



INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' INNOVATIVE ETHICAL PRACTICES ON TEACHERS' JOB EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA.



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Abstract

The study investigates the influence of principals' innovative ethical practices on teacher's job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprised all 2,786 teachers (1,683 males and 1103 females) in 8 local government areas in Rivers West Senatorial District. A sample size of 281 respondents (168 males and 113 females) was selected through a simple random sampling technique! The instrument titled "principals' innovative ethical practices on teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District questionnaire (PIEPTJEPSSRWSDQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was rated on a four-point rating scale of very high extent (VHE=4 points), high extent (HE=3 points), moderate extent (ME=2 points), and low extent (LE=1 point). The data was collected by personal hand delivery of the instrument to the respondents, with research assistants trained for the data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.79, respectively, and the overall reliability coefficient was 0.82, which was deemed adequate for the study. The data was analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and a t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that principal's flexibility and participatory ethical practices influence teachers' job effectiveness in Rivers West Senatorial District, to a high extent. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the researcher recommends that:

Principals should employ flexibility ethical practices to influence teachers' job effectiveness in both public and private schools.

Government should organize seminars for principals on participatory ethical practices to enable principals to be productive in school leadership in both public and private schools.

Keywords: Principals, Innovative, Ethical practices, Teachers Job and Effectiveness.

Introduction

Education is a vital instrument for national development, and the quality of educational success is greatly influenced by the effectiveness of secondary school teachers within the school system. Nwokporo and Nwankwo (2024) stated that the effectiveness of school teachers is very important for the academic achievement and personal development of students. The ability of teachers to deliver effective instruction and carry out their duties diligently depends largely on the quality of school principals. Principals are secondary school administrators who oversee the daily operations of secondary schools, providing leadership and management to ensure that teachers are motivated for effective teaching delivery and students receive a high-quality education. Eziuzo, Ogbuanya, and Chika. (2024) Principals are responsible for setting academic goals, managing school budgets, supervising teachers and other staff, and maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. Ughamadu, Obiagwu, and Igwe (2024) the principal is described as a transformational agent whose leadership



practice influences the performance of teachers and the overall effectiveness of the school. Nnamani (2025), the principal, plays a central role in ensuring transformation through academic success, staff coordination, student discipline, and policy implementation. Principals set the academic tone and Vision for the school. Eze (2022) defined a principal as a professional leader entrusted with the implementation of educational policies, maintenance of school culture, and coordination of both academic and nonacademic programmes. On this, a principal engages stakeholders for school development and partnerships. Adeke, Tyokaa, and Mando (2024) stated that principals are chief administrators of the schools and they are responsible for the overall leadership, management, and day-to-day operation of the secondary school. A principal inspires teachers and students towards high performance and discipline. According to Nwokporo and Nwankwo (2024), a principal oversees curriculum implementation, supervises teachers, and ensures lesson plans align with educational goals. Adikwu (2024) states that the current educational system is defined by dynamic reforms, accountability demands, and increasing societal expectations. On this note, principals of schools are expected to not only uphold ethical standards but also adopt innovative ethical strategies to drive teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance.

Principal motivation practices are the abilities of the principal to creatively adapt to leadership strategies that involve introducing new ideas. Technologies, systems, and methods to solve problems, motivate staff, and enhance effectiveness in schools.

Eze (2022) principal motivation refers to the factors that energize and sustain school administrators in discharging their managerial and instructional roles in pursuit of educational goals. On this note, principals can adopt motivational practices such as teachers' professional development, staff welfare support, recognition of staff commitment, ethical engagement, mentorship, coaching, delegating leadership responsibilities, and promoting autonomy.

Ejilibe (2024) stated that principals' motivational practices are the intentional strategies and leadership actions taken by the principal to inspire, encourage, and sustain teachers' commitment, performance, and job satisfaction with the school environment. These motivation practices are crucial for building a productive school culture, enhancing teachers' morale, and improving students' academic performance.

