



Teachers perceived effective school management as correlate of their school connectedness in secondary schools in Anambra State

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between teachers' perceived effective school management and their connectedness in secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study, and three hypotheses were tested. The study employed a correlational survey design to determine teachers' perceived effective school management and their school connectedness. It was conducted in Anambra State, which has six education zones and a total of 267 public secondary schools with 5,677 teachers.

The sample of the study consisted of 320 teachers, selected from the population of 5,677. Two validated structured questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instruments, using Cronbach's Alpha, was found to be 0.74 for TQSC and 0.85 for TQESM, indicating high consistency of the items in the instruments. Aggregate scores, Pearson correlation statistics, and a t-test were used to analyze the data.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of teachers were connected to their schools. The findings also indicated that most teachers believed their school management was effective. Furthermore, the study revealed a very high positive relationship between teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommended, among other things, that teachers should not only make learning meaningful for students but also foster a positive classroom culture.

Keywords: Teachers Connectedness, Effective, School Management, School Connectedness.

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Introduction

A school is an educational institution designed to provide a structured environment where children and adolescents can learn academic subjects, develop social skills, and acquire values necessary for personal growth and societal participation. Schools play an important role in the development of children by promoting cognitive, emotional and social development through various educational programmes and extracurricular activities. Schools serve as a primary venue for children to interact with peers, helping them develop communication skills, teamwork, and empathy. A supportive school environment can enhance a child's self-esteem and resilience, providing a safe space to express themselves. The situation where students feel cared for the school environment is called school connectedness (Uzoehina & Okoye, 2020).

School connectedness is the degree to which students feel cared about by adults and peers in the school environment. It includes emotions of belonging, support, and participation in school activities. Hurd et al. (2018) defined school connectedness as students' sense of belonging and closeness to others at school. Research has demonstrated that high school connectedness is associated with increased academic achievement, better mental health, and less participation in dangerous behaviors among adolescents. School connectedness refers to students' perception that teachers and school administrators genuinely care about their academic progress and, more broadly, their overall well-being (Cumming et al., 2018). Studies have highlighted school connectedness as a critical element in reducing the likelihood of students engaging in behaviours that could jeopardise their health (Blum in Marsh, 2022). School connectedness encompasses the relationships students form with teachers and peers, their participation in school activities, their adaptation to school policies and procedures, and their sense of safety within the school environment (de Swart et al., 2022; van Loan & Garwood, 2020; Zolkoski, 2019). Furthermore, teachers' connectedness represents teachers' feelings of trust for each other, care for each other, respect for one another, and ability to discuss feelings, worries and frustrations with other teachers (Schnaidman, 2020). Teachers who report high level of connectedness according to Hurd et al. (2018) are likely to be punctual and regular to school, engage in team teaching with fellow staff, observe school rules and regulations, take part in decision-making, relate and communicate effectively, give awards to the best intelligent and well-behaved students and have a conducive teaching environment. On the other hand, teachers who report low level of connectedness are more likely to be truants, less likely to engage in team teaching, less likely to take part in decision-making, to relate and communicate effectively with students, fellow staff and the management, to have conducive teaching environment. Authors like Eziamaka (2014) who is one the pioneers of connectedness as a concept in secondary education noted that school connectedness could be influenced by effective school management.

School management refers to guiding a school towards development by effectively utilising human and material resources, physical assets, and essential principles to achieve the institution's objectives. Essentially, it is an ongoing process that encompasses all facets of the school, including policies, resources (both human and material), activities, and equipment,

integrating them to fulfil educational goals (Agogbua et al., 2021). Pekkolay (2021) stated that school management involves efficiently and effectively overseeing the operations of an institution. It includes planning, directing, controlling, and organising the school while making optimal use of available resources to achieve specific objectives. Thus, effective school management can be defined as the systematic process of organizing and directing the various components of an educational institution to achieve its goals efficiently and effectively. Pekkolay (2021) opined that an important aspect of effective school management is ensuring teachers are motivated. Expecting success from an unmotivated teacher is unrealistic. Organisational culture plays a key role in fostering this motivation. Research has shown a positive relationship between organisational culture and motivation. In schools, organisational culture includes rules, values, and beliefs. Aligning actions with the school's mission and vision strengthens its organisational culture (Kübra et al., 2019). However, it appears like teachers connectedness in their school seems to be poor.

Poor teacher connectedness in secondary schools within Anambra State significantly affects students' academic performance and overall well-being. Uba (2020) that the quality of teacher-student relationships is a critical factor in determining educational outcomes. Studies reveal that weak teacher-student relationships often lead to disruptive classroom behaviours, which hinder the learning process. Poor teacher connectedness is also linked to higher dropout rates. Students who do not feel valued or supported by their teachers are more likely to disengage from their education, leading to increased absenteeism and a greater likelihood of leaving school prematurely. Teachers are always held responsible whenever there is poor performance in students' results both internal and external examination (Ikegbusi&Eziamaka, 2016). Some teachers in Anambra state portray poor attitude of work and lack of commitment to duty (Onyekazi et al., 2021).

