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Principals' Leadership Strategies For Teacher Retention In Public Secondary Schools In Osun State

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated principals' leadership strategies for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and the population comprised 387 principals in the 387 public secondary schools in Osun State, with a sample of 387 principals. The sampling technique was census sampling technique. The instrument that was used for data collection in this study was a scale, titled "Principals' Leadership Strategies Scale" (PLSS), developed by the researcher. The instrument was determined by two experts in educational management and three experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education. The reliability coefficient was obtained using Test Retest and Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula. The reliability coefficient was 0.91. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test. The findings revealed that ways principals' leadership strategies can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State include communication and decision making strategies. It was concluded that, principals' communication and decision making strategies are ways teacher retention can be enhanced in public secondary schools in Osun State. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended amongst others, that, principals of public secondary schools in Osun State should continue to communicate effectively with teachers by relating well with them and ensuring immediate feedback accordingly. Also, principals should always involve teachers in all decision making process in schools by allowing them partake in decision implementation, as well as attending meetings where decisions are being deliberated.
Keywords: Principal, Leadership Strategies, Teacher Retention, Public Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Education is the transmission of knowledge and culture from one generation to another. It entails the delivery of formal and informal instruction, as well as ensuring that societies advance. Within the education system are teachers who train and guide students in order to enhance their learning outcome. The retention of teachers in schools is crucial for sustainability and to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Teacher retention implies the proportion of teachers in one year who are still teaching in the same school till the following year. Teacher retention is about making sure teachers stay, continue teaching, and do not quit or move to other schools. When teacher retention is high, it means most teachers remain in the school year after year. When it is low, it means many teachers are leaving. It relates to the goal of keeping teachers in the workplace, and reducing their turnover (Okeke et al., 2019). Teacher retention is a global issue that affects schools and how they manage their teachers. There are growing concerns about educator turnover and attrition is reported widely as a global phenomenon. In many countries, concerns about teacher shortages are beginning to be

articulated strongly. Teacher turnover manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to various reasons. Hoang (2020) asserted that a high teacher turnover rate is a serious problem for the educational system and the children it serves. Teachers' willingness to stay at a school or leave a district can be affected by a number of factors, including the work environment and administrators' leadership style. If teachers believe that their school or district is not supportive of their work, or if they lack the tools and support necessary to be effective in the classroom, they may more likely resign from their positions.

Teacher retention in other words, means dedication to doing what is required for the achievement of predetermined goals. It therefore refers to the willingness of teachers to stay in their job and give their best towards the achievement of the goals of the school where they work. A teacher who remains in his place of work is self-motivated; he is one that enjoys his job and shows signs of job satisfaction. Teacher retention is distinctive, and varies from one teacher to another. It therefore could account for the differences in the productivity and performance of different teachers working in the same or different schools. Ingersoll (2020) stated that a retained teacher is likely to be more productive and resourceful as a teacher than a teacher who changes schools occasionally. The prospect of teachers staying or remaining in the teaching profession or within the same school for a longer period of time, is largely dependent on the leadership strategies of the school principal.

Principals are managers of schools that handle the day to day operations within schools. They are leaders who exhibit leadership qualities that are followed by teachers, students and other staff. Principals are pivotal in shaping the school environment, setting academic standards, and fostering an inclusive culture that promotes learning and development. In secondary schools, principals manage and handle activities to ensure the achievement of school goals and objectives. In essence, school principals organize, coordinate, manage and harmonize school undertakings for attainment of educational goals. Effective leaders in schools not only manage administrative tasks but also play a crucial role in instructional leadership, curriculum development, and stakeholder engagement (Leithwood et al., 2019). Leadership is a multifaceted and complex concept that has been defined and interpreted in various ways across different fields and disciplines. At its core, leadership involves the ability to influence and guide individuals or groups towards achieving specific goals. Northouse (2018) maintained that leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. This definition highlights the relational aspect of leadership, emphasizing the interactions between leaders and their followers. Leadership is not solely about the position or authority held by an individual but also about the ability to inspire and motivate others.

Expectantly, principals are to lead in schools and motivate staff accordingly, in order to achieve pre-determined goals. The leadership strategies applied by principals in schools is essential for the sooth operations of schools. Leadership strategies are the plans, methods, and attitudes leaders use to guide teams toward organizational goals. Also, leadership strategies could be referred to those acts, principles or policies organizations put in place to attract, maintain and retain their staff. This could be in form of training, motivation, career growth, delegation of duties, supervision and promotion, provision of instructional materials and so on (Bua, 2020). These leadership strategies are meant to improve upon organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Principals' leadership strategies are the set standards, routine or static laid-down rules and regulations that are followed in the day-to-day running of a school. These leadership strategies are measured based on principals' leadership behavior. Principals can encourage effective performance of their teachers by identifying their needs and trying to meeting them (Ogunsanju & Olaniyan, 2024). This encouragement is very much dependent on various aspects of principals' leadership behaviour such as involvement in decision making, communication, supervision, provision of instructional materials, provision of benefits (Bua, 2020).

