PRINCIPALS' FAVOURITISM BEHAVIOUR AND TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDUCATION DISTRICT I, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of principals' favouritism behaviours on teachers organisational commitment in public senior secondary schools of Education District I of Lagos state, Nigeria. Two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research population consists of 738 teachers and 41 principals from 41 public senior secondary schools in Education District I of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A total of 244 teachers and 20 principals were included through simple random sampling technique from the three zones (Agege, Ifako-Ijaye, and Alimosho) of the Education District I. Principal Favouritism Behaviour Questionnaire (PFBQ), and Teachers Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (TOCQ) were used respectively, as instrument for data collection. The analysis of the data was carried out by using Pearson product moment correlation. Findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between principal favouritism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment (r =0.629, p>0.05), and also there is a significant relationship between principals' display of nepotism and cronyism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment (r = 0.891, p > 0.05). The study concludes that when principals show favouritism towards certain teachers, it can create a negative work environment and lead to feelings of injustice and inequality among the staff and this can in turn demotivate teachers in contributing to the school's goals and missions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that more effective regulations and penal sanctions should be introduced to eliminate the favouritism attitudes and behaviours in schools.
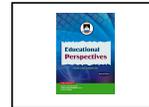
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Introduction

Education is widely recognised as the greatest tool for national development. one of its main purposes is to produce trained talents who can overcome development barriers in A certain country. To achieve this, the educational system needs a happy workforce. Satisfied teachers put more time, energy and effort into their work to achieve high productivity. In the world today, concepts such as equality, transparency, accountability, rights and fairness are very popular in the globalised world and the managers who are often prominent in all aspects of life do not attach importance to these concepts in their field.

Concepts like equality, transparency, accountability, rights, and justice have been more prominent in today's world of globalization, and administrators who fail to prioritize these ideas in their applications have come under fire. Administrators who incorporate the aforementioned concepts into their management activities are generally well-received, while those who do not consider objective criteria, such as competence and proficiency, have faced criticism for being perceived as partial (Meric & Erdem, 2013).

Favouritism is the decision made by a person or group that has the same rights as other people or groups (Roy & Roy, 2004). The propensity to stray from justice and rights in favor of one individual or one group is known as favouritism (Erdem, 2010). It involves favoring someone based on unrelated characteristics, such as personal preferences, participation in a group that is favored, etc., rather than because they are doing the best job possible (Nadler & Schulman, 2006). It may also mean choosing a certain staff member based more on friendship or family ties than on qualifications (Oren, 2007: 84).Favouritism is the practice of putting friendship, family, or political and religious affiliation ahead of other considerations when a candidate is appointed to or promoted within the public sector. According to Akozer (2013), it may also be described as allocating public funds in support of the electorate and political power.

According to Ramanchander (2011), favouritism may be recognized in one or more of the following ways:

1. The supervisor spends excessive amounts of time and interacts with the preferred employee more than any other employee inside the organisaton.

2. The supervisor confides in the preferred worker and talks about all the private matters.

3. The superior gives the favourite employee credit for even the smallest accomplishment that others do not receive recognition for;

4. The superior ignores even the mistakes committed by the favourite employee;

5. The superior provides extra benefits and help to the favourite employee in order to complete the task;

6. The superior accepts the favourite employee's advice without weighing the advantages and disadvantages, even when it comes to matters concerning other employees' pay; and

7. Above all, the preferred employee receives more benefits than other employees in the same position.

Favouritism in the context of school administration is defined as an official's unlawful and unjustified help and protection given to staff members with whom they have a personal connection (Erdem & Meriç, 2013).

Nepotism, cronyism, political, service, sexual, and patronage favouritism are some of the forms of favouritism that may be found in an organisational setting (Asunakutlu and Avcı, 2010; Büte and Tekarslan, 2010; et al). Fairness and equality principles are eliminated by these kinds of favouritism attitudes and behaviors, which also damage the public interest and interfere with an organisation's ability to operate (Erdem & Meriç, 2013).

Organisational commitment is a psychological contract between an individual and an organisation. Organisational commitment plays a key role in determining whether employees will stay with the Organisation for a longer period of time and work passionately toward its purpose. A teacher's Organisational commitment reflects the teacher's multidimensional psychological attachment to the particular school he or she belongs to. Mart (2013) noted that teachers commitment is an emotional bond between the teachers and the school where he /she is serving. Commitment will motivate people to work and encourage them to fulfill their assigned roles and responsibilities in the workplace.

