



PRINCIPALS' ETHICAL ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

*This study investigated principals' ethical administration and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the relationship between ethical people-orientation, ethical power-sharing, and teachers' job commitment. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted. The study population consisted of all 133 teachers across the 13 public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area. A census approach was employed, involving the entire population. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled *Principals' Ethical Administration and Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (PEATJCQ)*. The instrument underwent face and content validation by experts from the Department of Educational Management and the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies, University of Calabar. Reliability was established using the Cronbach Alpha technique, yielding indices of 0.81 and 0.79 for the respective subscales. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses, all at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between principals' ethical people-orientation, ethical power-sharing, and teachers' job commitment. The study concluded that principals' ethical administration is significantly associated with teachers' job commitment in the study area. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education should implement continuous leadership training programs for school principals, with a focus on ethical values such as fairness, transparency, respect, and open communication to enhance teacher commitment and performance.*

Keywords: Principal, Ethical Administration, Ethical People Orientation, Ethical Power-Sharing Teachers, Job Commitment

Introduction

In Nigeria, secondary school education is structured into two tiers namely: the Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School. It is the level of education students receive after primary school and serves as a pathway to tertiary education (Nwokonko et al., 2024). According to the *National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014), this level of education also serves as a critical preparatory stage for tertiary education and contributes significantly to national socio-economic advancement. Secondary education is established to maintain a high standard of quality to facilitate effective teaching and learning, promote the development of sustainable communities, and support the attainment of economic objectives that benefit individuals and society at large (Etor, Obeten, & Obona, 2019; Obona, Edim, & Edim, 2020). This level of education is expected to prepare students for adulthood by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential for personal growth, responsible citizenship, lifelong learning, and meaningful living within society (Nwannunu et al., 2024; Obona, & Sampson, 2019; Madukwe et al., 2024).

Teachers are key resources and backbone of any education system (Olorunfemi, 2008; Difoni, et al., 2025). Hence, in this context, teachers represent the most vital human resource in the educational process as they play a central role in molding the future of the learners as well as driving sustainable economic and national development. It is the teachers that make use of the available resources to deliver instructions in classroom to achieve set objectives of secondary education (Dunu et al., 2025). Obona and Etete, (2019) described teachers as the cornerstone of secondary education system, the human resources needed for the smooth functioning of secondary education in Nigeria. The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE, 2004) cited in Peretomode and Bello (2018) emphasized that the extent to which teachers dedicate themselves to their schools, students, instructional responsibilities, professional growth, collegial relationships, and societal obligations is a vital determinant of educational effectiveness (Karuki, et al., 2014). Thus, it will not be wrong to state that the full attainment of educational goals might be difficult without teachers' job commitment.

Contextually, teachers' job commitment is the emotional and psychological attachment teaching staff have toward their job and activities of the school. Dunu et al. (2025) defined teachers' job commitment as the emotional attachment, loyalty, dedication of teaching staff toward their duties and activities of schools to achieve set goals. According to Ekpoh and Eze as cited in Madukwe et al. (2024) it is the extent to which the teacher participates in the overall running of the school in order to achieve the expected objective and goals of the school. In the views of Abbas et al. (2023), Chime (2024, p.2) as cited in Dunu et al. (2025) teachers job commitment is how well and how quickly teaching staff fulfill their duties, as well as the emotional bond and attitude that members of teaching staff demonstrate toward their work. Chukwuemeka (2017) describes it as the attainment of expected outcomes or productivity within a given period by individuals or organizations.

Meyer and Allen (1991) introduced a three-component model of organizational commitment, grounded in empirical research across various organizational settings. This model identifies three distinct dimensions of commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment reflects an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and active involvement in the organization. Employees with high affective commitment stay because they *want to*. Continuance commitment refers to an individual's perception of the costs—both material and psychological—associated with leaving the organization. In this case, employees remain because they *need to*, due to potential losses or lack of alternatives. Normative commitment is characterized by a perceived moral obligation to remain with the organization. This sense of duty often stems from personal values, cultural norms, or organizational investments. For example, a teacher who has benefited from a government or institutional scholarship tied to a service agreement may feel ethically compelled to honor that commitment, thereby reinforcing normative commitment.

