

PRINCIPALS' OPENNESS AND HONESTY AS ETHICAL PREDICTORS OF ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated principals' openness and honesty as ethical predictors of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the extent to which these ethical practices influence the administration of public secondary schools. The population of the study comprised 7,184 academic staff, consisting of 291 principals and 6,893 teachers across 291 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample size of 720 respondents, representing 10% of the population, was selected using the proportionate stratified sampling technique from six Local Government Areas across the three senatorial districts of the state. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled Principals' Openness and Honesty and Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (POHAEPSSQ). The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Psychology, Guidance and Counselling at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education to ensure face, content, and construct validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of .891, indicating high internal consistency. Out of 800 questionnaires distributed, 720 valid copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance using SPSS version 28. The findings revealed that principals' openness and honesty significantly predict administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools. The study concluded that ethical leadership practices are essential for effective school administration and recommended that principals should uphold openness and honesty in their leadership practices.

Keywords: Principals', Openness, Honesty, Ethical, Administrative, Effectiveness, Public Secondary Schools, Rivers State.

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INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of school administration largely depends on the leadership qualities and ethical conduct of school principals (Ololube, 2017a). In secondary schools, principals play a critical

role in coordinating academic activities, supervising teachers, managing resources, and ensuring that the goals of education are achieved. However, the success of these responsibilities does not depend solely on managerial competence but also on the ethical behaviour of school leaders. Ethical leadership has become increasingly important in modern educational administration because it promotes trust, accountability, and transparency in school management. Among the ethical attributes expected of principals, openness and honesty are fundamental practices that can significantly influence administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Ethical leadership in education refers to the demonstration of moral values such as integrity, fairness, honesty, and transparency in decision-making and interpersonal relationships within the school environment. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), ethical leadership involves demonstrating normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and promoting such conduct among followers through communication and decision-making. To Ololube (2024), when principals demonstrate ethical leadership, they create a moral climate that encourages teachers and students to act responsibly and uphold institutional values. Ethical leadership has also been linked to improved organizational commitment, trust, and collaboration among school personnel.

Openness is a vital ethical practice in school leadership. It refers to the willingness of principals to communicate transparently, share relevant information with staff members, and involve teachers in decision-making processes. Openness fosters participatory leadership, where teachers feel respected and valued in matters concerning school administration. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), leadership practices that encourage openness and collaboration significantly improve teacher commitment and school effectiveness. When principals maintain open channels of communication, teachers are more likely to express their ideas and contribute to the development of the school. Such openness promotes mutual trust and strengthens the professional relationships necessary for effective school administration.

Honesty is another essential ethical attribute that supports effective leadership in educational institutions. Honest principals demonstrate truthfulness in their interactions, fairness in decision-making, and accountability in the management of school affairs. Honesty enhances credibility and strengthens the confidence teachers, students, and parents have in school leadership. According to Ciulla (2004), honesty is a central component of ethical leadership because it establishes trust and reinforces the legitimacy of leadership authority. To Ololube (2024) institutional leaders who consistently demonstrate honesty create a climate of integrity within the organization, which encourages staff members to uphold ethical standards in their professional duties.

The influence of ethical leadership practices such as openness and honesty on school administration has been widely acknowledged in educational research. Studies indicate that when school leaders demonstrate ethical values, teachers tend to develop positive attitudes toward their work and exhibit higher levels of job commitment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Ethical leadership also contributes to the development of a supportive school climate, where cooperation, respect, and shared responsibility are encouraged. Such a climate is essential for the effective management of schools because it promotes teamwork and enhances the implementation of educational policies and programmes.

Administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools involves the ability of principals to efficiently plan, organize, coordinate, supervise and evaluate school activities in order to achieve educational goals (Ololube, 2017a). Effective administration ensures the proper utilization of resources, maintenance of discipline, and promotion of quality teaching and

learning within the school system. Scholars (e.g., Ciulla, 2004; Ololube, 2017b) have argued that the ethical behaviour of principals plays a significant role in achieving these administrative responsibilities because ethical leadership promotes transparency, accountability, and fairness in decision-making. Thus, openness allows school leaders to involve teachers in decision-making and promote collaboration, while honesty helps build trust and credibility among stakeholders (Ololube, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Administrative effectiveness is essential for the successful running of public secondary schools because it ensures proper planning, organization, coordination, supervision and evaluation of educational activities. Principals as institutional leaders are expected to provide leadership that promotes transparency, accountability and collaboration among teachers and other stakeholders. However, public secondary schools in Rivers State have continued to experience several administrative challenges such as poor communication between principals and teachers, lack of transparency in decision-making, low teacher morale and conflicts among staff members. These issues have undermined the effective administration of schools and have hindered the achievement of educational goals.