Okorie and Usulor(2023). These practices comprise leadership behaviour that promotes positive reinforcement, inclusiveness, and teachers' development in the school environment. These practices help in building a supportive school climate, improving teachers' effectiveness for the attainment of students' high performance in the teaching and learning process.

Principal ethical practices are actions, decisions, and behaviours that are guided by strong moral principles, professional standards, and social responsibility of a secondary school principal. In education, principal ethical practices refer to fair, honest, respectful, and accountable conduct by school principals. Principal's ethical practices can be seen as integrity, transparency, respect for others, responsibility, accountability, justice, fairness, and confidentiality of a principal in the school community.

Jejenywa (2024) describe ethical practices as moral behaviours, professional standards, and equity that ensure effectiveness in school management. Principal ethical practices also refer to the value-based leadership actions and moral decisions that principals adopt in managing their schools. These practices involve accountability in administration, respect for others, and transparency. Principal ethical practices play a critical role in fostering a trustworthy, inclusive, and productive educational environment that supports teachers' effectiveness, students' achievements, and stakeholders' confidence. Eze and Okoro (2022) stated that principal ethical practices are reflected in the principal's ability to manage the school with integrity, treat teachers fairly, and uphold professional morals in decision-making. On this note, the ethical practices of school principals are the cornerstone of effective leadership, as they enhance teachers' motivation, professional trust, and school productivity. Teachers' job effectiveness is the degree to which teachers successfully achieve desired school goals, promote student learning, and fulfill their professional responsibilities in the school system. It

harnesses teaching and learning performance, discipline, classroom management, interpersonal skills, and commitment to student and social development.

Onyekwelu (2024) stated that a teacher's job effectiveness is the extent to which a teacher demonstrates competence in delivering instructions, managing students, and contributing to school goals.

Onidiebo and Okorji (2023) Stated that teachers job effectiveness refers to how well a teacher facilitates learning, upholding professional ethics and contributing to a supportive school climate, contributing to school goals base on these, the effectiveness of teachers job effectiveness is measured by the outcomes of their instructional efforts, their discipline record, and their overall impacts on student learning.

Principal flexibility is the ability of a principal to adapt leadership strategies, respond to changing educational needs, and adjust ethical decisions in creative and inclusive manners, without compromising core moral values. In this situation of innovative ethical practices, principal flexibility means the principal being open to new ideas while upholding fairness, integrity, and respect.

Arinze, Egboka, and Nwosu(2024) stated that principals who adopt flexibility are better able to adjust to changing school dynamics, accommodate diverse teachers' needs, and support creativity in educational delivery. David (2022) stated that flexibility, when guided by ethical values, encourages teachers' commitment, reduces conflict, and improves instructional effectiveness. On this note, a principal is both a strategic and moral imperative for advancing teachers' job effectiveness. In education, principal's flexibility is the ability of the principal to adapt to leadership approaches, policies, and decisions in response to changing needs, challenges, and circumstances within the school system, and it is a hallmark of innovative and ethical leadership. Uzoechina (2023) stated that a flexible principal accommodates diverse optimal effectiveness. Adeyemi (2024) stated that flexibility in leadership is the ability of a principal to switch from rigid authority to responsive governance while maintaining ethical integrity. On this note, flexible principals do not impose one-size-fits-all rules, but tailor solutions that reflect the realities of each classroom. Opinions, suggestions, and adapts to dynamic challenges and modifies school procedures for principal participatory is the leadership approach where the school principal involves teachers and sometimes students and community members in making key decisions that affect the school

Participatory decisions emphasize collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility.

Ogbonna and Chika (2024) stated that participatory decision making is the process in which members of the school, especially the teachers, are actively involved in making policies, contributing to decisions on resource allocation, participating in promotion and disciplinary review, and helping in developing school rules and regulations.

