker who carries out his or her work in a workplace that does not provide him or her with a good physical, social, emotional and psychological well being can hardly be happy or satisfied. Thus, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2016) described a satisfied worker as a satisfied citizen. This suggests that when principals are satisfied with their job, they can positively impact the whole school organization and society. Suleman and Hussain (2018) posited that job satisfaction is a dominant organizational variable as it is linked to the overall organizational activities, such as productivity and individual's prosperity. It is also linked to counterproductive work behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover (Lodisso, 2019). In the secondary education organization, job satisfaction is very crucial for principals' and teachers' job performance, commitment and school productivity. Jaiyeoba and Jibril (2014) emphasized that the success or failure of the education industry largely depends to a large extent on satisfied teachers and of course satisfied school managers and administrators. Suleman and Hussain corroborated that school heads cannot accomplish their duties and responsibilities until they are satisfied and secure in a work place. Thus, the educational system will not be performing smoothly and effectively when school principals and teachers are not satisfied (Mwenda, 2015). This is because the extent to which school principals are satisfied with their job is a potential indicator of their commitment to their responsibilities, managerial effectiveness and motivation (Jaiyeoba & Jibril, 2014). All these are indications of the importance of job satisfaction in the school organization. However, job satisfaction is multifaceted. Locke (1976) in his job discrepancy or range of affect theory posited that workers give preference to one facet of the job. These facets

include salary, organizational policies, workers' gender, marital status, autonomy, promotion, interpersonal or social relations, work (institutional/physical) environment. In order to improve organizational performance and productivity, researchers therefore, engage in determining which facet gives satisfaction to a worker. In the course of this study, only two of these variables were considered. These are interpersonal relationship and institutional environment. Investigating these two variables was based on the fact that other research works carried out on interpersonal relationship and institutional (physical) environment in Imo State did not link these variables directly to principals' job satisfaction. Moreover, Okorji and Njoku (2019) had conducted a pioneer study on the relationship between the four dimensions (safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationship and institutional environment) of school climate propounded by the National School Climate Centre (2012) in Imo State but they investigated only safety and teaching and learning. Thus, these researchers felt it was imperative to ascertain whether principals' interpersonal relationship and the institutional environment of Imo State public secondary school also predict principals' job satisfaction in the State.

Relationship forms part of our learning experiences and shaping of behaviours (McCarthy, 2016). This implies that the way we relate with people and the way people relate with us contribute immensely to our attitudes, behaviours, success as well as frustration or failure in life. In the secondary education system, principals are crucial to the satisfaction of school goals. They play diverse and complex roles, all of which hinge on interacting with other members of the school community. They serve as administrators, instructional leaders, teacher mentors, parents', school boards', government and school- community representatives. Thus, the way they relate with these school member groups determines, to a large extent, their ability to be satisfied with their job as principals. Di Benneto and



Alfred (2017) averred that principals are directly responsible for maintaining the relationship between the school and the community. They have the opportunity to interact with the community in many ways that may help to develop positive relationships. When principals enjoy positive relationships with other school members, they will be happy working in the schools. This implies that principals' job satisfaction is affected by their interpersonal relationship with other members of the school.

Interpersonal relationship refers to the way people interact with one another. Interpersonal relationship in an organization refers to the relationship among stakeholders of the organization. Muhammed, Toryila and Saanyol (2018) refer to interpersonal relationship as a strong association among individuals working together in the same organization. Interpersonal relationship in the secondary education system therefore refers to the relationship among stakeholders of the secondary school organization. It includes principal-principal, principal-teacher, principal-student, teacher-teacher, parent-teacher, principal-parent, school=community relationships. Principals' interpersonal relationship is therefore their relationships with the school staff, students, parents, supervisors, government officials and other members of the school community.