There are components of principals' leadership strategies which include communication and decision making amongst others. Communication is the life wire of any institution and it is a process of transmitting information from one person to another based on ideas, thoughts or feelings (Shonubi & Akintaro, 2016). If communication is not handled with care it can generate conflict among school members. This is because, numerous communication activities take place within and among members of educational organizations such as schools, colleges, boards, commissions etc. Communication is essential in schools as information is shared and feedback received in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Decision making, which is a component of leadership strategy, is the process of selecting a course of action by identifying a problem, gathering information, and weighing alternatives. It can involve both rational analysis and instinct and is a crucial skill in personal and professional life for achieving favorable outcomes. Effective decision making can lead to a more satisfying alternative by following a structured, step-by-step process. Being an integral part of modern management, decision-making begins with identifying a problem, planning, implementation, evaluation and feedback (Ayeni, 2018). Decisions are made at every level of management to ensure organizational or business goals are achieved. Every leader takes hundreds and hundreds of decisions subconsciously or consciously making it a key component in the role of a leader.

As managers of schools, it is expected that principals lead well and demonstrate leadership competence for effective teaching and learning. Teacher retention is dependent on how well principals administer and implement their leadership strategies, as the various components of leadership strategies decide if teachers will remain in schools for a longer period of time or not.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined principals' leadership strategies for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State. In specific terms, the objectives sought to:

1. find out the ways principals' communication strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.
2. examine the various ways principals' decision making strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. In what ways can principals communication strategy be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State?
2. In what ways can principals decision making strategy be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways principals' communication strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the ways principals' decision making strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for this study consisted of 387 principals in the 387 public secondary schools in Osun State. The sample size that was used for this study was 387 principals that were drawn from the 387 public secondary schools in the state. The sampling technique that was used is the census (purposive) sampling technique. The instrument that was used for data collection was a measurement scale titled "Principals' Leadership Strategies Scale" (PLSS). The instrument items were designed in such a manner that responses followed a modified 4 point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instruments were face and content validated by five experts in University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha Statistics with a co-efficient of 0.91. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and two research assistants and out of 387 copies of the instruments that were administered, 362 copies were correctly filled and were retrieved. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation scores, while the hypotheses was tested at 0.05% level of significance using z-test.

RESULTS

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1: *In what ways can principals communication strategy be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State?*

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principals on Ways Principals Communication Strategy can be enhanced for Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Osun State

S/No	Items	Male principals 200		Female principals 162		Mean Set	
		X_1	SD	X_2	SD	X_1X_2	Decision
1	Open and timely communication is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.77	.44	2.90	.23	2.83	Agreed
2	Providing clear explanations of school policies and expectations is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.82	.36	2.65	.45	2.73	Agreed
3	Listening actively to teachers' concerns is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.98	.23	2.99	.12	2.98	Agreed
4	Regularly holding staff meetings to discuss issues affecting teachers is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.	2.64	.74	3.06	.22	2.85	Agreed
5	Communicating recognition of teachers' efforts is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.88	.65	2.77	.49	2.82	Agreed
6	Using multiple communication channels (meetings, memos, digital platforms) to keep teachers well informed is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.	2.72	.11	2.85	.36	2.78	Agreed
7	Encouraging open dialogue where teachers can freely express their opinions without fear of intimidation is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.	3.03	.49	2.83	.53	2.93	Agreed
	Aggregate mean	2.83	1.02	2.86	.63	2.84	Agreed

Data on Table 4.1 shows that items 1-7 had weighed mean ratings greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 and therefore reveals that, the respondents agree that, the items are ways principals communication strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 2.84, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, male and female principals agree that the ways principals communication strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State are; open and timely communication is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, providing clear explanations of school policies and expectations is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, listening actively to teachers' concerns is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, regularly holding staff meetings to discuss issues affecting teachers is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, communicating recognition of teachers' efforts is one way

of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, using multiple communication channels (meetings, memos, digital platforms) to keep teachers well informed is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention and encouraging open dialogue where teachers can freely express their opinions without fear of intimidation is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.

Research Question 2: *In what ways can principals decision making strategy be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State?*

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Ratings of Experienced and Less Experienced Principals on Ways Principals Decision Making Strategy can be enhanced for Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Osun State

S/No	Items	Experienced principals 227		Less experienced principals 135		Mean Set	
		X_1	SD	X_2	SD	X_1X_2	Decision
8	Involving teachers in key school decisions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.64	.11	2.71	.45	2.67	Agreed
9	Ensuring that decisions are fair in schools is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.72	.22	2.68	.12	2.70	Agreed
10	Seeking input from teachers before implementing policies that affect their work conditions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.87	.11	2.77	.89	2.82	Agreed
11	Ensuring that decisions related to workload distribution are made collaboratively is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.60	.56	2.59	.23	2.59	Agreed
12	Using data and feedback from teachers to make informed decisions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.67	.32	2.55	.12	2.61	Agreed
13	Prioritizing decisions that improve teachers' welfare is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.91	.23	2.65	.49	2.78	Agreed
14	Regularly reviewing school decisions to address teachers' concerns is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention	2.88	.72	2.70	.33	2.79	Agreed
	Aggregate mean	2.75	.59	2.66	.51	2.70	Agreed