One factor that may contribute to these challenges is the absence or inadequate practice of ethical leadership among some school principals. Ethical practices such as openness and honesty are crucial for fostering trust, encouraging participation in decision-making and promoting accountability in school management. When principals demonstrate openness in communication and honesty in their professional dealings, teachers are more likely to cooperate, remain committed to their duties, and support school policies. Conversely, the lack of these ethical qualities may create mistrust and reduce staff commitment to institutional goals.

In spite of the importance of ethical leadership in educational administration, there is limited empirical evidence on the extent to which principals' openness and honesty predict administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This gap necessitates the need for this present study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine principal's ethical practices for effective administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

- Investigate the extent openness as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Explore the extent honesty as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- To what extent does openness as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- To what extent does honesty as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses further guided the study:

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which openness as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which honesty as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

System Theory

The theory was propounded by a biophysicist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1920. Systems theory hold that an organization is a social system made up of integrated parts. The system was seen as a series of interrelated and interdependent parts in such a way that the interaction of any part of the system affects the whole system. That is, one part of the system must interact and depend on the other parts around it to function effectively. The system theory is relevant to education system because education system (school) is a system and the concept of interaction and interdependence of parts with the education system like all other social systems has identical properties with the other system. This study is anchored on system theory. The schools are looked at in terms of social system as complex interactive examined structurally and operationally. The assumptions of this theory include:

- That a system is a combination of parts that are interrelated;
- That the sub-systems have limits or boundaries;
- That the system as a whole is better than the sum of the sub-systems in part;
- That change in one of the sub-system can lead to a predicable change in the entire system;
- Positive growth in the system depends on how well the system fits into the environment.

The theory is of immense help to this study as the principal reflects in the objectives, functions and the ultimate goal of the educational system in which they operate. The principal as the administrator represents a crucial component of the social system. This implies that the principal as the chief executive of the school deals with people at all times and is bound to get along with them. For the principal to perform his administrative role very well, he is expected to ensure that he exhibits ethical behaviours and practices required of him so as to achieve secondary school objectives and goals as stipulated in the National Policy (FRN, 2014). This brings to the

limelight the ideas of principal's administrative process. It contends that when special attention is given, the principals do their works very well and productivity is likely to be high.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Openness and Effective Administration of Public Secondary School

Openness has been defined as willingness, readiness to receive impressions and ideas also characterized by an attitude of ready accessibility about ones actions and purposes (Khadyr & Smajic, 2018). It is an overarching concept or philosophy that is characterized by an emphasis on transparency and free unrestricted access to knowledge and information as well as collaborative or cooperative management and decision making rather than a central authority. Thus, openness can be said to be the opposite of secrecy (Henkel, et al., 2014).

Charlene (2020) research shows that the most affecting factor of organizations success is not the number of employees neither their knowledge but an open mind-set, openness that is very right in terms of time, place, and amount. Also, Scott et al. (2015) stated that there are 2 excellent two-way communications between leaders and members, and also among members. People can speak openly, without fear of being thought critical. Facilitating consensus decision making depends on a wide range of activities and skills which are building trust and openness among group members. All that matters is to ensure that the best decisions are taken. Kouzes (2017) corroborates this interpretation by saying that trusting leaders nurture openness, involvement, personal satisfaction, and high levels of commitment to excellence. They are willing to ante up first in the game of trust, they listen and learn from others, and they demonstrate their trust by sharing information and resources with others.

According to Mai and Alan (2018), openness is very valued and significant in an organizations such as the school, as it helps to promote effective administration and conducive atmosphere where trust is built. It has several scopes, which are answering to the questions what, when, to whom and how to speak with particular employee. When a principals with an open mind set speak, teachers will want to believe them, which mean if they trust them they can follow and do their jobs in a complete way. Mai and Alan (2018) also stated that trust and openness is needed mostly in bureaucratic organizations. Most of the time school organizations hierarchy constitutes the distance between top, middle managers and employees, which later may reduce the honesty and openness of each worker in the school independent from the authority he or she has.

