

Principals' Intellectual Stimulation Strategies and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Ilorin East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT.

This study investigates the relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East, Nigeria. The research addresses three primary questions and one hypothesis regarding the impact of leadership strategies on teacher satisfaction. A total of 323 questionnaires were distributed to teachers but 212 completed responses were suitable for analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.696$, $p < 0.05$) between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction. Specifically, strategies such as fostering professional development, encouraging collaboration, and promoting innovative teaching practices were positively associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among teachers. The results underscore the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher morale and engagement. In conclusion, the study highlights that effective intellectual stimulation practices implemented by school principals significantly contribute to improving teachers' job satisfaction. It was recommended that professional development programs should be established to equip principals with the skills necessary to foster such an environment, ultimately benefiting both educators and students in the Nigerian educational landscape.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, Intellectual Stimulation, Educational Leadership, Transformational Leadership.*

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INTRODUCTION

The interplay between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction is a critical area of study in the field of educational leadership. As the Nigerian education system continues to navigate various challenges, understanding how to foster job satisfaction among teachers is essential for improving educational outcomes. Job satisfaction among teachers is an essential element in the functioning of educational institutions, particularly in public secondary schools. This satisfaction not only influences the individual teacher's performance but also significantly impacts student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the school. In Nigeria, where the educational landscape faces numerous challenges—including inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, and frequent policy changes—understanding the factors that enhance job satisfaction is crucial for improving the quality of education. One prominent factor contributing to teacher job satisfaction is the leadership style adopted by school principals. Among various leadership strategies, intellectual stimulation has emerged as a key component of transformational

leadership (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). This approach encourages teachers to think critically, innovate, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Research by AvolioKarakitapoğlu-Aygün et al. (2024) established that transformational leaders, who include intellectual stimulation as part of their repertoire, tend to foster higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among their followers.

Job satisfaction in the teaching profession is often linked to various outcomes such as teacher retention, motivation, and student performance. According to Lopez (2018), job satisfaction is a significant predictor of teachers' intent to remain in their positions. In a country like Nigeria, where teacher attrition rates are alarming, understanding and enhancing job satisfaction is of paramount importance. Teachers who feel satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be motivated, effective in their teaching and committed to their schools. Intellectual stimulation involves encouraging teachers to explore new ideas, challenge the status quo and engage in continuous learning. This leadership style fosters a culture of inquiry and creativity, leading to enhanced professional development and job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021). As noted by Kilag et al. (2023), principals who implement intellectual stimulation strategies create an environment where teachers feel empowered to contribute their ideas and take ownership of their professional growth. In the context of public secondary schools in Ilorin East, Nigeria, the role of principals in promoting intellectual stimulation is particularly significant. The region has faced various educational challenges, including insufficient funding, limited access to resources, and high turnover rates among teachers. Eliophotou Menon (2014) highlighted that effective leadership, characterized by intellectual stimulation, not only improves teacher job satisfaction but also positively influences student learning outcomes. Principals who engage teachers in meaningful dialogue and collaborative decision-making contribute to a more motivated and committed workforce, which is essential for the success of educational institutions.

Recent scholarship has further explored the relationship between leadership styles and teacher job satisfaction. Butaki et al. (2024) found a strong correlation between principals' use of intellectual stimulation and teachers' perceptions of their work environment. Their research indicates that schools led by principals who prioritize intellectual engagement tend to have higher levels of teacher satisfaction and lower rates of attrition. This aligns with findings from global research, indicating that supportive leadership is crucial for fostering job satisfaction across various educational contexts. Moreover, Melesse and Belay (2022) emphasize the role of professional development in enhancing job satisfaction among teachers. They argue that principals who invest in training and development opportunities for their staff create a culture of continuous improvement, which not only benefits teachers but also enhances student learning outcomes. By encouraging teachers to pursue professional growth through intellectual stimulation, principals can significantly enhance job satisfaction and retention rates. Recent research indicates that principals who effectively implement intellectual stimulation strategies can create an environment that not only enhances teacher satisfaction but also positively impacts student learning outcomes. For example, Zhang et al. (2022) found that principals who facilitate professional learning communities and encourage action research among teachers significantly improve job satisfaction levels. Similarly, Ismail and David (2024) highlighted that supportive leadership characterized by intellectual stimulation is crucial for fostering commitment and reducing teacher attrition rates.