Data on Table 4.2 shows that items 8-14 had weighed mean ratings greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 and therefore reveals that, the respondents agree that, the items are ways principals decision making strategy can be managed for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 2.70, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, experienced and less experienced principals agree that the ways principals decision making strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State are; involving teachers in key school

decisions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, ensuring that decisions are fair in schools is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, seeking input from teachers before implementing policies that affect their work conditions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, ensuring that decisions related to workload distribution are made collaboratively is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, using data and feedback from teachers to make informed decisions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, prioritizing decisions that improve teachers' welfare is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention and regularly reviewing school decisions to address teachers' concerns is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways principals' communication strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.

Table 4.3: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principals on the Ways Principals' Communication Strategy can be enhanced for Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Osun State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Principals	200	2.83	1.00	360	2.04	1.96	0.05	Significant (Reject)
Female principals	162	2.86	.63					

Data on Table 4.3 show the value of z-cal. to be 2.04 while the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. of 2.04 is higher than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was rejected and this implied that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways principals' communication strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the ways principals' decision making strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.

Table 4.4: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Experienced and Less Experienced Principals on the Ways Principals' Decision Making Strategy can be enhanced for Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Osun State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Experienced Principals	227	2.75	.59	360	2.17	1.96	0.05	Significant (Reject)
Less experienced principals	135	2.66	.51					

Data on Table 4.4 show the value of z-cal. to be 2.17 while the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. of 2.17 is higher than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was rejected and this implied that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the ways principals' decision making strategy can be enhanced for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Communication Strategy for Teacher Retention

Results from the first finding of the study revealed that the ways principals enhance communication strategy for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State are; open and timely communication is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, providing clear explanations of school policies and expectations is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, listening actively to teachers' concerns is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, regularly holding staff meetings to discuss issues affecting teachers is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, communicating recognition of teachers' efforts is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, using multiple communication channels (meetings, memos, digital platforms) to keep teachers well informed is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention and encouraging open dialogue where teachers can freely express their opinions without fear of intimidation is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.

The finding is in consonance with Idah (2021) who found out in his studies that effective communication can affect teacher attachment to the institution, and reduce their turnover. Communication is vital in schools and scholars have agreed to it. Effective communication in schools is essential for improved teaching and learning, as well as better enhanced relationship. This assertion is in agreement with Akinwale and Okotoni (2018) who discovered in their studies that only a few secondary school principals adopted aggressive communication style in their various schools, which allowed teachers to remain in these schools. The respondents agreed that providing clear explanations of school policies and expectations is crucial for all teachers to be conversant with. This explains the need for them to be comfortable with school policies and embrace the willingness to remain in schools. This is buttressed by Okeke and Nnaji (2021) who expressed that communication is fundamentally a meaning-making activity that enables people to understand one another and coordinate actions within social or organizational settings.

Decision Making Strategy for Teacher Retention

Results from the second finding of the study revealed that that the ways principals enhance decision making strategy for teacher retention in public secondary schools in Osun State are; involving teachers in key school decisions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, ensuring that decisions are fair in schools is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, seeking input from teachers before implementing policies that affect their work conditions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, ensuring that decisions related to workload distribution are made collaboratively is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, using data and feedback from teachers to make informed decisions is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention, prioritizing decisions that improve teachers' welfare is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention and regularly reviewing school decisions to address teachers' concerns is one way of enhancing leadership strategies for teacher retention.

This finding is in agreement with Mohammed (2024) who discovered that modern decision making in schools increasingly enables teachers participate actively, which enhances participation and reduces turnover. A possible explanation for this may be in fact that quite very recently, school principals have seen the need to engage teachers in all decision making practices in schools. As a school leader, the principal is responsible for setting the school's vision and providing guidance and support to teachers, students and parents. This is also in line with Ibe (2023) who asserted that decision making that incorporates input from teachers, students and other stakeholders increases commitment to implementation and fosters a sense of ownership. The principal must work closely with teachers and other stakeholders to develop policies and programs that enhance students' learning experiences while simultaneously ensuring the smooth running of the teaching progress. This is in consonance with the findings of Mayasari et al. (2019) who explained that the school principal plays a critical role in the decision-making process within the school and is a key factor in ensuring high-quality education, as well as sustaining teacher presence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that, principals' communication and decision making strategies are ways teacher retention can be enhanced in public secondary schools in Osun State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Principals of public secondary schools in Osun State should continue to communicate effectively with teachers by relating well with them and ensuring immediate feedback accordingly.
2. Principals should always involve teachers in all decision making process in schools by allowing them partake in decision implementation, as well as attending meetings where decisions are being deliberated.

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