Statement of the Problem

It is clear that the purpose of any education system is to prepare competent citizens for it. It helps the country's political, social and economic development. These are fulfilled when the components of the education system are in good standing. Of the few components of an educational system, maintaining happy, engaged, and motivated teachers within the system is crucial, viable, functional, and productive. If teachers are not committed in and satisfied with their work, their morale will drop, which will take a toll on the energy supply of skilled workers. The area of dissatisfaction includes; salary, poor benefits and opportunities for promotion, management style of the principals, inability to make good decisions, poor relationships with principals and parents, and principal favouritism behaviour Turhan (2014) pointed that the favouritism attitudes and behaviours of the school principals have a negative effect on the trust in the teachers.

When it comes to providing services to their staff, school administrators should act impartially, fairly, and at an equal distance from them in order to avoid showing favouritism. Education activities will also be badly impacted at the schools where instructors who are seen favorably by school authorities are employed. Teachers' relationships with school administrators and with each other are badly impacted if they believe that administrators act unfairly in their activities. Teachers are the fundamental practitioners of education (Meric & Erdem, 2013).

In a school environment where teamwork is essential to achieving educational goals and objectives, principals' biased attitudes and behaviours impede communication, interaction, and cooperation in the educational environment and, as a result, lead to hostile and conflicting behaviours. In addition to reducing motivation and performance of teachers, reducing job satisfaction and damaging feelings of trust. Furthermore, unfair competition due to bias has a negative impact on encouraging teachers to leave their jobs by affecting the educational environment, teacher job satisfaction and therefore, organisation commitment.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are generated by the researcher and will be tested in this study:

HO1: There is no significant relationship between principal favouritism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between principal display of nepotism and cronyism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I.

Literature Review

Concept of Favouritism Behaviour

Favouritism prevails in a variety of organisations. It appears that there must exist some efficiency enhancing motivations for playing favouritism in organisations. Prendergast and Topel (1996) suggest that subjectivity opens the door to favouritism; evaluators act on personal preferences toward subordinates to favour some employees over others.
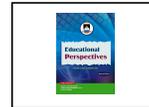
The propensity to stray from justice and rights in favor of one individual or one group is known as favouritism (Erdem, 2010). It involves favoring someone based on unrelated characteristics, such as personal preferences, participation in a group that is favored, etc., rather than because they are doing the best job possible (Nadler & Schulman, 2006). It may also mean choosing a certain staff member based more on friendship or family ties than on qualifications (Oren, 2007). Favouritism is the practice of putting friendship, family, or faith or political affiliation ahead of other considerations when a candidate is appointed to or promoted within the public sector. According to Akozer (2013), it may also be described as allocating public funds in support of the electorate and political power.

Compared to previous writers, Meric (2012) covered the many forms of favouritism in more depth. He received preference under six categories. They are as follows: (1) sexual favouritism; (2) partisanship; (3) cronyism; (4) service favouritism; (5) patronage; and (6) nepotism. This research included a short discussion of the many forms of favouritism.

1. **Nepotism:** When someone is hired or promoted based only on family ties and lacks the qualifications needed for the position, it is considered nepotism (Ozler, Ergun-Ozler & Gumustekin-eren, 2007; Dökumbilek, 2010). This can happen regardless of success, skill, ability, or educational attainment. When you are in a position of authority, nepotism is the practice of unjustly offering your family members the greatest employment (Longman, 2014). Nepotism may have one or many detrimental effects on an organisation. First, views of justice may be lowered as a consequence of nepotism. Second, the perception of nepotism and cronyism may produce difficulties when handling underqualified individuals recruited due to nepotism, which might result in greater job stress among organisational employees. Third, according to Hoft and Stout (2012), nepotism is linked to decreased organisational commitment and satisfaction. People are seen to constantly be less committed to the organisation when their supervisor was chosen via nepotism (Hooft & Stout, 2012).

2. **Cronyism:** Organisational politics is a much larger notion that encompasses a wide range of political behaviors. Cronyism is one specific kind of this. Gnomonyism is often defined as favouritism towards companions regardless of their credentials. Decisions are often made on the basis of popularity rather than ability. For instance, a worker with a strong performance history could miss out on an increase in salary or raise because the manager chose to reward someone else based on an informal, friend-friend connection. Because favouritism decides who succeeds, merit therefore loses out in cronyism (Khatri et al., 2008). Cronyism is the practice of hiring public employees based more on their friendships with their peers than on their qualifications or equality (Ozsemerci, 2003). Nepotism and cronyism are comparable concepts. The main distinction between the two is that nepotism favors members of the same family, elevating the favored individual to a level that he is not deserving of based only on his family connections rather than his skills (Ozkanan & Erdem, 2014).

