

Article

# Principal–Teacher Relationships and Their Effects on Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Abuja

Kavwam Stanley Augustine<sup>1</sup>

1. Ph.D, Conflict Management and Intergroup Relations, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University of Lafia Nasarawa State Nigeria

**Abstract:** The quality of secondary education is significantly influenced by the leadership provided by principals and the professional commitment of teachers. This study investigates the relationship between principal–teacher relationships and the job performance of both principals and teachers in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. A correlational research design was employed, involving a sample of 156 respondents, including 36 principals and 120 teachers, selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled “Principal–Teacher Relationship and Job Performance Questionnaire (PTRJPQ),” and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed a strong positive relationship between principal–teacher interactions and job performance for both groups. Principals reported that communication, trust, collaboration, and participatory decision-making significantly enhance their administrative effectiveness, while teachers highlighted that supportive leadership, recognition, open communication, and inclusive practices improve instructional delivery, classroom management, and overall motivation. The study concludes that positive interpersonal dynamics between school leadership and teaching staff are critical for enhancing school performance, staff commitment, and educational outcomes. Recommendations include promoting open communication, participatory leadership, professional support for both principals and teachers, recognition of teacher efforts, and the cultivation of a collaborative school culture to sustain high performance.

**Keywords:** Principal–Teacher Relationship, Job Performance, Secondary Education, Leadership Effectiveness, Teacher Motivation

## 1. Introduction

The secondary school system plays a crucial role in preparing students for higher education and responsible citizenship. The effectiveness of this system largely depends on the quality of leadership provided by school principals and the professional commitment of teachers. Within the school organization, the relationship between principals and teachers is a significant factor that influences administrative efficiency, staff morale, instructional quality, and overall school performance (Akinnubi & Adeoye, 2024; Giami & Obiechina, 2019).

A cordial principal–teacher relationship promotes trust, mutual respect, collaboration, and open communication. Such an environment encourages teachers to perform their duties effectively, enhances job satisfaction, and fosters a culture of accountability (Akinnubi & Adeoye, 2024; Berhanu, 2025). Conversely, strained relationships characterized by poor communication, lack of support, authoritarian leadership, or limited participation in decision-making may negatively affect both principal and teacher job performance (Akinnubi & Adeoye, 2024; iResearchNG, 2025). Principal job performance is often measured through their ability to provide instructional leadership, manage resources efficiently, enforce discipline, and create a conducive

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learning environment. Teachers' job performance, on the other hand, involves effective lesson delivery, classroom management, timely assessment of students, and adherence to professional standards. The interdependence between principals and teachers suggests that the quality of their relationship can directly or indirectly influence how well each performs their responsibilities (Frontiers in Education, 2025).

In public secondary schools within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, increasing student enrolment, diverse staff backgrounds, and rising expectations for educational quality have made collaborative leadership more important than ever. Schools require strong professional relationships to address administrative demands, improve teaching standards, and maintain institutional effectiveness. Despite this need, variations in leadership approaches and interpersonal dynamics may affect how principals and teachers work together (Ogunode, Ojochnemi, & Ayoko, 2023).

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Effective school administration depends largely on the cooperation between principals and teachers. However, in many public secondary schools, concerns have been raised about the nature of interpersonal relationships within the school structure. Instances of poor communication, limited professional support, inadequate recognition, and leadership conflicts may weaken the bond between principals and teachers (Akinnubi & Adeoye, 2024).

When the relationship between principals and teachers is not supportive, it can adversely affect job performance. Teachers may become less committed to instructional responsibilities, while principals may struggle to effectively supervise academic activities and maintain organizational discipline (iResearchNG, 2025; Frontiers in Education, 2025). This situation can lead to reduced productivity, poor teaching quality, and challenges in achieving school objectives. Although principal leadership and teacher effectiveness have been widely discussed in educational research, there is insufficient empirical evidence focusing on how principal-teacher relationships relate to both principal and teacher job performance, particularly in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This gap makes it necessary to investigate whether a significant relationship exists among these variables. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the relationship between principal-teacher relationships, principal job performance, and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between principal-teacher relationships, principal job performance, and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Determine the relationship between principal-teacher relationships and principal job performance in public secondary schools.
2. Examine the relationship between principal-teacher relationships and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between principal-teacher relationships and principal job performance in public secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja?
2. What is the relationship between principal-teacher relationships and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja.

## 2. Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to determine the degree of relationship that exists between principal-teacher relationships, principal job performance, and teachers' job performance without manipulating any variables.

The population of the study will consist of principals and teachers in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A total sample of 156 respondents was used, comprising 36 principals and 120 teachers. The principals were selected using a purposive sampling technique due to their administrative roles, while teachers were selected through simple random sampling to ensure fair representation.

Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire titled "*Principal-Teacher Relationship and Job Performance Questionnaire (PTRJPQ)*." The instrument included sections measuring the quality of interpersonal relationships, principal job effectiveness, and teachers' job performance.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, experts in educational management and measurement review the questionnaire. A pilot study was also conducted to establish reliability using an appropriate reliability coefficient. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among the variables. The results was presented in correlation tables and interpreted accordingly.

