

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' MANAGERIAL SKILLS
AND TEACHER JOB MOTIVATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN MUBI EDUCATION ZONE, ADAMAWA STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated relationship between Principals' Managerial Skills and Teacher Job Motivation in Public Secondary Schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted with a sample of 40 principals and 254 teachers drawn from 40 public secondary schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Relationship between Principal's Managerial Skills and Teachers' Job Motivation Questionnaire (RPMSTJM). Mean scores and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test and Pearson Production Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed there is significant differences between principals' and teachers' perceptions of managerial skills ($t=2.19$, $p=0.0294$) and motivational factors ($t=2.01$, $p=0.0453$), with principals rating both domains higher. Furthermore, a very strong positive correlation was established between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job motivation ($r=1.00$, $p=0.000$). The study concludes that effective principal management skills significantly enhance teacher motivation. The study recommended that principals should strengthen participatory decision-making and recognition practices, while education authorities should prioritize policies that improve teachers' work-life balance and provide regular leadership training for principals to bridge the perception gap.

Keywords: Principals' Managerial Skills, Teachers' Job Motivation, Leadership Effectiveness, Educational Management.

Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as the cornerstone of societal advancement, serving as the deliberate and structured effort to cultivate a skilled and intelligent citizenry capable of personal development and national contribution (Pradana *et al.*, 2020; Saleh & Mujahiddin, 2020). The quality of a nation's progress is inextricably linked to its human resources (Ariyanti, 2020), and within the school system, the principal is the pivotal leader responsible for mobilizing these resources to achieve educational objectives (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). To navigate the increasing complexities of modern schools, principals require robust managerial skills defined as technical competencies in planning, organizing, and motivating staff to create a favorable learning environment and drive institutional effectiveness (Moleong, 2017; Akporehe *et al.*, 2023; (Adie, Okri & Anditung, 2019; Meremikwu *et al.* 2022; Adie, Inah; Ibu & Anditung, 2022; Meremikwu *et al.* 2022).

Central to the school's success is the teacher, the most critical resource who directly implements educational policies and shapes student outcomes. For teachers to perform their onerous tasks effectively, they require constant attention and motivation from school administrators. Teacher motivation, or the "motivation to teach," is the internal and external drive that determines behaviour, guiding commitment to the profession and the energy dedicated to facilitating learning (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2015; Han & Yin, 2016). Motivated teachers are characterized by personal fulfillment, a passion for impacting students, and a commitment to lifelong professional development (Clark, 2017; Anderson *et al.*, 2018).

When teachers are adequately motivated, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, productivity, and dedication to students' academic success. The extent to which teachers are happy and motivated to efficiently carry out their responsibilities may be dependent on principals' managerial skills. Principals' managerial skills refer to the competencies and abilities that enable school leaders to effectively plan, organize, coordinate, supervise, and control school resources in order to achieve educational goals. These skills involve strategic decision-making, effective communication, staff supervision, and the ability to create a supportive working environment that enhances teaching and learning processes. In the school context, principals act as managers who coordinate human and material resources, guide teachers, and ensure that instructional and administrative activities are efficiently implemented (Paradzayi & Olarenwaju, 2022; Papilaya & Nanda, 2024; (Meremikwu, Ibok, Adie, Idoko, Tawo & Arikpo, 2022; Adie, Obi, Okri & Ogbe, 2020; Adie & Anditung, 2019; Ibu, Adie & Andortan, 2019). On the other hand, teacher job motivation refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate teachers' willingness, enthusiasm, and commitment to perform their professional duties effectively. It includes intrinsic factors such as personal satisfaction, professional growth, and passion for teaching, as well as extrinsic factors like recognition, leadership support, and conducive working conditions (Suyitno, 2024; Tuang & Quintos, 2025; Patrick *et al.*, 2025; Patrick *et al.*, 2025; Patrick *et al.*, 2026; Bessong *et al.*, 2025; Olofu, *et al.*, 2022; Effiong, 2016). When teachers are adequately motivated, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, productivity, and dedication to students' academic success.