Ibrahim and Nwachukwu (2022) stated that schools where the principal practiced participatory decision making recorded higher staff motivation, inclusivity. This democratic approach allows for the emergence of innovative teaching ideas and reduces workload and resistance to change. Nwokporo and Nwankwo (2024) participatory decisions in education enhance trust between the principal and the teaching staff as it is an essential aspect of ethical practices.

Mawalo and Rutaro (2024) emphasized that participatory leadership strengthens teachers' professional commitment and improves job effectiveness as teachers tend to support policies they helped to develop. Participatory decision-making, when achieved based on fairness and respect, forms a practical expression of ethical leadership and contributes to sustainable school improvement.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools is critical to the achievement of educational goals. However, in recent years, there has been growing concern about the declining performance, low morale, and fading commitment among teachers in many schools across Rivers State. These problems persist despite various reforms in the education sector, pointing to deeper issues related to school leadership and ethical governance.



One of the major factors believed to influence teachers' job effectiveness is the leadership style and ethical practices of school principals. Especially, principals' innovative ethical practices, such as flexible decision-making and participatory decision-making are considered essential for fostering a supportive and productive teaching environment. Flexible decision-making allows principals to adapt to changing school realities, respond to teachers' needs, and promote innovative solutions. Participatory decision-making, on the other hand, involves teachers in governance processes, as a result enhancing their sense of ownership, motivation, and accountability.

Despite the potential of these innovative ethical practices to transform school climate and improve academic outcomes. There is limited empirical evidence on how innovative ethical practices are applied by principals in the Rivers West senatorial district and the extent to which they influence teachers' effectiveness. Many studies have examined general leadership styles; few have isolated the ethical flexibility and participatory dimensions of school leadership that directly impact teacher motivation and performance.

This study therefore tends to bridge the gap by looking at the influence of principals' innovative ethical practices, especially adaptive and inclusive decision making in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial District

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate principals' innovative ethical practices on teachers' job effectiveness in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically, the study tends to:

1. Determine the extent to which principals' flexibility in ethical practices influences teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the extent to which principals' participatory ethical practices influence teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Research Questions.

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does principals' flexibility in ethical practices influence teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do principals' participatory ethical practices influence teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' flexibility in ethical practices influences teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' participatory ethical practices influence teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed a survey research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprised all 2,786 teachers (1,683 males and 1103 females) in 8 local the Rivers West senatorial district. A sample size of 2560, (168 males and 113 females) was selected through a simple random sampling technique! The instrument titled "principals' innovative ethical practices on teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial district questionnaire (PIEPTJEPSSRWSDQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was rated on a four-point rating scale of very high extent (VHE=4 points), high .collected by personal hand delivery of the instrument to the respondents, with research assistants trained for the data

collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.79, respectively, and the overall reliability coefficient was 0.82, which was deemed adequate for the study. The data was analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and a t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Decisions on the research questions were based on the grand mean of the real-time numbers. Items with a mean rating of 0.50- 1.49 are rated low extent, those with i. 50-2.49 were rated moderate extent, and items with a mean rating of 2.50 - 3.49 were rated high extent, those with 3.50 - 4.00 were rated very high extent. For the hypotheses, if the calculated t- t-value is equal to or greater than critical t-value, it will be rejected, otherwise it will be accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does principals' flexibility in ethical practices influence teachers job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial District, Nigeria?

Table 1: Data on the extent principals' flexibility in ethical practices influences teacher's job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district, Nigeria.
(N=281)