## 3. Results

### Research Question One

**What is the relationship between principal-teacher relationship and principal job performance in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?**

**Table 1.** Principal-Teacher Relationship and Principal Job Performance  
(Sample Size = 36 Principals)

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Communication improves administrative effectiveness	18	12	4	2	3.28	Agree
2	Mutual respect enhances supervision	16	13	5	2	3.19	Agree
3	Teacher cooperation aids decision-making	17	11	6	2	3.19	Agree
4	Trust promotes conflict management	15	14	5	2	3.17	Agree
5	Collaborative planning improves performance	19	10	5	2	3.28	Agree
<b>Grand Mean = 3.22</b>							<b>Agree</b>

The results indicate that principals generally agree that a positive relationship with teachers enhances their job performance. High mean scores suggest that communication, trust, cooperation, and collaborative planning contribute significantly to administrative effectiveness. This implies that principals function more efficiently when strong professional relationships exist within the school system.

### Research Question Two

**What is the relationship between principal-teacher relationship and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?**

**Table 2.** Principal-Teacher Relationship and Teachers' Job Performance  
(Sample Size = 120 Teachers)

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Principal support improves lesson delivery	52	40	18	10	3.12	Agree
2	Open communication motivates teachers	48	46	16	10	3.10	Agree

3	Participation in decision-making enhances commitment	50	42	17	11	3.09	Agree
4	Recognition increases productivity	55	38	17	10	3.15	Agree
5	Positive environment improves classroom management	53	44	15	8	3.18	Agree
<b>Grand Mean = 3.13</b>							Agree

The findings show that teachers perceive strong principal–teacher relationships as essential to their job performance. Supportive leadership, recognition, and inclusive decision-making appear to motivate teachers, improve instructional delivery, and strengthen classroom management. This suggests that interpersonal leadership practices directly influence teacher effectiveness.

### Findings

The results indicate that principals generally agree that a positive relationship with teachers enhances their job performance. High mean scores suggest that communication, trust, cooperation, and collaborative planning contribute significantly to administrative effectiveness. This implies that principals function more efficiently when strong professional relationships exist within the school system. The findings also show that teachers perceive strong principal–teacher relationships as essential to their job performance. Supportive leadership, recognition, and inclusive decision-making appear to motivate teachers, improve instructional delivery, and strengthen classroom management. This suggests that interpersonal leadership practices directly influence teacher effectiveness.

## 4. Discussion

The analysis of data from both principals and teachers underscores the pivotal role of interpersonal relationships in shaping school performance. Principals indicated that effective communication with teachers fosters administrative efficiency, reduces conflicts, and enhances decision-making processes. For instance, the ability to engage teachers in planning and implementation of school policies ensures smoother execution of administrative tasks. This finding aligns with educational management literature that emphasizes collaborative leadership as a cornerstone of effective school administration. High mean scores on items related to trust and mutual respect suggest that when teachers feel valued, principals can more effectively enforce policies, supervise curriculum delivery, and coordinate school activities (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Similarly, teachers highlighted that principal support directly impacts their instructional effectiveness. Open communication, recognition of efforts, and participation in decision-making processes were all identified as factors that enhance lesson delivery, classroom management, and overall job satisfaction. This finding suggests that teacher motivation is closely linked to leadership practices that promote inclusivity and professional respect. Teachers' perception of a positive school environment indicates that relational leadership contributes not only to their performance but also to the broader educational climate, affecting student learning outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

The study's findings corroborate existing research conducted across Nigeria. For example, in Zamfara State, studies revealed that principals' skills in communication, coordination, and supervision significantly influenced teacher productivity (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Similarly, investigations in Anambra State demonstrated that principals' classroom observation and participatory leadership techniques positively affected teachers' instructional quality. These findings highlight a pattern across diverse educational settings: the quality of principal–teacher relationships consistently predicts performance outcomes (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2016).

Beyond Nigeria, international studies reinforce the critical link between leadership and teacher effectiveness. Research shows that pedagogical leadership, characterized by mentoring, feedback, and shared decision-making, predicts teacher commitment and

classroom performance. When principals foster environments of trust, collaboration, and recognition, teachers are more likely to engage in continuous professional improvement, adopt innovative instructional strategies, and maintain high standards of classroom management (Okeke & Egbo, 2016). The findings reveal that collaborative planning and joint problem-solving improve organizational cohesion. Schools where principals actively involve teachers in planning academic programs or administrative policies tend to experience fewer conflicts, higher morale, and stronger accountability mechanisms. This demonstrates that relational leadership not only benefits individual performance but also strengthens institutional effectiveness (Schannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

## 5. Conclusion

The study concludes that principal–teacher relationships are vital determinants of job performance for both administrators and teachers in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Positive interpersonal interactions, characterized by communication, trust, collaboration, and support, enhance administrative effectiveness, instructional quality, and teacher motivation. Schools that nurture such relationships are more likely to achieve higher productivity, staff satisfaction, and improved student outcomes.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Principals should maintain transparent communication channels to ensure clarity of expectations, reduce misunderstandings, and foster trust.
2. Teachers should be actively involved in decision-making processes to enhance ownership, commitment, and motivation.
3. Education authorities should implement leadership development programs focusing on relationship management, supervision skills, and conflict resolution.
4. Regular acknowledgment and constructive feedback for teachers' contributions can enhance morale and productivity.
5. Schools should institutionalize joint planning, problem-solving sessions, and team-building activities to cultivate a culture of cooperation and shared responsibility.

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