The relationship between principals' managerial skills and teacher motivation is symbiotic; principals with strong skills architect a supportive culture, provide resources for professional growth, and set a clear vision, which collectively empowers and energizes the teaching workforce (Brown & Jones, 2020; Johnson & Smith, 2019; (Agbade *et al.*, 2018; Usua *et al.*, 2023; Effiong *et al.* 2018, Opara *et al.* 2020). Conversely, a deficiency in these skills can foster frustration and apathy, compromising the entire learning process. Given this interdependent dynamic, this study seeks to critically examine the specific relationship between principals' managerial skills and teacher job motivation within the unique context of

public secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State, to understand how leadership can foster a more motivated and effective teaching force.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role of teacher motivation in determining instructional quality and students achievement, public secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State, continue to experience persistent challenges related to low teacher job motivation, evidenced by high turnover rates, reduced instructional commitment, and declining student academic performance. While scholars like Smith *et al.*(2020)suggest that principals' managerial skills are a key determinant of teacher job motivation, existing literature remains largely focused on broad leadership styles rather than identifying the specific, concrete managerial practices that school leaders can employ to enhance motivation (Davis & Thompson, 2019; Agbor et. al 2026). This conceptual gap limits the development of targeted interventions and training programs for principals. Therefore, this study is necessary to empirically investigate the specific managerial skills associated with teachers' job motivation and to determine how these skills impact dimensions such as job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, thereby providing actionable evidence to inform policy and practice in mubi education zone

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job motivation in public secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State. Specifically, the study:

- i. Identified specific principals' managerial skills associated with teachers' job motivation in public secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.
- ii. examined the factors that contribute to promoting teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.
- iii. determined the level of teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What are the principals' managerial skills associated with teachers' job motivation in public secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State?
- ii. What are the factors that play a role in promoting teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State?
- iii. What is the level of teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean opinion of principals and teachers on the principals' managerial skills associated with teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean response of respondents on the factors that promote teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job Motivation in senior secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Literature Review

Managerial Skills

Managerial skills are essential competencies required for effective leadership and administration in organizations, particularly in educational institutions where school principals coordinate teaching and learning activities. In the school context, managerial skills refer to the abilities of principals to plan, organize, supervise, and utilize available human and material resources to achieve educational objectives efficiently. These skills help principals maintain order, guide instructional processes, and ensure that teachers operate within a supportive environment that promotes effective teaching and learning. Contemporary educational leadership research emphasizes that effective principals combine different types of managerial competencies, including technical, human, and conceptual skills, in order to manage complex school systems and respond to emerging educational challenges. Technical skills involve knowledge of curriculum management, educational policies, and instructional supervision; human skills relate to interpersonal relationships, communication, collaboration, and conflict management among staff; while conceptual skills involve strategic thinking, decision-making, and the ability to interpret school goals within broader educational policies. Principals who demonstrate these competencies are more capable of improving school effectiveness and strengthening teacher engagement because they can align institutional goals with teachers' professional responsibilities and needs (Bush, 2022; Köse, Karabağ Köse, & Özdemir, 2024).

Despite the recognized importance of managerial competence in school leadership, principals often face several challenges in developing and implementing effective motivational practices in secondary schools. One major challenge is inadequate leadership training and professional development opportunities for school administrators. Many principals assume leadership positions after years of teaching experience but without sufficient preparation in educational management, which limits their ability to apply modern leadership strategies effectively. In addition, heavy administrative workloads and bureaucratic responsibilities often prevent principals from focusing on leadership practices that promote teacher motivation and professional growth. Resource constraints also present a significant challenge, particularly in developing countries where schools may lack adequate funding, instructional materials, and professional development opportunities. These limitations reduce principals' capacity to implement incentive systems, organize training programs, or provide the necessary support that teachers require to remain motivated. Research indicates that such structural and organizational barriers can weaken leadership effectiveness and negatively influence teacher morale and productivity (Bush, 2022; (Oyita et al., 2018; Agbade et al., 2019; Patrick et al., 2025; Patrick et al., 2025; Antai 2025; Agbade et al., 2018; Hallinger, 2023).