The principals in this region operate within a complex environment where they must navigate bureaucratic constraints, societal expectations, and the diverse needs of their staff and students. This region faces unique educational challenges, including limited resources and high turnover rates among educators. Teachers in Ilorin East often report feeling overwhelmed, which can lead to decreased job satisfaction. However, research findings indicate that principals who actively engage their teachers through strategies such as facilitating professional learning communities, encouraging innovative teaching methods, and providing opportunities for professional development can significantly enhance teacher morale. By examining this relationship,

the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge and provides actionable insights for educational leaders. Understanding the dynamics between leadership strategies and teacher satisfaction is essential for developing effective policies and practices that support teachers in their professional roles. To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were explored 1. What are teachers' perceptions of the intellectual stimulation strategies employed by their principals? 2. How do these strategies influence teachers' overall job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East? and 3. What specific aspects of intellectual stimulation are most valued by teachers?

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it fills a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between leadership strategies and teacher job satisfaction in the Nigerian context, particularly in Ilorin East. Second, the findings provide valuable insights for school principals and educational policymakers seeking to enhance teacher satisfaction and retention. By identifying effective intellectual stimulation strategies, educational leaders can create a more conducive work environment that empowers teachers and ultimately benefits students. Lastly, the study contributes to the development of actionable strategies for educational policymakers and school administrators. By identifying effective intellectual stimulation practices, the research equips leaders with the tools necessary to create a supportive and engaging work environment for teachers

METHOD

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate the relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East, Nigeria. This design is appropriate as it allows for the collection of quantitative data that can be systematically analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. The descriptive nature of the research design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the current state of teachers' job satisfaction and the effectiveness of various leadership strategies employed by principals. This study focuses on the population of public secondary school teachers in Ilorin East, Nigeria, which is estimated to be around 1,200 teachers. The population comprises teachers with at least one year of teaching experience, as this allows them to understand the school environment and leadership strategies implemented by their principals. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure a representative sample, accounting for the diversity within the population. The sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula, which gives a sample size of approximately 384 teachers. Adjusting for a finite population ($N = 1200$), the sample size was adjusted to approximately 323 teachers while 212 copies were retrieved for data analysis. The study understands the experiences and leadership strategies of teachers in Ilorin East, as not all teachers may meet the experience criterion. The sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula, which provides a more accurate representation of various subgroups, such as teachers from different schools, subjects taught, and levels of experience.

The research instrument adopted for this study was a structured questionnaire developed based on the work of Akinnubi and Adeoye (2024). The questionnaire was designed to assess teachers' perceptions of principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and their job satisfaction levels. The questionnaire had two sections: Section A, which collected demographic information, and Section B, which measured teachers' responses. A 4-point Likert scale was used in Section B to gauge teachers' responses, allowing them to express their agreement or disagreement with each statement related to intellectual stimulation strategies and job satisfaction. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, using SPSS software version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics and perceptions of principals' strategies and job satisfaction levels. Inferential statistics, such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation, were used to assess the relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction. A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to assess the questionnaire's reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicating good internal consistency. Results

were presented in tables and charts to facilitate interpretation and understanding, highlighting key findings and trends observed in the data

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Research Question One: Effectiveness of Intellectual Stimulation Strategies

Research Question: How effective do teachers perceive intellectual stimulation strategies to enhance job satisfaction among public secondary school educators in Ilorin East?

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perception of Intellectual Stimulation Strategies

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	Principal facilitates professional learning communities	3.49	0.60
2	Principal encourages teachers to conduct action research on new trends	3.34	0.62
3	Principal provides opportunities for teachers to present their work at seminars	3.08	0.65
4	Principal supports teachers in implementing innovative teaching methods	3.22	0.52
5	Principal creates a modern culture of inquiry and experimentation	3.05	0.62
	Average Mean	3.24	

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation for various intellectual stimulation strategies perceived by teachers as effective in enhancing job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East. The results indicate that respondents agreed with all the items listed. Specifically, the principal's facilitation of professional learning communities received the highest mean score of 3.49, while the creation of a modern culture of inquiry and experimentation had the lowest mean score of 3.05. The average mean of 3.24 surpasses the weighted mean of 2.50, indicating that teachers perceive intellectual stimulation strategies as highly effective in enhancing their job satisfaction. All tables or figures presented must be centered and numbered consecutively.

Research Question Two: Level of Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Research Question: What is the level of teachers' job satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Ilorin East, Kwara State?