Furthermore, academics believe that openness as ethical practice of principals is important for success in the school environment. Such openness enables the teachers to build trust in the principals for the actualization of school goals and objective (Drucker, 2008). Drucker (2008) identified that principals need to interact openly in the school to teachers, so as to enable both parties come up with policies and strategies that will help them surmount turbulent challenges which will ensure effective teaching and learning , productivity and long-term sustainability of effective administration. Empirical study on the subject of openness reveals that if the principal wants to improve school effectiveness, then he has to apply the characteristics or ethic of openness and understand the importance of working with the very nature of the school organization (Hippel & von-Krogh, 2018; Mink et al., 2019; Mink, et al., 2021).

Working effectively with openness ensures sustainability and enhances school organizational effectiveness. An organizations culture can explain much about how an organisation functions, both internally and in relation to its external environment. Although there is no one best culture to aspire to, openness should be the foundations of any healthy culture.

Khadyr and Smajic (2018) redefined openness in five different factors which are; openness to information and knowledge, openness to mistakes and critics, openness to change, openness to new ideas and openness to religion and culture. Khadyr and Smajic (2018) believed that organizations like the school fail because their leaders usually lack skills openness.

Honesty and Effective Administration of Public Secondary School

Honesty is widely recognized as an important moral virtue (Wilson, 2018). People with a low level of honesty tend to behave dishonest, manipulative, cheating, and pretentious. It is worth recalling the definition of ethical leadership: ethical leaders are likely to be honest, considerate of their followers, fair in their decisions, use rewards and punishments to promote ethical conduct, and make decisions based on ethical values (Brown et al., 2015). Bastian (2020) claimed that honesty are simply necessary in school organization because, if the principal and other school personnel live by it, it can be the basis for making decisions, and for a quick response because everybody knows each other very and the values they believe. Principal as a leader in the school is saddle with task of influencing an attitude of honesty by being honest in the discharge of his duties. Such attitude will inspire other personnel in school to do same, which in turn promotes effective administration.

Principals in schools is expected not to be indifferent to forming the ethical attitudes of honesty when such is lacking (Karmańska & Obrębska, 2021). Honesty has a positive and significant relationship with effective administration in school because it is a value that seem to play a key role in managing an organization for productivity (Błachnio, 2021; Kirkland et al., 2021; Hannan et al., 2016; Cekuls, 2015). The value of honesty is one of the most important values in the context of school organizational leadership because it creates a peaceful and enabling atmosphere for attainment of goals and objectives of the school (Huhtala et al., 2021; Ete et al., 2020; Barends et al., 2019).

Effective principal leadership requires essential quality like honesty. The principal in exercising leadership in the school, need to be honest to foster integrity and dedication of the teachers and other school users in order to achieve the targeted school goal. By honesty, it means that the principal should be truthful, transparent and accountable in his duties to put the school in the limelight for global competitiveness (Cohn et al., 2019). When a principal is honest it enables the school to meet up with her daily activities devoid of crisis or chaos. Also, the teachers will be up to their task and time properly managed. Honesty of principal will help the school in the management of her human and material resource. Issues of wastages, theft and other corrupt practices will be curbed (Bastian, 2020). Through honesty, there is free flow of information among school leader and followers. Because, principals are there to serve the public at large. Relating it to good governance, the public has a right to access information and to have a say about what the principals do on behalf of the public at large. School effective administration is affected by principals' honesty and relationships with its school stakeholders. When honesty is lacking on the side of the principals, the schools suffer a lot especially in delivery of quality service (Freeman, 2016).

METHODS

This study investigated principals' openness and honesty as ethical predictors of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enables the investigation of existing phenomena as they occur naturally without manipulation of variables. It also allows the researcher to collect data from a sample of respondents in order to describe the current situation and generalize the findings to the wider population.

The population of the study comprised 7,184 academic staff, including 291 principals and 6,893 teachers from the 291 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The information was obtained from the Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Port Harcourt (2022). A sample size of 720 respondents, representing 10% of the population, was selected using the proportionate stratified sampling technique. The sample was drawn from six Local Government Areas across the three senatorial districts in the state vis-à-vis Rivers South-East, Rivers West, and Rivers East.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled 'Principals' Openness and Honesty and Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (POHAEPSSQ)'. The instrument consisted of demographic items and statements addressing the research questions. Responses were measured using a modified four-point Likert scale of Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2), and Very Low Extent (1).