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Male teachers		Females teachers		Male and female		Teachers combine		N=(174)		
N= (94)										
S/N	Item Statement	X ₁	SD ₁	Rmks	X ₂	SD ₂	Rmks	X	SD	Rmks
1	My principal adjusts Leadership decisions based in emerging school issues	3.82	0.38	HE	3.62	0.36	HE	3.72	0.37	HE
2	My principal encourages innovative classroom mgt and teaching.	3.96	0.39	HE	3.77	0.38	HE	3.87	0.39	HE
3	Principal modifies school routines to meet the needs of both teachers and students	3.59	0.35	HE	3.52	0.35	HE	3.56	0.35	HE
4	My principal is open to changing plans when presented with better alternatives	3.91	0.39	HE	3.79	0.38	HE	3.85	0.39	HE
5	Flexibility in decision making by my principal promotes a more effective working environment	3.86	0.38	HE	3.79	0.38	HE	3.38	0.38	HE
6	My principal makes school policies to meet specific teachers needs.	3.38	0.38	HE	3.66	0.37	HE	3.37	0.38	HE
7	My principal alter Creative solution during unexpected changes	3.83	0.37	HE	3.69	0.37	HE	3.67	0.38	HE
	GRAND MEAN and SD	3.81	0.38	HE	3.70	0.37	HE	3.70	0.38	HE

Source: Researcher field survey, 2025.

The data presented on table1 shows the extent to which principal's flexibility ethical practices on teacher's job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West senatorial district, Nigeria.

This is evident in the mean rating of the respondents. The item indicated mean and standard deviation values of the following: My principal adjusts leadership decisions based in emerging school issues (3.82, 3.62 and 0.38, 0.36). My principal encourages innovative classroom mgt and teaching (3.96, 3.77 and 0.39, 0.38). My principal modifies school routines to meet the needs of both teachers and students (3.59, 3.52 and 0.35, 0.35). My principal is open to changing plans when presented with better alternatives (3.91, 3.79 and 0.39, 0.38). Flexibility in decision making by my principal promotes a more effective working environment (3.86, 3.79 and 0.38, 0.38). My principal makes school policies to meet specific teacher's needs. (3.38, 3.66 0.38 and 0.37, 0.38). My principal alter creative solution during unexpected changes (3.83, 3.69 0.37, 0.37) The grand mean and standard deviation of 3.81, 3.70 and 0.38, 0.37 respectively in Rivers East Senatorial District, Nigeria. This indicates that the respondents agreed to a high extent that they perceived principal flexibility ethical practices improves teachers job effectiveness in secondary school in Rivers west senatorial.

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals' participatory ethical practices influence teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigerian?

Table 2: Data on the extent principals' participatory in ethical practices influences teacher's job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district, Nigeria. (= 281)

Male Teachers N= (94)		Females Teachers		Male and female		Teachers combine N= (174)					
S/N	Item Statement	X ₁	SD ₁	Rmks	X ₂	SD ₂	Rmks	X	SD	Rmks	
8	Teachers are regularly consulted before important decisions are made in my school	3.01	0.38	HE	3.76	0.38	HE	3.80	0.38	HE	
9	Principal engage open discussion during Staff meeting	3.35	0.38	HE	3.71	0.37	HE	3.74	0.37	HE	
10	My principal often invite me to contribute to the school development policies.	3.40	0.39	HE	3.76	0.38	HE	3.84	0.38	HE	
11	My suggestions are respected and consider valid in school planning.	3.41	0.37	HE	3.09	0.30	HE	3.38	0.34	HE	
12	Participatory decision making has improved trust between the principal and the teachers.	3.42	0.36	HE	3.55	0.36	HE	3.58	0.36	HE	
13	My principal makes me Feel more committed to school goals.	3.36	0.39	HE	3.65	0.37	HE	3.75	0.38	HE	
14	My principal usually reflect teachers input in final decision.	3.22	0.37	HE	3.62	0.36	HE	3.65	0.35	HE	
	Grand mean and SD	3.17	0.38	HE	3.59	0.36	HE	3.67	0.37	HE	