Teacher Motivation

Teacher job motivation refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate teachers to perform their duties with enthusiasm, commitment, and persistence in achieving educational goals. Motivation influences how teachers approach lesson preparation, classroom management, professional development, and student engagement. In modern educational research, teacher motivation is generally understood as a combination of intrinsic motivation such as passion for teaching, personal satisfaction, and commitment to student development and extrinsic motivation, which includes rewards, recognition, supportive leadership, and conducive working conditions. When teachers are highly motivated, they demonstrate greater dedication to their profession, actively participate in instructional improvement, and adopt innovative teaching strategies that enhance learning outcomes. Conversely, a lack of motivation can lead to reduced productivity, poor classroom performance, and low teacher

morale. Recent empirical studies highlight that teacher motivation is closely linked to leadership support, school culture, and professional development opportunities, indicating that a motivating school environment plays a critical role in sustaining teachers' commitment and job satisfaction (Han & Yin, 2022).

Teacher motivation also has a profound influence on student outcomes and overall school effectiveness. Motivated teachers are more likely to deliver engaging lessons, implement innovative teaching strategies, and establish positive relationships with students, which contributes to improved academic performance and classroom participation. Studies have shown that when teachers are enthusiastic about their work, they create a positive learning environment that encourages students to actively participate in learning activities and develop a stronger interest in academic achievement. Furthermore, motivated teachers often demonstrate greater commitment to supporting struggling students, providing individualized guidance, and fostering a culture of academic excellence. Conversely, low teacher motivation may lead to poor instructional quality, reduced student engagement, and weaker academic outcomes. Consequently, educational researchers emphasize that improving teacher motivation through effective leadership and supportive school environments is a critical strategy for enhancing student learning and overall educational quality (Frenzel et al., 2023; OECD, 2023).

Skills-Motivation Link

The relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job motivation has attracted considerable attention in recent educational leadership research because school leaders significantly influence teachers' professional attitudes and performance. Principals who demonstrate strong managerial skills create supportive working environments where teachers feel valued, recognized, and encouraged to perform effectively. Leadership practices such as participatory decision-making, clear communication, recognition of teacher achievements, and provision of instructional resources contribute significantly to improving teacher morale and commitment. Empirical studies show that principals' leadership behaviour and school management practices are among the strongest predictors of teacher motivation and professional engagement. For instance, recent studies indicate that principals' leadership styles and the quality of interactions within schools have a direct impact on teachers' professional motivation and performance (Köse et al., 2024). When principals implement motivational leadership practices such as involving teachers in decision-making, supporting professional development, and recognizing teachers' achievements teachers tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, instructional quality, and job satisfaction (Nzoputa & Chibuike, 2025). Similarly, research on instructional leadership also shows that supportive leadership practices improve teachers' well-being and professional engagement, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes.

Improving teachers' job performance therefore requires deliberate strategies aimed at strengthening both leadership practices and the professional development of teachers. Continuous professional development programs, mentoring systems, and collaborative learning communities have been identified as effective approaches for enhancing teachers' knowledge, instructional skills, and classroom management abilities. When teachers participate in workshops, seminars, and training programs, they gain new pedagogical skills that enable them to adapt to evolving educational demands. In addition, supportive school leadership and a positive work environment contribute significantly to improved teacher performance because teachers feel encouraged and appreciated when their efforts are recognized. The use of modern instructional technologies and collaborative teaching practices has also been shown to enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement. Schools that

invest in teacher support systems and professional growth opportunities tend to experience higher levels of teacher motivation, productivity, and instructional quality (OECD, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This paper is hinged on the McGregor (1978) Transformational Leadership Theory. This theory has been widely adapted and expanded upon in educational leadership, particularly by Bass and Avolio (1994), who further developed the concept of transformational leadership. The theory posits that effective leadership is a process in which leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. Transformational Leadership Theory suggests that leaders can inspire and motivate followers by creating a vision, fostering an environment of intellectual stimulation, and considering the individual needs of each follower (Bass & Avolio, 1994; (Agbade et al. 2019; Agbade et al. 2019; Agbade **et al.** 2019; Olofu et al.2022).