Teachers who are truly committed to their job demonstrate it through consistent and responsible actions. They make a conscious effort to arrive at school early each day, report to duty on time, take on responsibilities willingly, prepare lesson notes diligently, attend school events, and uphold the professional code of conduct for teachers. In the same vein, Ibezim (2024), as cited in Dunu et al. (2025), emphasized that committed teachers are not only punctual but also dedicated to planning their lessons, delivering instructions promptly, covering their schemes of work before the end of each term, conducting examinations, and processing students' results within the required timeframe. Job commitment among teachers is further reflected in their acceptance of the school's values, adherence to school rules, and active participation in co-curricular activities. As Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2019) observed, such commitment signifies a teacher's readiness to carry out their duties effectively, remain loyal to the school's mission, and make a meaningful contribution to students' academic growth and overall development.

Teachers' job commitment has become a source of deep concern to researchers (Madukwe et al., 2024; Obona & Etete, 2019; Difoni et al., 2025). Ibezim (2024) noted that some teachers exhibit undesirable organizational behaviours such as frequent absenteeism, disengagement from official duties. Obionu et al (2024) laments that some teachers come late to school, engage in irregular and

unauthorized movement from schools. Thompson and Ofojebe (2020) also report cases of absenteeism, persistent lateness and other forms of professional misconduct of some teachers.

Given the above indices, it seems that there are some laxities in job commitment of teachers in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State. The researcher observed that some teachers exhibit unprofessional attitude such as frequent absenteeism without valid reasons, late arrival and early departure. Lessons are poorly planned or not delivered at all, leaving students disengaged and struggling to grasp basic concepts. Assessments are either delayed or completely ignored, with feedback rarely provided. In some cases, teachers show little interest in professional development or adapting to modern teaching methods, resulting in outdated practices that fail to meet learners' needs. These deficiencies contribute to widening learning gaps and eroding public confidence in the education sector, underscoring the urgent need for interventions.

Teachers are very important to the school and several factors can influence their job commitment, one of such factors is principals' ethical administration. Ethical administration as used in this context, refers to the practice of managing a school organization in a manner that upholds moral principles and values like honesty, fairness, integrity, and respect for others. Ethical leadership according to Dunu et al. (2025) is the act of leading others by demonstrating integrity, uprightness, supportive and transparency in running the affairs of an organization. Şentürk (2011) mentioned adds that they also include equality, impartiality, responsibility, commitment to the organization, respect for human rights, compliance with the law, tolerance, and transparency. Similarly, Orunbon et al. (2022) mention traits such as honesty, fairness, a focus on people, shared decision-making, clear roles, ethical direction, and a commitment to sustainability. For Gikonyo (2020) it is crucial in guiding school managers toward value-driven leadership. Ethical school administration is vital as it promotes trust and accountability, which are key to effective leadership. Maimela (2024) further supports that ethical leadership in schools enhances accountability and trust, both vital for the institution's success and reputation.

Operationally, ethical administration involves influencing staff members to display good conduct and expected behavior in the discharge of their official duties with the aim of achieving set goals. Scholars outlined different ethical administrative practices to include: ethical people orientation, fairness, ethical power-sharing, ethical guidance and role clarification (Sabello & Oted, 2024; Vikaraman et al, 2021). However, the dimensions of ethical administration adopted in this study are ethical people orientation, and ethical power-sharing.

Ethical people orientation and teachers job commitment

Ethical people orientation involves showing genuine concern for the professional welfare and development needs of teachers. According to Arinze et al. (2024), staff orientation is a critical aspect of ethical leadership, whereby school administrators demonstrate a high level of sensitivity to the professional aspirations and needs of their staff. This ethical practice is reflected in administrators' attentiveness to staff issues, the respect and recognition they accord to teachers, and their demonstration of compassion and empathy. Shahab et al. (2021) emphasized that the people-oriented component of ethical leadership is characterized by sincere care, respect, and support for subordinates, ensuring their needs are adequately addressed.

Granjo et al. (2020) explored the relationship between ethical orientation and aspects of teacher identity, such as perceived competence, psychological need satisfaction, commitment, and self-esteem. Analyzing data from 643 Portuguese teachers through structural equation modeling (SEM), their findings revealed that ethical orientation had both direct and indirect significant effects on these variables, reinforcing its importance in shaping teacher commitment. Similarly, Sheikh et al. (2024) investigated the influence of teachers' personality traits on organizational commitment in universities in Lahore, Pakistan, with ethical orientation acting as a mediator. The study employed correlation and mediation analyses using SPSS and found that traits like extraversion and conscientiousness were positively associated with organizational commitment, with ethical constructs—particularly relativism—serving as mediating factors.