Research evidences show that principals' interpersonal relationship with other school members is pivotal to the achievement of job satisfaction and school goals. Koula (2015) opined that principals' interpersonal relationship constitutes an important factor in the effective operation of the classroom and the school unit generally as it leads to teachers' job satisfaction and students' achievement. This suggests that only satisfied principals can care about teachers' satisfaction and school goal achievement. It is not surprising then that satisfied and productive principals have been described as those who are visibly present in the classroom and hallways,

who spend more of their time working with the students and less time in the office (Sadker & Sadker, 2008), those who gain teachers' confidence and clearly communicate to the faculty what the school should accomplish and how each teacher should contribute towards each end, those who reach out to parents instead of ignoring them or keeping them at arm's length, those who prevent school violence by relating well with the community and other stakeholders (Hoy & Miskel, 2015).

Highlighting the importance of principals' interpersonal relationship levels in the secondary school organization to their job satisfaction and school success, Ethridge (2017) asserted that principals' positive interpersonal relationship with the staff is associated with successful schools, shared vision and norms, openness of governance and trusting relationships which produce committed and contented school community members. Olsen and Huang (2019) corroborated that principals' interpersonal relationship with teachers improves teachers' teaching skills, enhance their sense of collegiality and collective responsibility and heighten their satisfaction with teaching. Abari, Ibikunle, Animashaun and Oguntuga (2016) specified that the most successful teachers may be the ones inspired by their the beautiful relations developed with their principals, motivating them to do their very best, improving their morale and job performance, leading to effective teaching, measured by the resultant effect of high students' achievement. On their part, Kane, Hoff, Cathcart, Heiffner, Palmon and Peterson (2017) posited that children are more likely to engage in learning and less likely to misbehave when they sense that their principals (and teachers) positively interact with them, care about them and have high expectations for them. Koula (2015) added that the good behaviours, the quality and personality of the principals and teachers imbibed by students as a result of positive interpersonal relationships with them contribute to the schools' effectiveness and the all-round development of the students' personality. Olsen



and Huang (2019) subscribed that when students and their families feel valued and welcomed by the school management, they are more likely to support school initiatives and school staff. This suggests that when parents support teachers and school initiatives as a result of good interpersonal relationship between them and the principals, it highly contributes to the improvement of principals' job satisfaction and school goal attainment. In their studies, Maforah (2015), Wang, Pollock and Hauseman (2019) noted that job satisfaction is more evidenced when principals relate well with their colleagues, learners, teachers, parents and supervisors. Thus, Bakwai (2016) concluded that the establishment of an interdependent and cordial relationship between principals, the school and community is a very crucial aspect of school climate which determines principals' attainment of job satisfaction, school goal and life satisfaction. This implies that principals must establish a friendly relationship with other school members. It also implies that other school members should help principals to establish a friendly climate by relating well with principals. When this is done, principals' job satisfaction will also be improved.

In Imo State, principals' interpersonal relationship with other school members does not appear to be very cordial. Some principals quarrel with their fellow principals, especially since the Federal Government of Nigeria split some schools into two as a result of the 2004 Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy (Ekechukwu & Amaeze 2016). Some of these principals struggle for school property and even engage in physical fights. Anuna, Mbonu, Isah, Manga and Agim (2015) had previously noted a strained relationship between principals and teachers in Imo State public secondary schools which made the teachers to abandon most of the disciplinary aspects of the schools to the principals. Onyekakeya (2019) bewailed that principals in Imo State public secondary schools did not enjoy a cordial and fulfilling relationship with the government of

Imo State, especially between 2011 and 2019. Moreover, many principals in Imo State public secondary schools do not directly involve the communities (Chukwu, 2016; Anyanwu, Okoroji & Ukpere, 2014; Emenalo & Ibekwe, 2013) and students (Anuna, Mbonu & Amanchukwu, 2013) in decision makings that affect the schools. These negative interpersonal relationships of principals with these school members tend to hamper principals' attainment of job satisfaction in the schools.

