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PRINCIPALS' QUALITY OF WORKLIFE AS CORRELATES OF THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined principals' quality of worklife as correlates of their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South-East Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study while three null hypotheses were formulated. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted all the 1,015 public secondary school principals in South East Nigeria. The sample size consisted 751 principals selected using the purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collected was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part is titled "Walton's Quality of Work Life questionnaire (WQWLQ) (Adapted)" and the second part is titled "Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PAEQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundation. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instrument and an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained for the three clusters of WQWLQ. Also, a coefficient value of 0.82 was obtained for PAEQ. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer research questions while linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The finding revealed that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between principals' professional development, principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. It was also found that there is a weak positive and non-significant relationship between principals' reward system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) institute regular and mandatory in-service training, workshops, and leadership development programs for principals.

Keywords: Administration, Effectiveness, Principals, Quality of Worklife, Secondary School.

Introduction

The success of a school administrator depends on their ability to steer the school towards achieving effective output. Effectiveness is defined as the ability to produce desired results or output, and it is a symbol of good administrative style, teamwork, staff morale, good teaching, a conducive social climate, counselling, and rules and regulations (Mustafa, 2021). The effectiveness of a school administrator is determined by their ability to identify basic components of their assignment and achieve desired administrative outcomes in the school. Administrative effectiveness is the progressive response to administrative efforts and actions with the purpose to achieve stated goal. It is therefore important that the principal should see himself as a leader, a thinker and a decision maker. To this end, principals who have good administrative strategies will employ team work strategy to facilitate teachers' job effectiveness and better students' academic performance as all stakeholders have a key role to play in ensuring qualitative education in our secondary school system. Consequently, the administrative effectiveness of school principals is not only a function of their leadership competencies but is also influenced by the conditions under which they perform their administrative responsibilities. In this regard, examining the quality of work life of principals becomes imperative, as favourable work conditions may enhance their capacity to perform effectively and achieve the educational goals of the school.

Nwogu and Unuigbe (2018) remarked that most secondary school principals in Anambra State are improving their administrative roles, with Anambra State ranking second in the 2023/2024 West African Examinations Council (WAEC). The competency of principals is crucial for their capacity to serve their duties. For principals to effectively achieve their responsibilities, there is need to consider the quality of worklife. Quality of work life (QWL) is a positive relationship between employees and their work environment, where employees exercise freedom, relate well with superiors, and jointly share organizational responsibilities (Onyeh and Oluwuo, 2018). It is a process where all members of an organization have an open and suitable way to interfere in all issues that affect their working environment. Quality of work life is a crucial aspect of the lives of individuals and their work environment.

Quality of Work-life is a set of work-related factors that improve the working conditions of employees, ultimately leading to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Walton cited in Aviguetero, 2021). According to Danna and Griffin (2019), quality of work-life is the overall impact of workplace experiences on an individual's well-being and job performance. They emphasize that QWL extends beyond physical work conditions to include psychological well-being, organizational climate, stress levels, and interpersonal relationships within the workplace. A high-quality work life fosters employee motivation and engagement, leading to improved organizational performance. Operationally, quality of work-life refers to the extent to which principals in secondary school's experience favourable working conditions, job satisfaction, and professional growth opportunities that enable them to effectively manage their schools. It encompasses factors such as work-life balance, professional development, leadership support, job

security, and recognition, all of which contribute to their administrative effectiveness and overall well-being.

Quality of work life encourages employees to make balance between professional, personal and social life and ultimately enhances employee job satisfaction and commitment which ultimately leads to overall development of educational institutions (Aviguetero, 2021). Components of quality of work life are different in the viewpoints of scientists. Oyeh and Oluwuo (2018) and Darabi, Mehdizadeh, Arefi and Ghasemi (2013) emphasized on these dimensions of quality of worklife to be professional development, job security, and reward system.

Professional development is one dimension of quality of worklife. Every job should offer professional development. That is an important factor which decides the quality of work life. Professional development refers to matters related to formal training and education, work experience, relationships and personality assessments, skills and abilities that help employees prepare for jobs and positions in the future that can be used as individual personal and professional growth from a long-term perspective (Jehanzeb and Mohanty, 2018). Furthermore, if professional development increases, motivation, self-esteem and personal satisfaction also increase and employees become more committed (Ashraf, Jahanzeb, and Mohanty, 2018). In Ebonyi Sate, workshops and seminars are being provided to principals on administrative duties and responsibilities but from the researcher's observation, some principals take into practice the outcome of these workshops and seminars into administrative practice most especially in the area of emotional intelligence and administrative prowess (Nwogu and Unuigbe, 2018)