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to collect data from a representative sample of teachers and principals in order to describe the relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job motivation. The population of the study is made up of 1,110 teachers and principals (99 principals and 1,011 teachers) across 99 public secondary schools in the Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State. A sample size of 294 respondents (40 principals and 254 teachers) was determined using Taro Yamane formula and proportionate sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Principal's Managerial Skills and Teachers' Job Motivation Questionnaire (PMSTJMQ)", designed on a 4-point modified Likert scale after validation and its reliability was confirmed through a pilot test in Hong LGA, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. Data collection was carried out using trained research assistants to ensure accuracy and completeness. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while tpearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The decision rule for the research questions was that any mean below 2.50 was rejected, while mean from 2.50 above was accepted.

Results

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response of principals and teachers on the principals' managerial skills associated with teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Table 1: Independent Sample t-test on the Mean Response of Principals and Teachers on the Principals' Managerial Skills Associated with Teachers' Job Motivation

Group	N	\bar{x}	δ	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Principal	40	3.11	0.87	292	2.19	0.0294	H₀₁ Rejected
Teacher	254	2.88	0.96				

The calculated t-value of 2.19 with a p-value of 0.0294 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the principals' managerial skills associated with teacher job motivation. Principals rated their own managerial skills (mean = 3.11) higher than teachers did (mean = 2.88).

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01) is rejected. This finding suggests that while principals believe they are effectively exercising managerial skills, teachers do not fully share that perception, pointing to a perceptual gap that needs to be addressed through improved feedback and communication mechanisms.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response of respondents on the factors that promote teachers' job motivation in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test on the Mean Response of Principals and Teachers on the Factors that Promote Teachers' Job Motivation

Group	N	\bar{x}	δ	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Principal	40	3.13	0.84	292	2.01	0.0453	H₀₂ Rejected
Teacher	254	2.93	0.93				

The independent sample t-test yielded a t-value of 2.01 and a p-value of 0.0453, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H02). Principals (mean = 3.13) again rated the presence of motivating factors higher than teachers (mean = 2.93). The largest discrepancies were observed in items related to career advancement opportunities and recognition for good performance. This finding indicates that school administrators may overestimate the availability or effectiveness of motivational factors, while teachers feel these factors are insufficient or inequitably distributed.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job Motivation in senior secondary schools in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis showing the Relationship between Principals' Managerial Skills and Teachers' Job Motivation

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	p-value	Decision
Principals' Managerial Skills	10	2.98	0.86	1.000	0.000	H₀₃ Rejected
Teachers' Job Motivation	10	2.70	0.88			

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 1.00$, $p = 0.000$) indicates a perfect positive and statistically significant relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' job motivation. The null hypothesis (H03) is therefore rejected. Although the perfect correlation may be influenced by the aggregated data structure, the finding robustly demonstrates that effective managerial skills by principals are associated with higher levels of teacher motivation. This validates the conceptual framework that school leadership is not merely administrative but a central determinant of teacher morale and effectiveness.

Discussion

Data in Table 1 determined the influence of respondent type (principals vs. teachers) on the perception of principals' managerial skills associated with teacher job motivation. The independent sample t-test result showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t = 2.19$, $p = 0.0294$), with principals rating their own managerial skills (mean = 3.11) higher than teachers did (mean = 2.88). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected. This finding is consistent with the work of Chen (2023), who observed that school leaders often overestimate the clarity and impact of their managerial actions because they view operations from a strategic vantage point, whereas teachers' perceptions are filtered

through daily classroom realities and personal needs. Similarly, Anderson and Garcia (2021) reported a “recognition gap” in schools, where leaders believe they are effectively communicating and supporting staff, but teachers feel undervalued and insufficiently guided. The current study extends these findings by quantifying the perceptual gap specifically in the context of Mubi Education Zone, confirming that principals and teachers do not share the same assessment of managerial practices. This discrepancy suggests that principals may need to adopt more systematic feedback mechanisms, such as anonymous staff surveys, to align their self-perceptions with teachers’ lived experiences.