Institutional environment is another factor that predicts principals' job satisfaction. The National School Climate Centre, NSCC (2012) described the institutional environment of a school as the physical surroundings of the school and how engaged or connected it makes school members (principals, teachers, students, etc) to be in the school. It is the cleanliness, order and appeal of facilities, adequate resources and materials (NSCC, 2012). It includes school buildings, space, temperature, light, noise, facilities, equipment, vegetation, relief, rivers. Shobe (2018) in agreement with other researchers emphatically posited that job satisfaction and productivity are actually affected by the physical workplace. This agrees with Hassard and Cox (2017) and Okafor (2018) who subscribed that workers who are satisfied with the physical environment are more likely to produce better outcomes than frustrated ones. In the school organization, Adun, Akinloye and Olaoye (2014) argued that availability of quality physical resources appears to play a key role in facilitating the teaching and learning process, while their absence may jeopardize it. This was expatiated by Ukpong and Okon (2020) who maintained that quality and quantity of school facilities, such as classrooms, staff offices, libraries, laboratories, furniture, enhance the quality of teaching and learning, effective school management and job satisfaction of school heads and teachers. Thus, Ogundiran was very right when he buttressed that in planning the school location, certain factors which influence the school, such as building, equipment and other facilities, geographical location such



as rivers, reliefs, lakes, topography, vegetation and economic situation should be considered (Ogundiran, 2008, cited by Adun, Akinloye & Olaoye, 2014). This suggests that principals who work in a good institutional environment can achieve job satisfaction and school productivity, while those who lack this environment will experience job frustration, job dissatisfaction and unproductivity. Thus, Nethels (2010) urged principals to ensure that their schools enhance productivity by improving the working conditions and by providing good physical and social environments. Dangara (2016) urged the government to allocate quality and quantity physical and human resources to schools and to ensure regular supervision of schools so that they can detect any lack or inadequacy of facilities within the school. When these are done, principals' (and other school members') connectedness to the school is enhanced and principals' job satisfaction is promoted.

In Imo State, there appears to be a poor institutional environment in public secondary schools. The researchers observed that in the schools, there are dilapidated infrastructures, outdated and ill-equipped libraries, unstructured and undeveloped playgrounds, among others. This observation was confirmed by Onyekakeya (2019) who bewailed that it has become a taboo to see good libraries, laboratories, toilet facilities and good play grounds in public secondary schools in Imo State. Imo State government had earlier admitted that public secondary schools in the state require extensive rehabilitation as they are among the structures dotting Imo landscape without adequate maintenance (Imo State Government Blog, citing Imo SEEDS, 2010). The absence of many school facilities and the poor level of maintenance of school buildings and infrastructures may tend to affect the job satisfaction of principals in the state. Implicitly, principals' interpersonal relationship within and outside of the school and the institutional environment they work in, could be factors which tend to predict their job satisfaction. This study therefore, sought

to determine the predictive relationship between principals' interpersonal relationship and the institutional environment they work in Imo State.

Statement of the Problem

Research evidences have shown that principals' interpersonal relationship with other school members coupled with the institutional environment they work in, contributes immensely to their achievement of job satisfaction. Invariably, principals who relate well with teachers, students, parents and other members of the school community are most likely to enjoy their job as principals. Similarly, principals who work in an institutional environment equipped with good physical resources also enjoy their job better than those who work in an environment devoid of adequate and quality resources. Those who work in a poor institutional environment are most likely to experience job dissatisfaction and frustration.

In Imo State, principals work in schools where they neither enjoy very friendly relationships with other school members nor a conducive institutional environment. Principals quarrel with their fellow principals, especially since the Federal Government of Nigeria split many public secondary schools into two as a result of the 2004 Universal Secondary Education Policy. Some of them struggle and fight over school property such as land, economic or fruit trees, school plant. They have strained relationships with teachers. Many of them do not enjoy a cordial relationship even with the vice principals and other school subordinates. They do not adequately involve students, teachers and other school community members in decision makings that affect the school.