To ensure validity, three copies of the instrument were given to experts in measurement. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha after administering 30 copies to respondents outside the study sample. A reliability coefficient of .891 was obtained, indicating high reliability.

A total of 800 copies of the questionnaire were administered with the assistance of trained research assistants, and 720 valid copies were retrieved for analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance, using a criterion mean of 2.50 for decision-making. SPSS version 28 was employed for the analysis.

RESULTS

Answer to the Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent does openness as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of respondents answer to openness and principal ethical practice

s/n	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Openness as principal ethical promote conducive learning atmosphere where trust is built for effective administration of schools.	2.9042	1.26160	High extent
2.	Openness displayed by principal facilitates the planning and execution of some school projects for effective administration.	2.6306	1.16134	High extent

3.	Open mind set of principal makes teachers to trust in his plans to do their jobs in a complete way for effective administration of schools.	2.7083	1.21233	High extent
4.	Openness makes staff feel free to make inputs on administrative activities of the principal.	2.7111	1.21758	High extent
5.	Openness enables the teachers to build trust in the principals for the actualization of school goals and objective.	2.8986	1.13706	High extent
6.	Openness enables both principal and teachers come up with policies/strategies that will help them surmount turbulent challenges which will ensure effective teaching and learning.	2.8958	1.13558	High extent
Grand total		2.7914	1.18758	High extent

Research question one states that “To what extent does openness as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria”? The reason for this research question was to evaluate the extent to which openness as a principal ethical practice predicts administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. data in Table 1 revealed that openness as principal ethical promote conducive learning atmosphere where trust is built for effective administration of schools, openness displayed by principal facilitates the planning and execution of some school projects, and open mind principals makes teachers to trust in their plans to do their jobs in a complete way for effective administration of schools. The respondents in addition noted that openness makes staff feel free to make inputs on administrative activities of the principal, and openness enables both principal and teachers come up with policies/strategies that will help them surmount turbulent challenges which will ensure effective teaching and learning. This is as reflected in the grand mean of 2.7914 with a standard deviation of 1.18758, which shows that openness as a principal ethical practice predicts administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: To what extent does honesty as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents answer to honesty and principal ethical practice

s/n	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
7.	Honesty of principal creates room for upward and downward communication channel in the school administration	3.1444	1.13546	High extent
8.	Honest communication of principal foster integrity and dedication of the teachers in order to achieve the targeted school goals.	2.8694	1.27440	High extent
9.	Principal honesty enables the school to meet up with her daily activities devoid of crisis or chaos for effective administration of schools.	2.6875	1.24958	High extent
10.	Issues of wastages, theft and other corrupt practices are curbed when a principal is honest for effective administration of schools.	2.8139	1.22393	High extent
11.	Honesty promotes free flow of information among school leaders and followers for effective administration of schools.	2.7639	1.18865	High extent
12.	Honesty helps principal communicates his ideas with staff before implementation for effective administration of schools.	2.8306	1.24771	High extent
Grand total		2.8516	1.21995	High extent

Research question two state that “To what extent does honesty as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria”? The purpose of this research question was to appraise the extent honesty as a principal ethical practice predicts administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Information in Table 2 illustrates that honesty of principal creates room for upward and downward communication channel in the school administration, honest communication of principal foster integrity and dedication of the teachers in order to achieve the targeted school goals, and principal honesty enables the school to meet up with her daily activities devoid of crisis or chaos for effective administration of schools. The respondents further demonstrated that the issues of wastages, theft and other corrupt practices are curbed when a principal is honest; honesty promotes free flow of information among school leaders and followers for effective administration of schools, and that honesty helps principal communicates his ideas with staff before implementation for effective administration of schools. This is reflected in the grand mean of 2.8516 with a standard deviation of 1.21995, which shows that honesty as a principal ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which openness as a principal’s ethical practices predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 3: ANOVA Analysis of difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which openness as a principal’s ethical practices predict administration of public secondary schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.151	1	12.151	8.192	.004
Within Groups	1064.911	718	1.483		
Total	1077.061	719			

The One-way-analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted as shown in Table 3 above, using status (principals and teachers) as independents variables on items 1-6 of section B of the instrument as dependents variables shows that both principals and teachers have no significant difference between their mean scores on the extent to which openness as a principal’s ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 8.192 and a Sig. of .004, shows that both principals and teachers hold that significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which openness as a principal’s ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. As a result hypothesis four was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which honesty as a principal’s ethical practice predict administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis of difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which honesty as a principal's ethical practices predict administration of public secondary schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.984	1	5.984	4.164	.042
Within Groups	1031.877	718	1.437		
Total	1037.861	719			

The One-way-analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted as shown in Table 4 above, using status (principals and teachers) as independents variables on items 7-12 of section B of the instrument as dependents variables shows that both principals and teachers have no significant difference between their mean scores on the extent to which honesty as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 4.164 and a Sig. of .042, shows that both principals and teachers hold that significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which honesty as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. As a result hypothesis five was rejected.