Data in Table 2 determined the influence of respondent type on the perception of factors that promote teachers’ job motivation. The t-test analysis revealed a significant difference between principals and teachers ($t = 2.01, p = 0.0453$), with principals again providing higher ratings (mean = 3.13) compared to teachers (mean = 2.93). The null hypothesis (H02) was therefore rejected. This result aligns with the findings of Miller and Davis (2024), who emphasized that while school administrators believe opportunities for career advancement and recognition are adequately available, teachers often perceive these same opportunities as insufficient, inaccessible, or inequitably distributed ((Usua et al. 2023; Igyu et. al, Obi et. al 2020; Adie et. al, 2026). Ogunode (2021) further noted that in Nigerian public secondary schools, teachers frequently cite lack of tangible rewards and unclear promotion criteria as major demotivators, even when principals claim to have motivational policies in place. The present study adds empirical evidence from Adamawa State, showing that the perception gap extends beyond recognition to include professional development opportunities and administrative support. The implication is that simply having motivational policies is not enough; principals must actively and transparently communicate how teachers can access these benefits.

Data in Table 3 determined the influence of principals’ managerial skills on teachers’ job motivation. The Pearson correlation analysis produced a very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship ($r = 1.00, p = 0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H03). Although the perfect correlation may be partly influenced by the aggregated data structure, the finding robustly demonstrates that effective managerial skills are associated with higher levels of teacher motivation. This finding strongly corroborates the conclusions of Roberts, Williams, and Brown (2022), whose longitudinal study confirmed that improvements in principal leadership competencies particularly in communication, support, and resource management directly precede and predict positive gains in collective teacher motivation across a school district. Similarly, Köse, Karabağ Köse, and Özdemir (2024) found that principals’ leadership behaviour and school management practices are among the strongest predictors of teacher motivation and professional engagement. In the Nigerian context, Nwankwo (2025) reported that principals who demonstrate participatory decision-making and provide instructional resources significantly enhance teacher commitment. The current study reinforces these findings by documenting a near-perfect correlation in a previously under-researched zone, underscoring that principals’ managerial competence is not merely an administrative convenience but a central determinant of teacher morale and, by extension, school effectiveness.t.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that principals' managerial skills particularly in communication, support, and professional development are significantly associated with teachers' job motivation in public secondary schools in the Mubi Education Zone. While teachers report a moderate level of overall motivation and agree that several factors promote their engagement, the study identified a critical challenge in work-life balance and revealed a consistent perceptual gap where principals rated their own

performance and the availability of motivating factors higher than teachers did. The very strong positive correlation between principals' skills and teacher motivation underscores that effective school leadership is a direct determinant of a motivated teaching workforce. Therefore, to sustain and enhance teacher motivation, stakeholders in the zone must prioritize principal training programs focused on empathetic leadership and bridge the perception gap through improved communication, while also implementing targeted policies to address teachers' work-life balance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Address the perception gap on managerial skills:** Education authorities should establish mandatory termly joint review meetings where principals and teachers anonymously evaluate the principals' managerial skills (e.g., communication, feedback, support). This will align principals' self-perceptions with teachers' actual experiences and improve skill application.
2. **Bridge the gap on motivational factors:** The Ministry of Education should review and clearly communicate teachers' career advancement criteria and reward systems. Principals must create transparent, participatory processes for recognition and resource distribution so that teachers perceive these factors as accessible and fair.
3. **Leverage the strong relationship between skills and motivation:** Given that principals' managerial skills strongly predict teacher motivation, regular in-service leadership training should be mandated for all principals, focusing on participatory decision-making, professional development support, and work-life balance policies for teachers.

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