Zehra et al. (2022) conducted a survey in Karachi examining the predictive role of ethical leadership in shaping teachers' perceptions of their work environment and their organizational commitment. Based on data from 560 elementary and secondary school teachers analyzed using PLS-SEM and SPSS, the study found that ethical leadership was positively correlated with both a supportive work environment and higher organizational commitment. Li et al. (2020) also studied ethical leadership, focusing on its influence on young university teachers' work engagement. Utilizing SPSS, principal component analysis, and hierarchical regression, the researchers found that ethical leadership significantly predicted work engagement, with trust acting as a mediating variable.

Arisoy and Cömert (2021) investigated the relationship between school principals' ethical leadership behaviors and teacher motivation in Turkey. Using a relational survey approach with 298 teachers, and analyzing responses with tools such as the Kruskal-Wallis test, Mann-Whitney U test, and Pearson's correlation, the study identified a moderate positive correlation between ethical leadership and teacher motivation, further supporting the value of ethical practices in educational leadership. Mohamed and Hussein (2022) examined the impact of ethical leadership on teaching staff performance in public secondary schools. The findings indicated that ethical leadership practices, characterized by fairness and selflessness, positively influence teachers' job performance.

Ethical power-sharing and teachers job commitment

Ethical power-sharing is all about administrators genuinely caring for teachers' professional needs and well-being. When school leaders treat staff with empathy, respect, and fairness, it builds a supportive environment where teachers feel valued and motivated. This human-centered approach to leadership plays a powerful role in improving teachers' dedication and overall commitment to their work (Obona & Sampson, 2021; Arinze et al., 2024; Shahab et al., 2021). Numerous studies back up this idea. For example, Obona et al. (2024) found that modern leadership practices like digital communication and teacher empowerment positively influence job commitment in secondary schools in Calabar. Similarly, Likewise, Ngene (2025) investigated *Ethical Instructional Supervision and Teachers' Job Commitment*, using a survey design with a census of 118 public secondary school teachers in Akpabuyo, Nigeria. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire (reliability: $\alpha = .82$ and $.79$) and analyzed with descriptive statistics, simple linear regression ($R = .502$, $R^2 = .252$), ANOVA, and regression. The study found that ethical supervision by marked by fairness, transparency, respect, and integrity accounted predicted teachers' job commitment.

Across different countries and contexts, the evidence holds strong. Sabir (2021) in Pakistan and Zaki (2022) in Malaysia both found that ethical leadership improves teacher commitment and job satisfaction. A large-scale meta-analysis by Özdoğru & Sarier (2024) also confirmed that when principals lead ethically, it strengthens teachers' trust, motivation, and commitment. Abuzaid (2018) and Mitonga-Monga et al. (2023) found similar positive effects in banking and industrial settings, respectively. In Nigeria, Mbarawii & Amabibi (2024) showed that principals who model collaboration and accountability significantly improve teacher commitment.

Interestingly, studies in healthcare (Mishra & Tikoria, 2021) and cooperative societies (Bhandari & Subedi, 2024) also supports that ethical leadership fosters a healthy work culture and builds trust, which then strengthens commitment. In Colombia, Santiago Torner (2025) showed that ethical leadership enhances self-efficacy, which in turn boosts organizational loyalty. Obiekwe (2020) and Obiekwe & Ezeugbor (2024) highlighted strong links between ethical leadership dimensions—like open communication and fair decision-making—and teachers' dedication. Likewise, in Turkey, Önder & Gündoğdu (2024) found that ethical behavior from school leaders positively shapes teachers' organizational commitment. Neves et al. (2024/25) emphasized that ethical leadership boosts both motivation and commitment, while despotic leadership harms both.

Statement of the problem

In secondary schools, the ability of students to acquire knowledge and requisite skills for personal and societal development is largely dependent on the job commitment of teachers. As such,

parents and guardians expect teachers to be punctual, consistent in lesson planning and delivery, actively involved in school activities, prompt in assessing students, and dedicated to professional growth and moral mentoring. However, despite these expectations, it is worrisome that some teachers in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State, who the students depend on tend to exhibit unprofessional conduct such as lateness to school, and absenteeism. Many teachers habitually miss their lessons, and leave school before the end of school hours. Additionally, cases of inadequate lesson preparation, and delays in marking assessments have been noted. These lapses have led to declining student performance, poor discipline, and reduced confidence in public schools.

In response, the state government have implemented interventions such as timely salary payments, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, attendance tracking, and disciplinary actions. Yet, the problem persists, suggesting that deeper issues. The researcher suspects that principals' ethical administration could be a key factor in enhancing teachers' commitment. As such, this study seeks to examine the relationship between principals' ethical administration and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated p principals' ethical administration and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State.
2. Ascertain the relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State?
2. What is the relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State?

Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided study:

1. There is no significant relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State.
2. There is no significant relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. Barkha and Basnet (2023) defined correlational research design as the type that involves the examining the relationships between or among two or more variables in a single group, which can occur at several levels. Correlational design is appropriate for this study because the researcher collected data from the given sample of teachers to investigate principals' ethical administration and teachers' job commitment. The study was conducted in Abi Local Government Area (L.G. A), which is one of the 18 local government areas in Cross River State, Nigeria. The choice of Abi Local Government Area for the study was informed by observed poor job commitment of teachers probably due to some incompetence of some principals to control their activities. The population of the study comprised all 133 teachers (99 males and 33 females) in the 13 public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area. Census method was used in this study due to the manageable size of the population.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Principals' Ethical Administration and Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (PEATJCQ).” The instruments have Sections 1, 2 and 3. Section 1 focused on the demographic data of the respondents such as gender and age. Section 2 of the instrument (PEAQ) measured ethical principals' administration in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area. The instrument contained 19 items spread in two clusters A and B. Cluster A which focuses on ethical orientation contained 9 items, Cluster B contained 9 items on ethical power-sharing. The items are designed on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Section 3 of the instrument (TJC) was adapted by Meyer and Allen (1997) and structured to measure teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi L.G. A. The instrument contains 9 items structured on a four-point Likert scale: Very High (VH), High (H), Low (L), Very Low (VL)., weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The face and content validation of the instrument was determined by three experts from the Department of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies, University of Calabar. Based on their input, irrelevant items were either removed or modified. The suggestions and comments of the experts were effected and incorporated in the final copy of the instrument. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach alpha method. The data used for computing the reliability indices were obtained from the copies of the three instruments administered and collected from 50 teachers in public secondary schools in Obubra L.G. A. The choice of Obubra Local Government Area was because school principals and teachers in Abi and Obubra L.G. A share similar characteristics and behaviour.

The data obtained were subjected to test for internal consistency using Cronbach alpha. It was considered appropriate in order to determine the level of homogeneity of the items in the clusters. This yielded co-efficient values of 0.81, and 0.79 for clusters A and B of PEAQ, while coefficient value of 0.83 was obtained for TJC. These values exceeded the 0.60 benchmark set by Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) who argued that an instrument yielding a reliability co-efficient of 0.60 and above should be considered strong enough for a study. Therefore, the researcher considered the instruments to be reliable for the study. Direct delivery method was used by the researcher and five trained research assistants for data collection. Prior to distribution, the respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study. They were assured that all information provided would be used strictly for research purposes and treated with confidentiality. The researchers and assistants distributed the questionnaires and later collected them. Out of the 133 questionnaires distributed, only 128 questionnaires were correctly completed and returned, representing a 90% response rate. As such, data analysis was based on the responses from 128 participants. They were then organized based on the variables they were designed to measure. Positively worded items were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. For negatively worded items, the scoring pattern was reversed. Respondents' scores on the sub-scales were summed and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Data analysis was conducted based on the null hypotheses that guided the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship was interpreted using the correlation coefficient recommended by Alsagr (2021), as follows:

Coefficient	Interpretation
.00 - .19	Weak Negative Relationship
.20 - .39	Fair Negative Relationship
.40 - .69	Moderate Positive Relationship
.70 - .89	Strong Positive Relationship
.90 - .99	Very Strong Positive Relationship
1	Perfect Relationship

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if the p-value is equal to or greater than significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected but if p-value is less than significant value of 0.05, the null hypotheses was rejected. All data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27.

Results

Research question one

What is the relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State? Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research question. The result is presented in table 1. Table 1 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.75 was obtained. This showed that there is a strong relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State. This indicated that increase in ethical people orientation led to strong positive increase in teachers' job commitment.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State (N=133)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Decision
Ethical people orientation	18.64	3.29		
Teachers' job commitment	19.05	3.22	.75*	Strong Positive Relationship

*Significant at $p < .05$ df=131

Research question two

What is the relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State? Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research question. The result is presented in table 2. Table 2 revealed that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.79 was obtained. This showed that there is a strong relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State. This indicated that increase in ethical power-sharing led to strong positive increase in teachers' job commitment.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State (N=133)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Decision
Ethical power-sharing	17.43	3.79		
Teachers' job commitment	19.05	3.22	.79*	Strong Positive Relationship