3. **Political Favouritism, or Partisanship:** Once a political party gains power, it grants special treatment and unjust advantages to those voter groups who support it. Political favouritism is the term used to describe this circumstance (Tarhan et al., 2006; Ozkanan & Erdem, 2014). When a political party gains power, they usually want to fill public institutions and organisations with members or sympathizers. In addition to harming neutrality, this widely accepted practice is the main obstacle to the efficient and fruitful operation of public administration throughout many nations (Yıldırım, 2013).

4. **Service Favouritism:** The political authority distributes funds to its own sectorial areas in a manner that optimizes its votes in order to win back power in the next elections. Budgetary

resources will have been plundered as a consequence of this. Due to this kind of corruption, the allocation of public resources disregards settlement regions and demands, instead providing services to the constituency of political authorities themselves (Tarhan, et al., 2006). According to Yılmaz and Kılavuz (2002), service favouritism is a kind of political favouritism that involves directing budget allocations to voting districts in order to increase the power's vote total.

5. **Patronage:** According to Karakas and Cak (2007), it is the act of receiving assistance or protection from someone in a position of power. In the literary world, the dismissal of "senior bureaucrats" by political parties from public institutions and organisations during the political process and the assignment of new personnel to these positions based on factors like ideology, nepotism, and cronyism are referred to as "patronage" (Tarhan, et al., 2006).

6. **Sexual Favouritism:** This is when a manager gives perks and/or advancements to a worker with whom they are romantically or sexually involved, but withholds these things from other workers who meet the requirements. Such preferential treatment is not only unjust, but it also has the potential to seriously hurt managers, paramours, and other workers in the workplace. One of the main worries about sexual favouritism's detrimental impacts on non-third-party employees is that it evaluates workers based more on their sexual behavior than their productivity. Favouritism may send the message to staff members that their sexual orientation—rather than their diligence or inventiveness—is the currency required to advance in the company. The actions of third-party personnel might make them feel uneasy and intimidated. Furthermore, as stated in Sheridan (2007), sexual favouritism may impair employee morale since it can make workers envious of and hostile toward coworkers who take use of their sexuality for personal gain. Sexual assault is among the horrors that women endure, and it is perhaps the most agonizing one. Legally speaking, sexual harassment violates the victims' freedom and rights to their own identity, as well as the effects on their physical and mental well-being on their social and economic lives (Bakırcı, 2000).
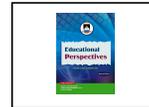
Teachers' organisational Commitment

Teachers' organisational commitment is a multifaceted phenomenon and several studies have affirmed that principal favouritism behaviour plays an important role on teachers in secondary schools. Teacher commitment is the emotional bond between the teacher and the school. It can also lead to motivation to work (Mart, 2013). Teacher commitment is one of the major professional characteristics that influence an educator's success (Cresswell 2006).

A three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) for the continuing participation of the individual in the organisation. The three components are: Affective commitment, Continuance commitment, and Normative commitment.

i. **Affective Professional Commitment:** In the context of education, this refers to teachers' emotional attachment to, identification with, and engagement in the teaching profession and its goals. It also includes teachers' motivation to identify with and aspiration to stay in the profession for self-interested inclinations, conformity to teach benevolently while contributing to the advancement of the teaching profession, and eagerness to make extra sacrifices, go above and beyond what is expected of them and to tolerate challenging circumstances (Bagraim, 2003; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007).

ii. **Continuance Commitment:** Based on the costs and advantages of continuing in the field, this commitment is made in the context of education (Nazari & Emami, 2012). According to Ware and Kitsantas (2007), it refers to the degree to which people feel compelled to stay in the field of education due to a lack of other options or potential disruptions from quitting their professions. Professionals adhere to their profession's principles due to economic pressures (Maheshwari *et*

al., 2007). Because it would be expensive for them to leave the teaching profession, teachers who have a continuous professional commitment stay in the field.

iii. **Normative Professional Commitment:** In the context of education, this refers to an individual's sense of moral obligation to continue working in the field (Bagraim, 2003; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). According to Maheshwari et al. (2007), a professional has a duty to maintain the values of their profession. The foundation for teachers' dedication to the school is the acceptance of the mission and core values. According to Cohen (2003), it is a person's attitude toward their job, which encompasses their emotions, beliefs, and behavioral intentions.

Method

The population of this study consist of all the 738 teachers and 41 principals in all the forty-one public senior secondary schools in Education District I of Lagos state.