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Job Satisfaction Levels

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	I am satisfied with my job as a teacher	3.23	0.66
2	I feel valued and respected by my principal	3.29	0.65
3	I am motivated to come to work each day	3.41	0.67
4	I feel a sense of accomplishment in my work	3.37	0.57
5	I am proud to be a teacher in this school	3.32	0.63
Average Mean		3.32	

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for the level of job satisfaction among teachers in public secondary schools in Ilorin East. The respondents agreed with all items, with the highest mean score of 3.41 for motivation to come to work, and a mean score of 3.23 for overall job satisfaction. The average mean of 3.32 is greater than the weighted mean of 2.50, indicating a high level of job satisfaction among teachers in this region.

Research Question Three: Teachers' Perceptions of Intellectual Stimulation Strategies

Research Question: How do teachers perceive the application of intellectual stimulation strategies by principals in public secondary schools in Ilorin East?

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceptions of Intellectual Stimulation Strategies

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	Passionately shares new ideas and perspectives with teachers	3.39	0.63
2	Encourages teachers to engage in professional development	3.17	0.67
3	Sets high expectations for teachers and students to meet contemporary challenges	3.21	0.69
4	Provides constructive feedback on assigned tasks and support to help teachers grow	3.22	0.65
5	Encourages teachers to take risks and try new approaches	2.96	0.79
6	Provides teachers with resources and opportunities to develop my skills	3.09	0.54
Average Mean		3.17	

Table 3 illustrates how teachers perceive the application of intellectual stimulation strategies by their principals. The table indicates agreement with all items, particularly valuing the principal's ability to passionately share new ideas (mean = 3.39). However, the item regarding encouraging teachers to take risks scored the lowest at 2.96. The average mean of 3.17 is above the weighted mean of 2.50, signifying that teachers hold a positive view of the application of intellectual stimulation strategies by their principals.

Research Hypothesis One: Relationship Between Intellectual Stimulation Strategies and Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East.

Table 4 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Summary

Variable		N	Mean	Df	SD	R-Value	Sig	Decision
Principals' Intellectual Stimulation		212	19.0472	210	2.9703	0.696	0.000	significant
Teachers' Job Satisfaction		212	16.6132	210	2.24166			

Table 4 summarizes the Pearson product-moment correlation between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction. The calculated r-value of 0.696 is significant at the 0.05 alpha level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). As a result, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship is rejected while the alternative hypothesis indicating a significant relationship is accepted. This finding underscores the importance of principals' intellectual stimulation strategies in enhancing job satisfaction among teachers in public secondary schools in Ilorin East. The analysis reveals a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.696$) at the 0.05 alpha level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction, is rejected. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating a significant relationship between these variables within the context of the study. These results collectively suggest a strong connection between intellectual stimulation strategies implemented by principals and the job satisfaction levels of teachers, highlighting the need for principals to prioritize such strategies to foster a more satisfying work environment for educators.

Discussion

The first finding of the study revealed the extent teachers perceive intellectual stimulation strategies as effective in enhancing teachers' job satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Ilorin East is high, also principal facilitates professional learning communities, encourages teachers to conduct action research on new trends, provides opportunities for teachers to present their work at seminars, supports teachers in implementing innovative teaching methods and creates a modern culture of inquiry and experimentation. This finding is in line with the submissions of Safia and Ayık (2022) who posited that leadership strategies and a learning organization positively and significantly impact teachers' job satisfaction levels in secondary schools. The findings are also in line with the submissions of Ojo (2018) who investigated principals' management techniques and students' academic performance in secondary schools, the study revealed that principals' motivational management technique significantly improves students' academic performance in secondary schools, also principals encourages teachers in implementing innovative teaching methods and creates a modern culture of inquiry and experimentation to improves students learnings. The results also corroborated the submissions of Kyangwe et al. (2023) who submitted that a supportive working environment, motivation, high teacher pay, equal distribution of duties, teacher development programs, healthy interpersonal relationships, and effective leadership are key strategies adopted by principals to enhance teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools. The results were also supported by the findings of Butaki et al. (2024) the study indicated that intellectual stimulation significantly influenced teacher productivity and job satisfaction in public primary schools, school heads often reward teachers when tasks are achieved on time and head teachers usually praise performing teachers.