*Significant at $p < .05$ df=131

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 3. Table 3 showed the correlation coefficient between ethical people orientation and teachers'

job commitment. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant for teachers' job commitment ($r = .75$, $p < .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis one is rejected. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Table 3: Summary of correlation between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi. (N=133)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Sig.	Decision
Ethical people orientation	18.64	3.29	3.22		
Teachers' job commitment	19.05		.75*	.000	Rejected

*Significant at $p < .05$ $df=131$

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 4. Table 4 showed the correlation coefficient between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant for teachers' job commitment ($r = .79$, $p < .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis two is rejected. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Table 4: Summary of correlation between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi. (N=133)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Sig.	Decision
Ethical power-sharing	17.43	3.79	3.22		
Teachers' job commitment	19.05		.79*	.000	Rejected

*Significant at $p < .05$ $df=131$

Discussion of findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed that, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between ethical people orientation and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State. This result is possibly because principals demonstrated ethical concern for the well-being, dignity, and fair treatment of the teachers' staff—such as transparent communication, respect, empathy, and support as such it enhances teachers' commitment to their duties, schools, and professional responsibilities. The implication is that the stronger the ethical orientation toward people, the more likely teachers are to exhibit dedication, loyalty, and willingness to go beyond the minimum requirements of their roles.

The findings of this study align with the assertions of Shahab et al. (2021), who emphasized that the people-oriented dimension of ethical leadership is characterized by genuine care, respect, and support for subordinates, ensuring that their needs are effectively met. Similarly, this result supports the work of Granjo et al. (2020), who investigated the link between ethical orientation and various elements of teacher identity—such as perceived competence, satisfaction of psychological needs, commitment, and self-esteem. Using structural equation modeling (SEM) on data from 643 Portuguese teachers, their

study demonstrated that ethical orientation had both direct and indirect significant impacts on these variables, underscoring its critical role in fostering teacher commitment.

In a related study, Zehra et al. (2022) examined how ethical leadership influences teachers' perceptions of their work environment and their organizational commitment. Drawing on survey data from 560 elementary and secondary school teachers in Karachi and analyzing it through PLS-SEM and SPSS, they found a positive association between ethical leadership and both a supportive work environment and elevated organizational commitment. Furthermore, Li et al. (2020) explored the impact of ethical leadership on the work engagement of young university teachers. Through the use of SPSS, principal component analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis, the study revealed that ethical leadership was a significant predictor of work engagement, with trust serving as a mediating factor in the relationship.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between ethical power-sharing and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State. This result means that when secondary school administrators ethically share power by involving teachers in decision-making, respecting their professional autonomy, and fostering a participatory leadership environment, it will definitely enhance the teachers' sense of belonging, responsibility, and dedication to their work. This implies that the more teachers feel empowered and valued the more likely they are to remain committed to their roles and actively contribute to the success of the school.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Obona et al. (2024), who reported that modern leadership practices—such as digital communication and teacher empowerment—positively influence job commitment among secondary school teachers in Calabar. Similarly, Ngene (2025), in a survey-based study involving a census of 118 public secondary school teachers in Akpabuyo, Nigeria, examined the role of ethical instructional supervision on teachers' job commitment. The results revealed that supervision characterized by fairness, transparency, respect, and integrity significantly predicted teachers' commitment to their work.

Likewise, Sabir (2021) and Zaki (2022) found that ethical leadership enhances both teacher commitment and job satisfaction. In a related study, Mbarawii and Amabibi (2024) demonstrated that principals who exemplify collaborative leadership and accountability significantly boost teacher commitment. Additionally, the works of Mishra and Tikoria (2021), as well as Bhandari and Subedi (2024), affirmed that ethical leadership promotes a healthy work culture and builds trust—factors that are crucial in strengthening employee commitment. Santiago and Torner (2025) further emphasized that ethical leadership enhances teachers' self-efficacy, which in turn reinforces organizational loyalty. Moreover, Obiekwe (2020) and Obiekwe and Ezeugbor (2024) identified strong correlations between key dimensions of ethical leadership—such as open communication and equitable decision-making—and increased teacher dedication. Similarly, in the Turkish context, Önder and Gündoğdu (2024) found that ethical behaviors demonstrated by school leaders positively influenced teachers' organizational commitment.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between principals' ethical administration and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between principals' ethical people orientation, ethical power-sharing and teachers job commitment. The study concluded that principals' ethical administration significantly relates to teachers' job commitment in the study area.

Recommendations

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



1. To boost teachers' commitment, the ministry of education should organize ongoing leadership training that emphasizes ethical values like fairness, transparency, and open communication among school leaders.
2. School principals should embrace digital tools and inclusive decision-making to create a more collaborative work environment that will strengthen teachers' engagement and commitment.

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