Researcher field survey, 2025

The data presented on table 2, shows the extent to which principals participatory ethical practices on teachers job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district, Nigeria. This evident is in the mean rating of the respondents. The items indicated mean and standard deviation values of the following: Teachers are regularly consulted before important decisions are made in my school (3.01, 3.76 and 0.38, 0.38).principal engage open discussion during Staff meeting (3.35, 3.71 and 0.38 ,0.37).My principal often invite contribute to the school development policies.(3.40, 3.76 and 0.39, 0.38).My suggestions are respected and consider valid in school planning.(3.41 ,3.09 and 0.37,0.30). Participatory decision making has improved trust between the principal and the teachers. (3.42, 3.55 and 0.36, 0.36).my principal makes me feel more committed to school goals. 3.36, 3.65 and 0.39, 0.37).My principal usually reflect teachers input in final decision (3.22, 3.62 and 0.37, 0.36) Grand mean and standard deviation 3.17, 3.59 and 0.38, 0.36 respectively indicates that the respondents agreed to a high extent that they perceived principal participatory ethical practices strengthen teachers professional commitment and improves job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' flexibility in ethical practices influences teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Table 3: summary of t-test Analysis on the Extent to which Principals' flexibility in ethical Practices Influences Teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Variables	N	x	SD	Df	a	t- cal	t-crit	Decision
Males	168	3.81	0.38	279	0.05	-2.63	+ 1.96	Accepted
Females	113	3.70	0.37					

Source: researcher field survey, 2025.

The data presented in table 3 showed the t-calculated value of -2. 62 at 279 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value of -2. 62 is less than the critical value of +1.96, the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' flexibility in ethical practices influences teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial district, Nigeria

Hypothesis 2: There is on significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' participatory in ethical practices influences teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Table 4: summary of t-test Analysis on the Extent to which Principals' participatory in ethical Practices Influences Teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Table 4: summary of t-test Analysis on the Extent to which Principals' flexibility in ethical Practices Influences Teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Variables	N	x	SD	Df	a	t- cal	t-crit	Decision
Males	168	3.17	0.38	279	0.05	-1.63	+ 1.96	Accepted
Females	113	3.59	0.36					

Source: Researcher field survey, 2025

The data presented in table 4 showed the t- calculated value of -1.03 at 279 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value of -1.03 is less than the critical value of +1.96, the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' participatory in ethical practices influences teachers job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers West Senatorial district, Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

The study in table 1, result reveal that principals' flexibility ethical practices are perceived to influence teachers job effectiveness in secondary schools in Rivers west Senatorial district, Nigeria to a high extent. This finding align with existing literature of Ejilibe (2024) which emphasizes the significance of principals flexibility ethical practices in boosting teachers jib effectiveness in promoting students learning outcomes. Specifically, the study result is in agreement with the earlier study of Uzoechina (2023) who stated that flexibility is the hallmark of innovative and ethical leadership and it modifies school procedures for optimal effectiveness of staff for a better productivity and school development.

However, the corresponding study in table 3,also reveal a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers regarding the extent to which principals flexibility ethical practices influence job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district. This finding suggests that gender may play a role in shaping teachers' perceptions of principal's flexibility ethical practices, warranting further investigations.

In contrast, the study in table 2. Reveal that principals' participatory ethical practices influence teacher's job effectiveness in public secondary schools to a high extent. This finding align with existing literature of Mawalo and Rutaro (2024) who find that participatory decision making of principals makes teachers actively involved in making policies, contributing to decisions on resource allocation, participating in promotion and disciplinary review, and helping in developing school. Similarly, finding of Ibrahim and Nwachukwu (2022) who stated that schools where the principal practiced participatory decision making recorded higher staff motivation, commitment, and goal achievement. However, the corresponding study in table 4 ,also reveal a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers regarding the extent to which principals participatory ethical practices influence job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that principal's flexibility ethical practices and participatory ethical practices influences teacher's job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers west senatorial district, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the researcher recommends that:

1. Principals should employ flexibility ethical practices to influence teacher's job effectiveness in both public and private schools.
2. Government should organize seminars for principal on participatory ethical practices to enable principals to be productive in school leadership in both public and private schools.

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