Job security is another dimension of quality of worklife. Quality of work life cannot be improved until employees are relieved of the anxiety, fear and loss of future employment. The working conditions must be safe and fear of economic want should be eliminated. Mejbel, Almsafir, Siron and Alnasar (2016) emphasizes that job security is a driver of QWL. It is widely accepted in societies that workers should not be exposed to physical conditions or hourly arrangements that are unduly hazardous or detrimental to their health. Legislation, union action, and employer concern have resulted in continually rising standards of satisfactory working conditions (Madankar and Nazem, 2017). Saraji and Dargahi (2016) in their study found that safety and security is an effective driver of QWL. In Anambra State, job security remains a significant advantage for civil servants, as permanent employment offers principals a sense of stability and continuity. Consequently, this employment security enhances their overall quality of work life and enables them to focus more effectively on their administrative responsibilities (Nwogu and Unuigbe, 2018).

The reward area of worklife addresses the extent to which rewards – monetary, social, and intrinsic are consistent with expectations. The most common type of monetary reward system especially in public secondary schools is the annual or semi-annual leave bonus. Other examples of monetary rewards include cash awards, profit sharing plans, and stock options. In many

organizations, monetary incentives are enough to get maximum productivity of employees. Lack of rewards from service recipients, colleagues, managers, and external stakeholders devalues both the work and the workers, and is closely associated with feelings of inefficacy (Leiter and Maslach 2017). However, it is evident that salaries and incentives provided to teachers and principals alike in secondary school are not fair considering the amount of energy dissipated into work.

The quality of work life of school principals has been shown to significantly influence their administrative effectiveness in other regions. For instance, Ikediugwu and Tim-Agbo (2022) demonstrated that workload, job control, and rewards significantly correlate with principals' administrative effectiveness in Enugu State, reinforcing that deficiencies in these areas can impair leadership performance. Abubakar and Ajadi (2023) identified school-community relations and provision of facilities components of the work environment as key predictors of effective school administration in Kwara State. Furthermore, Ereh, Ekerete and Albert (2025) noted that negative behaviours stemming from poor relationships, inadequate professional support, and limited autonomy compromise principals' administrative practices in Akwa Ibom State. The motivation behind this study is that no study has been found to investigate these dimensions of principals' quality of worklife and administrative effectiveness in South East, Nigeria. This is therefore informed the need for investigating this study.

Statement of the Problem

Preliminary observations reveal that most principals ascend to their positions after spending several years as classroom teachers, armed with extensive pedagogical experience but limited administrative expertise. This transition from teaching to leadership often proves challenging, as many newly appointed principals find themselves ill-equipped to navigate the complex demands of school administration. Scholars have consistently noted that teachers promoted to principalship frequently lack the requisite leadership skills, strategic planning abilities, and problem-solving competencies essential for effective school administration. Consequently, a significant number of principals are perceived as ineffective, struggling to implement educational policies, manage human and material resources efficiently, and foster the kind of collaborative school climate that promotes both teacher effectiveness and student academic achievement.

One critical yet often overlooked factor that may explain this persistent administrative ineffectiveness is the quality of worklife experienced by principals themselves. Among the dimensions of quality of worklife, professional development opportunities remain grossly inadequate for principals in South East Nigeria. Although initiatives such as seminars, conferences, and training programs organized by bodies like ANCOPSS exist, these interventions are often sporadic, poorly tailored to principals' actual needs, and insufficient in building the administrative competencies required for contemporary school leadership. Furthermore, the reward system available to principals appears largely dysfunctional—salary structures are unattractive, promotion criteria are ambiguous, and recognition for exemplary performance is virtually non-existent. When

principals feel undervalued and unrewarded for their efforts, their morale diminishes, and their commitment to administrative excellence wanes, ultimately undermining their overall effectiveness.

Beyond professional development and reward systems, job security though ostensibly guaranteed through permanent employment does not automatically translate into administrative effectiveness. While principals in Anambra State and other parts of South East Nigeria enjoy the relative stability of civil service appointments, this security paradoxically breeds complacency rather than competence. More troublingly, principals often lack adequate protection in their decision-making roles, facing undue criticism from superiors, resistance from subordinates, and pressure from community stakeholders without institutional safeguards. Poor working conditions, insufficient motivation from government agencies and school management boards, and the absence of a supportive work environment further compound these challenges. It is against this backdrop that this study was motivated to investigate the relationship between principals' quality of worklife specifically examining professional development, job security, and reward systems and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. On this premise, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between principals' rewards system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' rewards system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria

Theoretical Underpinning

The Theory of Person-Organization Fit (P-O fit)

The theory of Person-Organization Fit was propounded by French and Kaplan in 1972. The theory stated that there is compatibility between people and organizations that comes into existence, when at least one entity provides what the other needs or they share similar fundamental characteristics or both. Employees' desires, goals, values and abilities characterize their needs in this relation. Desires, goals values and abilities, in turn, are based on employees' competence and experiences. The P-O fit approach characterizes occupational stress and burnout as a lack of fit

between the individual factors and the environmental factors. Based on the Person-Organization fit approach, the antecedents of burnout include organizational, occupational, and individual factors. The interactive nature of the development of burnout, according to the general stress theories, demonstrates that all these factors have an effect on the relationship.