Principals in Imo State public secondary schools also work in a poor institutional environment. There are dilapidated infrastructures, poor maintenance of school buildings and other infrastructures, poor playgrounds, absence/inadequacy of teaching and learning facilities. Although many studies have been carried out in Imo State



on principals' interpersonal relationship and institutional environment, none of these studies linked these variables directly with principals' job satisfaction. No studies have yet shown the level of job satisfaction principals experience as a result of poor interpersonal relationship and the institutional environment in Imo State. These researchers were therefore propelled to carry out this study in order to find out whether principals' interpersonal relationship and the institutional environment of Imo State public secondary schools have any significant prediction on principals' job satisfaction in the State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate interpersonal relationship and institutional environment as predictors of principals' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Imo State. The study particularly sought to determine:

1. how principals' interpersonal relationship scores predict the job satisfaction scores of principals in Imo State public secondary schools.
2. how the institutional environment scores predict principals' job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. In what level do principals' interpersonal relationship scores predict principals' job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary schools?
2. In what level do institutional environment scores of principals' predict principals' job satisfaction scores in Imo state public secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Principals' interpersonal relationship scores do not significantly predict principals' job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary schools.

2. Institutional environment scores of principals do not significantly predict principals' job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary.

Method

The study employed a correlational research design. This is in line with Nworgu (2015)'s assertion that a correlational study seeks to establish the relationship that exists between two or more variables and the magnitude of the relationship. Correlational research design was considered suitable for this study because it enabled the researchers to determine the relationship between principals' interpersonal relationship and the institutional environment of Imo State public secondary schools and principals' job satisfaction. Okorji and Njoku (2019) had also used this design to examine the relationship between school climate and principals; job satisfaction in Imo State. This justified its employment in this study. The population of the study was all the 430 secondary school principals in the 430 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Imo State. The entire population was studied.

An adapted School Principal Survey (SPS) and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Questionnaires were used to collect data. The SPS was adapted from the School Personnel Survey developed by the National School Climate Centre, USA and modified by Okorji and Njoku for Imo State public secondary schools, while the JDI was developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) and modified by Mogaji (1997) for Nigerian professionals. The JDI was adopted. To ensure the face validity of the adapted SPS, it was submitted with the title, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, to three research experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The JDI was not submitted for validation since it was adopted. For a reliability test, the two instruments were administered on forty public secondary school principals in Abia State. Abia State was used for the pilot population because it was carved out from Imo State in 1993 and thus has many similar



characteristics, including educational opportunities with Imo State. To determine the internal reliability consistency of the two instruments, the Cronbach alpha test was employed in data analysis. Reliability coefficients of 0.71 (interpersonal relationship) and 0.0.83 (institutional environment) were obtained, resulting to an average reliability coefficient of 0.77 for the two instruments.

A total of 430 copies of each of the questionnaires were administered on the target population. Six research assistants were involved in the questionnaire administration. 416 copies of each of the instruments administered were properly filled by the principals and retrieved, yielding 96.7 % return rate. This percentage was used for data analysis. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used for data

analysis. Best & Khan (2003)'s interpretation of a correlation coefficient was used for the research questions as follows: .00 to .20 (negligible), .20 to .40 (low), .40 to .60 (moderate), .60 to .80 (substantial) and .80 to 1.00 (very high). For the null hypotheses, p-value was used to test the significance of the correlation at 0.05 levels. Where the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. The null hypothesis was not rejected where the calculated p-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05).

Results

Research Question 1: In what level do principals' interpersonal relationship scores predict principals' job satisfaction scores in public secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 1: Pearson's r on the level of prediction of interpersonal relationship scores of principals and principals' job satisfaction scores in public secondary schools in Imo State

Source of Variation	N	Interpersonal Relationship r	Job Satisfaction r	Remark
Interpersonal relationship	416	1.00	0.28	
Job Satisfaction	416	0.28	1.00	Low Positive Relationship

Table 1 indicates that there is a low positive relationship of 0.28 between interpersonal relationship and principals' job satisfaction in secondary schools in Imo State. This implies that as principals' interpersonal relationship improves, there will be increase in their job satisfaction and vice versa.

Research Question 2: In what level do institutional environment scores predict principals' job satisfaction scores in secondary schools in Imo State?