General observation of secondary school in Anambra state seem to indicate lack of good communication network, poor performance of student academically, low staff productivity, poor human relations among other staff, students and the management, which are indices of effective school management. This paper focused on whether level of connectedness to school by teachers has any relationship to effective school management in Anambra state. Therefore the problem of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers perceived effective school management and their connectedness in secondary school in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. How are teachers connected to their school in secondary school in Anambra State?
2. How effective do teachers perceive their school management in secondary school in Anambra State?
3. How related are the teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significance difference in the mean ranges of male and female teachers on the extent of their school connectedness.
2. There is no significance difference in the mean ranges of male and female teachers their perception of their effective school management.
3. The relationship existing between teachers' school connectedness and their perceive effective school management is not significance.

Methodology

The study was a correlational survey which determined teachers' perceived effective school management and their school connectedness. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The study area has six education zones and a total of 267 public secondary schools, and 5,677 teachers as provided for by the post primary Schools service commission (PPSSC), Awka. The sample of the study consisted 320 teachers which was chosen from a population of 5,677. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 4 zones and 8 secondary schools out of six Education zones in Anambra state. Thus, 32 schools were studied in the 4 selected zones. From each of the selected 32 schools, 10 teachers were randomly selected.

A questionnaire titled teachers' Questionnaire on school connectedness (TQSC) and teachers' Questionnaire on Effective School management (TQESM) served as the instrument for data collection. Each of the items was on a 4-point rating scale, divided into three parts: A, B and C. part A is concerned with personal background information about respondents. Part B consists of 15 items under teachers' school connectedness. The rating scales for part B are: very high (4 points), High (3 points), low (2 points) and very low (1 point). Part C was on teachers' Questionnaire on effective school management which consists of 15 items with response mode of effective (4 points), Effective (3 points), fairly Effective (2 points) and Not Effective (1 point). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the TQSC and TQESM were given to two experts in the department of Educational management and policy and an expert in measurement and Evaluation all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. After scrutinizing the instruments, the experts' useful suggestions were reflected in the final version of the instrument.

The reliability of the instrument using Cranach Alpha was found to be 0.74 for part B (TQSC) and 0.85 for part C (TQESM) which indicated high consistency of items of the instrument. The instrument was administered by hand with the help of two research assistants. In each zone and school visited, copies of the questionnaire were administered on the selected respondents, they were allowed to respond to the items before retrieving the filled questionnaire. These strategies were meant to explain any point the respondents may not understand very well. Eleven teachers did not complete their copies were used for data analysis. The aggregate scores were used to answer research question 1 and 2. For these research questions. The aggregate scores were calculated to measure teachers' level of connectedness to their schools, the scales are as follow:

1.00-1.45---15.00---22.35=very lowly connected
 1.50-2.49---22.50---37.35=lowly connected
 2.50-3.49---37.50---52.35=highly connected
 3.50-4.00---52.50---60.00=very highly connected

From the above, the minimum and maximum scores on teachers' school connectedness stood at 15 and 60 respectively, so that any teacher who scored below 37.50 was considered not considered connected to their school. Again, in measuring teachers' perceived effective school management, the following was used as a guide:

1.00—1.49---15.00---22.35=not effective
 1.50—2.49---22.50---37.35=fairly effective
 2.50—3.49---37.50---52.35=effective
 3.50—4.00---52.50---60.00=very effective

The shows that the minimum and maximum scores for measuring teachers' perceived school management stood at 15 and 60 respectively. Any teacher who score below 37.35 was considered to have perceived the school management as effective. Research question 3 was answered using the Pearson product moment correlation. In testing the hypotheses, z-test statistics was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2, while t-test of correlation was used to test hypothesis 3 at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

How are teachers connected to their school in secondary school in Anambra state?

Table 1: Range of score teachers' school connectedness

Range of score	N	Remarks
15.00---37.35	46	Not connected
37.50---60.00	263	connected
Total	309	

In table 1, it shows that with scores ranging from 15.00-37.35 showed that 46 teachers were not connected to the school while 263 teachers are connected to their schools.

Research Question Two

How effective do teachers perceive their school management in secondary school in Anambra state?

Range of score	N	Remarks
15-22.5	-	Not Effective
22.5-37.5	14	Fairly Effective
37.5-52.35	251	Effective
52.5	44	Very Effective
Total	309	

Data in Table 2 showed that scores ranged from 52.5 to 60, 44 teachers perceive their school management to be effective. Also with scores ranging from 37.50 to 52.35, 251 teachers perceived their school management to be effective. Furthermore, data showed that scores ranging from 22.5 to 37.35 indicated that 14 teachers perceived their school management to be fairly effective.