The P-O fit assumes that burnout develops primarily within the social and interpersonal context of the work organization. It focuses on the demanding interpersonal relationship between a provider and the recipients. In their relationship, the provider and the recipient have different expectations of each other and this complimentary relationship forms the basis of the exchange relationship between them. Reciprocal social relationships play a key role in individuals' life and well-being.

In relation to this study, secondary schools are considered as organization headed by a principal. Organization like schools is essential, thus, there is a need for principals to interact with the school setting in an attempt to understand what factors influence desirable outcomes. These factors relate to the three areas of quality of worklife which are professional development, job security and job security. In a school setting, when all the three areas of quality of worklife are matched together by the principals to their work/environment, they will perform better.

Methods

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted all the 1,015 public secondary school principals in South East Nigeria. The sample size consisted 751 principals using the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was considered appropriate because the study required respondents with specific characteristics and relevant administrative experience. Specifically, the study purposively selected public secondary school principals who had served in their current position for at least five years, possessed direct responsibility for school administration, staff supervision, decision-making and implementation of educational policies, and were actively involved in the day-to-day management of their schools. The instrument for data collected was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part is titled "Walton's Quality of Work Life (WQWL) (Adapted)" and the second part is titled "Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PAEQ)". Walton's Quality of Work Life (WQWL) model was developed by Richard E. Walton in 1975 to understanding and improving the well-being of workers within organizations. The researcher adapted and modified Walton's QWL scale to a 28-item question measuring principals' quality of work life using three dimensions of quality of work life thus: professional development; job security and reward system. The respondents were asked to respond to the items using a four-point Likert rating Scale of Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree and Strongly Disagree with values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The second instrument is titled Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PAEQ). The instrument was adapted from the works of Arikewuyo (2007), Orange County

Schools (2008) and Grissom and Loeb (2009). The instrument consisted of 42 items. The respondents were asked to respond to the items using a four-point Likert rating Scale of Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree and Strongly Disagree with values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts. Two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundation.

The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient values of 0.78, 0.87 and 0.85 were obtained for the three clusters of QWWL. Also, a coefficient value of 0.82 was obtained for PAEQ. Out of the 750 copies of the questionnaire distributed, a total of 732 copies were successfully retrieved, representing 97 percent return rate suitable for data analysis. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer research questions while linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson r on principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness

Sources of variance	N	Professional dev (r)	Admin. Effectiveness (r)	Remark
Professional development	732	1.00	0.81	Strong positive relationship
Administrative effectiveness	732	0.81	1.00	

Table 1 shows that there is a strong positive relationship of 0.81 existing between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Table 2: Linear regression on significant relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness

Linear	R	R^2	Df	t	a.level	p-value
Regression	.812[a]	.659	730	7.608	0.05	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), professional development
b. Dependent: administrative effectiveness

Table 2 indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and 730 df, the calculated t 7.608 with p-value 0.00 which is less than 0.05 (t= 7.608; df 730; $p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. The R^2 value of 0.659 means that about 65.9% of the variation in administrative effectiveness can be explained by principals' professional development.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria?

Table 3: Pearson r on principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools

Sources of variance	N	Job security (r)	Admin effectiveness (r)	Remark
Job security	732	1.00	0.76	Strong positive relationship
Administrative effectiveness	732	0.76	1.00	

Table 3 shows that there is a strong positive relationship of 0.76 existing between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Table 4: Linear regression on significant relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness

Linear	R	R^2	Df	t	a.level	p-value
Regression	.763[a]	.582	730	7.116	0.05	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), job security
b. Dependent: Administrative effectiveness

Table 4 indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and 730 df, the calculated t 7.116 with p-value 0.00 which is less than 0.05 (t= 7.116; df 730; $p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. The R^2 value of 0.582 means that about 58.2% of the variation in administrative effectiveness can be explained by principals' job security.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between principals' rewards system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria?