Table 2: Pearson’s on the level of prediction of institutional environment scores and principals’ job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary schools

Source of Variation	N	Institutional Environment r	Job Satisfaction r	Remark
Institutional Environment	416	1.00	0.24	Low Positive Relationship
Job Satisfaction	416	0.24	1.00	

Table 2 reveals that there is a low positive relationship of 0.24 between institutional environment and principals’ job satisfaction in secondary schools in Imo State. This means that a change in institutional environment in Imo State will bring out a change in principals’ job satisfaction in the same direction.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between interpersonal relationship dimension of school climate scores and principals’ job satisfaction scores in public secondary schools in Imo State public secondary schools.

Table 3: Test of significance of Pearson r between inter-personal relationship and principals’ job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary schools

Source of Variation	N	Interpersonal Relationship r	Job Satisfaction r	p-value	Decision
Interpersonal Relationship	416	1.00	0.28	0.00	Sig
Job Satisfaction	416	0.28	1.00		

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and principals’ job satisfaction. $r=0.28$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$. The first null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This shows that a significant relationship exists between interpersonal relationship and principals’ job satisfaction in Imo State public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between institutional environment and principals’ job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Imo State.



Table 4: Test of significance of Pearson r between institutional environment and principals’ job satisfaction scores in Imo State public secondary schools

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship

Source of Variation	N	Institutional Environment r	Job Satisfaction r	<i>p-value</i>	Decision
Institutional Environment	416	1.00	0.24	0.00	Sig
Job Satisfaction	416	0.24	1.00		

between institutional environment and principals’ job satisfaction. $r = 0.24$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$. The second null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This means that a significant relationship exists between school institutional environment and principals’ job satisfaction in Imo State public secondary schools.

Discussions

The study found out that a low (0.28) positive relationship exists between interpersonal relationship and principals' job satisfaction. This finding shows that interpersonal relationship between principals and other school members in Imo State can make a change in principals’ job satisfaction. This is in line with Mustapha (2013) who stated that a significant positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and interpersonal relationship. This finding corroborates Maforah (2015) and Wang, Pollock and Hauseman (2019) whose findings rated principals' interpersonal relationship as the most important source of their job satisfaction. This corroborates Di Benneto and Alfred (2017) who averred that a collaborative culture facilitated by the principal within the school community is a crucial determinant of attainment of educational goals and job satisfaction. This means that a positive interpersonal relationship fosters not only principals' satisfaction with their job in the school but also in their entire life.

The study showed that institutional environment also had a low (0.24) positive relationship with principals' job satisfaction. This indicates that this low state of

institutional environment is directly linked to principals’ low job satisfaction. This supports the findings of Anukam (2015), Anyaogu (2015), International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2018), Oboegbulem (2013), Ojukwu (2017) and Otegbulu (2015), all of who identified poor physical (institutional) environment of Imo State public secondary schools as a source of principals’ failure to achieve the goals of secondary school in Imo State. This finding confirms Isaiah (2013)’s passionate argument that the institutional environment has influence on the affective, cognitive, social and behavioural aspects of school members in the teaching and learning process. This is also in line with Mwenda (2015)'s position that the physical environment can make a whole difference in individuals' psyche and can positively influence their perceptions, behaviours and productivity. This proves the reason why Oboegbulem (2013) bewailed that the poor institutional environment in which principals work in Imo State public secondary schools causes them to fail in their administrative roles and efforts. This means that the institutional environment in Imo State must have adequate and functional facilities if principals must achieve both job and school goal satisfaction.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that interpersonal relationship and institutional environment have low positive relationship with principals' job satisfaction in Imo State public secondary schools. This implies that any



change in the interpersonal relationship and institutional environment (whether positive or negative) invariably affects principals' job satisfaction. **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it was recommended that

1. Principals in Imo State public secondary schools should improve their interpersonal relationship with their fellow principals, students, teachers and other school members.
2. School members, especially the government and society should help principals to establish a friendly interpersonal relationship with them by relating well with principals, recognising, appreciating, valuing and celebrating principals.
3. The government of Imo State and other stakeholders should work together to improve the institutional environment and principals' job satisfaction by providing adequate and functional facilities, renovating the dilapidated infrastructures.

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