Research Question Three

How related are the teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management in Anambra state?

Table 3: Pearson r on the teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management

Source of variation	school connectedness	Effective school management
School connectedness	1.00	0.75
Effective school management	0.75	1.00
N	32	

In table 3, the result shows that there is a high positive relationship of 0.75 existing between the teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management.

Hypothesis One

There is no significance difference in the mean ranges of male and female teachers on the externt of their school connectedness.

Table 4: z-test on the mean scores of male and female teachers on school connectedness

Source of variation	N	X	SD	df	Cal. Z	Crit Z	P>0.05
Male	110	43.64	7.31	307	1.67	1.96	NS
Female	199	45.02	6.74				

In table 4, it was indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and 307 degree of freedom, the cal. z value of 1.67 is less then crit. z value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicates that male and female teachers do no differ significantly in their school connectedness.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significance difference in the mean ranges of male and female teachers on their perception of effective school management.

Table 5: z-test on the mean scores of male and female teachers' perception of effective school management

Source of variation	N	X	SD	df	Cal. Z	Crit Z	P>0.05
Male	110	47.73	5.85	307	1.87	1.96	NS
Female	199	46.64	4.29				

In table 5, it was indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and 307 degree of freedom, the cal. z value of 1.87 is less than crit. z value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicates that no significance difference in the mean ranges of male and female teachers on the extent of their perceived effective school management.

Hypothesis Three

The relationship existing between teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management is not significant.

Table 6: t-test of correlation on teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management

N	r	df	cal.t	crit.t	p>
32	0.75	30	6.21	2.04	S

Information in Table 6 revealed that at 0.05 level of significance and 30 degree of freedom, the cal.t value of 6.21 is greater than the crit.t value of 2.04. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the high positive relationship existing between teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management is significant.

Discussion

Finding of the study revealed that majority of the teachers studied in Anambra state secondary school were connected to their school. These findings show that school connectedness is not a geographical location seemed not to influence school connectedness. The findings were in disagreement with that of Marsh (2022) who found that many teachers were not connected to their schools. In the case of perceived effective school management, the result in table 2 showed that 14 teachers perceived their school management to be fairly effective, 251 teachers perceived their school management as effective, while 44 teachers perceived their school management as very effective. This demonstrates that a greater number of teachers (251) perceived their school as effective. These findings were in agreement with that of Hurd et al. (2018) who found that a few respondents perceived their school management as very effective since the principal tended to lack the identified attributes of effective school management. The difference in the findings might be attributed to the focus of the studies. The current study tried to perceive school management effectiveness as a correlate of school connectedness, while the former ascertained the attributes of school management and linking them with effective school management. The

difference could also be attributed to the population of the studies. Zolkoski (2019) used school heads as respondents while the current study studies teachers.

Finally, the study indicated that there was very high positive relationship of 0.75 existing between school connectedness of teachers and their perceived effective school management. In table 6, the calculated t-value of 6.21 is greater than the critical t-value of 2.04, this led to the rejection of the null hypothesis 3. The inference is that the high positive relationship existing between teachers' school connectedness and their perceived effective school management is significant. In agreement with the findings, Schnaidman (2020) found that there is a very high relationship between school connectedness and school management and that the quality of relationship in this regard was positively associated with teachers' commitment to duty, use of team teaching and relating and communicating cordially with both students and the manager. This is in line with Pekkola (2021) who revealed that the more connected teachers feel to their school managers and the more likely they perceive the school management, the more likely they were to be more committed to duty and adhere to classroom rules and norms.

Conclusion

The study investigated teachers' perceived effective school management and their school connectedness. It was concluded that managers have a very crucial role to play in secondary school if school connectedness is to be enhanced. From the findings, it was discovered that majority of teachers were connected to their schools. Teachers also perceived the management of their schools to be very effective. Again, it was discovered that there was a very high relationship between teachers' connectedness and their perceived effective school management. The realization from the above discussion is that school manager should encourage and enhance school connectedness through effective school management so that the goals and objectives of education will be high achieved.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should not only make learning meaningful to students but also provide good classroom culture. This will go a long way to imbibe into the students the spirit of dedication to studies and learning and be more creative, thereby achieving the aims and objective of education.
2. School managers should not only be effective but also ensure high academic standards coupled with strong teacher support, this will help to ensure that maximal performance is achieved in schools.
3. School managers should always practice indices of effective school management like good communication network, conducive environment for teaching and learning, good human relations, among others. This will go a long way to enhance teachers and school connectedness.
4. Managers (principal) should not only encourage their teachers to use a wide variety of instruction methods and techniques but also ensure that teachers provide opportunities where students will participate. This will go a long way to make sure that quality assurance in education is achieved, thereby making a proof that there is a high teacher and school connectedness.

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