Table 5: Pearson r on principals' reward system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools

Sources of variance	N	Reward system (r)	Admin effectiveness (r)	Remark
Reward system	732	1.00	0.26	Weak positive relationship
Administrative effectiveness	732	0.26	1.00	

Table 5 shows that there is a weak positive relationship of 0.26 existing between principals' reward system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between principals' rewards system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Table 6: Linear regression on significant relationship between principals' reward system and their administrative effectiveness

Linear	R	R^2	Df	t	a.level	p-value
Regression	.263[a]	.069	730	7.528	0.05	0.069

a. Predictors: (Constant), reward system
b. Dependent: Administrative effectiveness

Table 6 indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and 730 df, the calculated t 7.528 with p-value 0.069 which is greater than 0.05 (t= 7.528; df 730; p > 0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant relationship between principals' rewards system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. The R^2 value of 0.069 means that about 6.9% of the variation in administrative effectiveness can be explained by principals' reward system.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in research question one revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. This finding was in support with that of Shikokoti et al (2021) who reported that continuous in-service training and leadership workshops significantly improved principals' communication, supervision, and conflict resolution skills across secondary schools Kakamega county, Kenya. Although Nwogbo and Oshia (2023) focused on primary school teachers in Anambra State rather than secondary school principals, their study similarly affirmed the significance of professional development by identifying technology and communication skills as key training needs among teachers. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Chiemeka-Unogu (2018), who also found a strong correlation between professional development participation and improved instructional leadership practices among secondary school principals in Anambra State. Amadi and Chinda (2025), found that principals who regularly engaged in

professional development showed improved competence in school finance management, teacher motivation, and curriculum implementation. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' professional development and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. This finding aligns with that of Shikokoti et al. (2021) who found a significant positive relationship between principals' participation in capacity-building programmes and their ability to manage school resources, staff coordination, and policy implementation.

The finding in research question two revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. This relationship indicates that when principals enjoy stable, secure employment conditions, their ability to effectively manage and lead their schools improves. Essentially, the more assured principals feel about their job continuity, the better they perform in their administrative roles. This finding supported that of Onyango (2023) that teachers' job security; as perceived through stable employment and protections had a positive relationship with teachers' job performance. Oyeh and Ukaigwe (2018) agreed that principals with tenure security showed better conflict-resolution skills and staff motivation strategies. This finding was in line with that of Mulinge, Kasiyu and Mulwa (2022), that job security enhances principals' confidence in implementing leadership strategies, thereby improving administrative outcomes. This supports the notion that job security positively impacts administrative effectiveness. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' job security and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. The finding means that that the stability and assurance principals have in their positions meaningfully influence how well they perform their leadership and management roles. This finding agreed with that of Oyeh and Ukaigwe 2018) that enhanced job security contributed significantly to greater productivity among school workers.

The finding in research question three revealed that there is a weak positive relationship between principals' reward system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. This statistical relationship, while demonstrating a measurable connection, suggests that the current reward structures for school principals in the region have only a modest influence on their overall administrative effectiveness. This finding agreed with that of Oguejiofor and Nneba (2024) found that that pay-based, benefits, career incentives, and non-financial rewards correlated low and positively with staff performance. Though focused on staff, it implies that effective reward systems by principals help create a conducive administrative environment. The finding agreed with that of Nwaozor and Thompson (2019) who found a weak positive correlation between the reward system and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is no significant relationship between principals' rewards system and their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in South East Nigeria. This indicates that the various incentive structures currently in place do not meaningfully influence how effectively principals manage their schools. This finding opposed the finding of Nwaozor and Thompson (2019) who found a significant correlation between the reward system and the administrative efficacy of principals in secondary schools.



Conclusion

Effective school administration is crucial for achieving quality education outcomes, particularly in secondary schools where leadership plays a central role in shaping teaching, learning, and overall institutional performance. In South East Nigeria, various organizational and psychosocial factors are believed to influence how well principals perform their administrative duties. Principals' professional development and job security emerged as critical drivers, showing strong, positive, and significant relationships with their effectiveness. Conversely, the reward system exhibited weak or non-significant relationships, suggesting that these factors, while relevant, are not sufficient on their own to enhance administrative performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. State Ministries of Education, Post-Primary School Management Boards (PPSMBs), and other relevant educational authorities should institutionalise regular professional development programmes for secondary school principals, including in-service training, leadership workshops, seminars, mentoring, and capacity-building programmes.
2. Education policymakers and school governing bodies should implement clear, fair, and transparent employment policies that protect principals from arbitrary dismissal. Tenure systems or contractual agreements that guarantee stability should be adopted, alongside performance appraisal mechanisms that promote accountability without threatening job continuity.
3. State governments and school boards should re-evaluate and redesign reward systems for principals. Rewards should be more performance-based, consistent, and tied to clear criteria such as improvements in student outcomes, teacher retention, and innovation in school practices.

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