DISCUSSION

Openness as a Principal Ethical Practice Predict and the Administration of Public Secondary Schools

The evidence from the study's findings is reflected in the grand mean of 2.7914 and a standard deviation of 1.18758, which shows that openness as a principal ethical practice predicts administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the ANOVA analysis of the between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 8.192 and a significant level of .004, shows that both principals and teachers hold that no significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to which openness as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This means that both principals and teachers agreed to a high extent that openness as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools.

This study's findings are in line with that that of Henkel et al. (2014) and Khadyr and Smajic (2018) who found that openness is another ethical practice that is exhibited by a leader in an organization (school). It is an overarching concept or philosophy that is characterized by an emphasis on transparency and free unrestricted access to knowledge and information as well as collaborative or cooperative management and decision making rather than a central authority. Openness can be said to be the opposite of secrecy. Openness has been defined as willingness, readiness to receive impressions and ideas also characterized by an attitude of ready accessibility about ones actions and purposes.

Honesty as a Principal Ethical Practice Predict and the Administration of Public Secondary Schools

The evidence from this study, and as reflected in the grand mean of 2.8516 with a standard deviation of 1.21995, honesty as a principal ethical practice predicts administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria and the ANOVA analysis, the between groups and the within groups Sum of Squares, Mean Square, and F-ratio of 4.164 and a Sig. of .042, shows that both principals and teachers hold that no significant difference exist between the mean scores of principals and teachers to the extent to which honesty as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. These results shows that principals and teachers agree to high extent that honesty as a principal's ethical practices predicts the administration of public secondary schools.

This study's findings are in line with that of Brown et al. (2015) and Wilson (2018) when they found that honesty is widely recognized as an important moral virtue. People with a low level of honesty tend to behave dishonestly, manipulative, cheating, and pretentious. Ethical leaders are likely to be honest, considerate of their followers, fair in their decisions, use rewards and punishments to promote ethical conduct, and make decisions based on ethical values. In the same way, Bastian (2020) found that honesty are simply necessary in school organization because, if the principal and other school personnel live by it, it can be the basis for making decisions, and for a quick response because everybody knows each other very and the values they believe. Principal as a leader in the school is saddle with task of influencing an attitude of honesty by being honest in the discharge of his duties. Such attitude will inspire other personnel in school to do same, which in turn promotes effective administration.

CONCLUSION

This study examined principals' openness and honesty as ethical predictors of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings highlighted the importance of ethical leadership practices in enhancing the effective administration of schools. Principals occupy a strategic leadership position in the school system, and their ability to demonstrate openness and honesty significantly influences how administrative duties are carried out. Ethical leadership promotes transparency in decision-making, encourages participatory management, and strengthens trust between principals, teachers, and other stakeholders within the school environment.

The results of the study suggested that openness in leadership encourages effective communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding among school staff. When principals maintain open channels of communication and involve teachers in decision-making processes, it fosters a sense of belonging and professional commitment among staff members. Similarly, honesty as an ethical practice enhances credibility, accountability, and fairness in the management of school affairs. Principals who demonstrate honesty in their interactions and administrative decisions are more likely to gain the confidence and support of teachers and other stakeholders, which contributes to improved administrative outcomes.

On the whole, the study emphasized that ethical leadership practices, particularly openness and honesty, are essential towards achieving administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools. Therefore, principals should consistently uphold ethical values like openness

and honesty in their leadership roles in order to strengthen trust, promote cooperation among staff members and enhance the overall effectiveness of school administration in Rivers State.

Recommendations

The following were put forward as result of the findings from this study:

- Principals should be encouraged to hold on the principle of openness as an ethical practice that predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Principals should be duty-bound to welcome honesty as an ethical practice that predicts the administration of public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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