The findings of the current study revealed teachers are satisfied with their job as teachers, feel valued and respected by their principal, motivated to come to work each day, motivated to come to work each day, feel accomplished in their work and are proud to be teachers in this school. The level of teachers' job satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Ilorin East, Kwara State is high. This finding is in line with the submissions of Hussain et al. (2022) who reveal that teachers from

public schools have higher job satisfaction and well-being compared to teachers from private schools, the study also reveals that teachers in public schools feel accomplishment at work and proud to be a teacher in this school. This finding is in line with the submissions of Rahim and Lakshmi (2018) who posited that the Job satisfaction of secondary school teachers is high and does not significantly differ between urban and rural schools, teachers from both rural and urban agree to be valued and respected by my principals. This is also in agreement with the assertion of Shankar and Bose (2022) that job satisfaction among secondary school teachers is high, with significant differences between gender and management (government vs. private). This finding does not align with the findings of Kachhawa et al. (2018) who posited that teachers' job satisfaction is low, with the highest satisfaction found in mathematics subject teachers and the minimum in Hindi, teachers are also not motivated to come to schools. This also aligns with the submission of Msuya (2016) that job satisfaction among teachers in public secondary schools in Tanzania is not homogeneous, with socio-economic and demographic factors contributing to varying levels of satisfaction.

This current study also revealed that principals passionately share new ideas and perspectives with teachers, encourage teachers to engage in professional development, set high expectations for teachers and students to meet up with contemporary challenges, provide constructive feedback on assigned tasks and support to help teachers grow, encourages teachers to take risks and try new approaches and Provides teachers with resources and opportunities to develop my skills. Also, teachers positively perceive the application of intellectual stimulation strategies by principals in public secondary schools in Ilorin East. This finding is in line with the submissions of Musyoki et al. (2021) who investigated the influence of principals' intellectual stimulation on students' performance, the study reveals that teachers positively perceive the application of intellectual stimulation strategies adopted by principals and in turn influence pupils' achievements. This finding is in line with the submissions of Sholeh (2021) who reveals that teachers positively perceive the application of intellectual stimulation strategies, also principals play a crucial role in improving teacher competence through various programs, including in-service education, training, and collaboration activities, sets high expectations for teachers and students to meet up with contemporary challenges. It is also in consonance with the submissions of Butaki et al. (2024) who posited that teachers indicated that intellectual stimulation significantly influenced teacher productivity and job satisfaction in public primary schools.

Finally, the study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East. This is in line with the submissions of Safia and Ayık (2022) who examined the relationship between transformational leadership and schools being a learning organization and teachers' job satisfaction levels, the results revealed that transformational leadership and a learning organization positively and significantly impact teachers' job satisfaction levels in secondary schools. This is also in consonance with the findings of Wanyama et al. (2023) who revealed that principals' intellectual stimulation strategies play a crucial role in enhancing teacher job satisfaction in public secondary schools by recognizing hard work, praising good performance, and providing financial benefits for good performance. It is in line with the submissions of Musyoki et al. (2021) that principals' intellectual stimulation positively and strongly correlates with students' KCSE performance in Makeni County, Kenya, suggesting transformational leadership practices can improve academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation strategies and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Ilorin East, Nigeria. The research findings indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between the leadership strategies employed by school principals and the job satisfaction levels of teachers. Specifically, the data revealed that practices such as fostering professional development, encouraging collaboration

among staff, and promoting innovative teaching methods contribute substantially to enhancing teachers' job satisfaction. The implications of this study are profound; as educational institutions strive to improve teaching quality and student outcomes, the role of effective leadership becomes increasingly critical. The findings underscore the necessity for school principals to adopt transformational leadership styles that prioritize intellectual stimulation. As teachers report higher job satisfaction when they feel supported and valued, fostering such an environment can lead to improved retention rates and overall school effectiveness. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed:

1. Educational authorities should implement comprehensive training programs for school principals that focus on transformational leadership and intellectual stimulation strategies. This training should equip leaders with the skills to foster an environment that supports teacher engagement and innovation.
2. Schools should establish professional learning communities where teachers can collaborate, share best practices, and engage in joint problem-solving. This collaborative approach can enhance professional development and contribute to higher job satisfaction.
3. Schools should create regular feedback mechanisms that allow teachers to express their concerns and suggestions regarding leadership practices and school policies. This input can help principals tailor their strategies to better meet the needs of their staff.
4. Implementing recognition and incentive programs that acknowledge teachers' efforts and achievements can significantly boost morale and job satisfaction. Celebrating successes, both big and small, fosters a positive work environment.

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