This study employed simple random sampling techniques. Each of the member of the population has the chances of been selected. Therefore, twenty (20) public senior secondary schools were selected. A total of 244 teachers and 20 principals were selected from the three zones of the Education District I. In each zone of the Education District, 70 teachers and 6 principals were selected from 6 sample schools in Agege zone of the Education District I, 70 teachers and 6 principals were selected from 6 sample schools in Ifako-Ijaye zone of the Education District I, 94 teachers and 8 principals were selected from 8 sample schools in Alimosho zone of the Education District**.**

A self structured questionnaire was used for collection of data. The questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers and principals. This is because questionnaire is convenient to conduct survey and to acquire necessary information from large number of study subject with short period of time. The questionnaire was prepared in English language, so all of the sampled teachers and principals can have the necessary skills to read and understand the concepts incorporated in the questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided in two sections; A and B. Section A was on the respondents' background information, categories include: gender, age, level qualification, length of service and marital status. Section B consist of variables selected from the study, with a total of twenty four items namely; Principal Favouritism Behaviour (12 items), and Teachers' Organisational Commitment (12 items). The measurement ranges from Likert four point scale, that is, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). Responses was scored by indicating appropriate information with (√).

The reliability of the instrument of this study was determined through test retest method, whereby same set of questionnaire was re-administered to thirty (15) teachers and five (3) principals who are part of the population for this study but are not part of sample. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the reliability of this instrument.

The data was analysed by the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical test method at 0.05 level of significant. The hypotheses were correlated based on the responses from the respondents. The data was arranged in a tabular form to facilitate descriptive analysis and easy comprehension of the responses.

Results

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between principal favouritism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I.
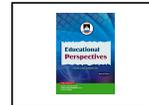
Table 1: Result of Relationship Between Principals' Favouritism Behaviour and Teachers' Organisationsal Commitment.

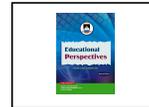|		Principals Favouritism Behaviour	Teachers Organisational Commitment
Principals Favouritism Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.629
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	244	20
Teachers Organisational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.629	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	20	20

The result of the test performed indicates that there exists a significant relationship between principals favouritism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in public senior secondary schools in Education District I of Lagos State ($r = 0.629$, $p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principal favouritism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between principal display of nepotism and cronyism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I.

Table 2: Result of Relationship Between Principals' Display of Nepotism and Cronyism Behaviour and Teachers' Organisationsal Commitment.

		Principal Nepotism and Cronyism Behaviour	Teachers Organisational Commitment
Principal Nepotism and Cronyism Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.891
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	244	20
Teachers Organisational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.891	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

The result of the test performed indicates that there exists a significant relationship between principals display of nepotism and cronyism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I of Lagos State ($r = 0.891$, $p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principal display of nepotism and cronyism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment in Education District I is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the first hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principal favouritism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment, findings reveals that principals favouritism behaviour significantly influence teachers organisational commitment, therefore the hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that principals' favouritism behaviour plays a vital role on how the teachers commit themselves to the organisation. This finding is supported by Dağli & Akyol (2019) which states that the more favouritism behaviours of school administrators are, the less organisational commitment of teachers are.

The second hypothesis revealed that there exists a significant relationship between principals display of nepotism and cronyism behaviour and teachers organisational commitment. This indicates that the level of nepotism and cronyism behaviour exhibit by the principals is a determinant of teachers' organisational commitment. This finding is in tandem with Okçu & According to Uçar (2016), teachers' organisational commitment may be lowered as a result of the integration sub-dimension by the cronyism and nepotism of school administrators. Stated differently, these actions by the administrators of the school would discourage the staff from going above and beyond in their work, reject the school's issues, have beliefs that are at odds with the school's, and refrain from making any kind of self-denial.

Conclusion

Principals' favouritism behaviour can have a significant impact on teachers' organisational commitment. When principals show favouritism towards certain teachers, it can create a negative work environment and lead to feelings of injustice and inequality among the staff. This can in turn decrease the overall organisational commitment of teachers, as they may feel less motivated to contribute to the school's goals and missions. It is important for school leaders to be aware of this issue and strive to create a fair and inclusive work environment to maintain high levels of organisational commitment among their teaching staff. Also the display of nepotism and cronyism by the principal, thereby favouring relatives and friends when making decisions, which is causing dissatisfaction among the teachers and impacting their dedication to the organisation. This behaviour may lead to a negative work environment, lack of trust, and reduced motivation among the staff. Addressing this issue is crucial for maintaining a healthy and productive work culture within the school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made to improve the level of teachers' knowledge management practices and quality education delivery in public senior secondary schools of Education District I in Lagos State.

1. To end favouritism attitudes and behaviours in schools, more stringent laws and penalties should be implemented.
2. To increase teachers' knowledge of favouritism attitudes and behaviors, in-service trainings and seminars should be planned to showcase the awareness of the evils of favouritism behaviours in the school organisations.
3. Education policy makers, especially in Lagos State, should enact laws that forbid favouritism in order to increase the efficiency and output of educational institutions.

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