



PRINCIPALS' ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND VICE PRINCIPALS' WORK BEHAVIOURS IN ANAMBRA STATE: A CORRELATION OF PRINCIPALS' INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE AND VICE PRINCIPALS' ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP AND TURNOVER INTENTION BEHAVIOURS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The relationship between principals and vice principals in Nigeria, particularly in Anambra State, has received very scant attention in empirical research. Moreover, the treatment vice principals receive from principals, especially in relation to principals' interactional justice and how this treatment influences vice principals' attitudes and behaviours at work, is rarely considered by anyone in the schools and in research studies. This study, therefore, sought to determine how principals' interactional justice affects vice principals' work behaviours in Anambra State. It was a correlational study involving all principals and vice principals from the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The total population was 798 participants, comprising 266 principals and 532 vice principals. The census technique was used to draw a sample of 532 Vice Principals, comprising 266 Vice Principals Administration (VP Admins.) and 266 Vice Principals Academics (VP Acads.). One research question and one hypothesis were postulated. Two instruments, namely, the Principals' Organizational Interactional Justice Scale for Vice Principals (POIJSVP) and the Vice Principals' Work Behaviours Scale (VPWBS), were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three research experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The instruments were pilot-tested on 20 public secondary school vice principals in Enugu State. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was used to analyze data collected from the 20 vice principals. This yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80. The instruments were thereafter administered to the 532 vice principals (VP Admins. and VP Acads.) in Anambra State. A total of 500 completely filled questionnaires were retrieved from the 532 administered. It yielded a 94% return rate. A simple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive value of the results on vice principals' work behaviours. The analysis showed that principals' interactional justice moderately predicted vice principals' work behaviours in schools. This prediction was also found to be significant to vice principals' work behaviours. It was recommended that principals in Anambra State public secondary schools should treat vice principals as their friends and colleagues rather than subordinates or rivals. Principals in Anambra State public secondary schools should interact with principals in a respectful and dignified manner, so that other school members would do likewise towards vice principals, thereby boosting vice principals' work behaviours in the schools.

Keywords: Principals, Interactional Justice, Vice Principals, Work Behaviours, Schools

1.1 Introduction

Principals and vice principals are two major leaders in secondary schools, and their relationship with each other determines the attitudes and behaviours of other school members (students, parents, teachers, community members) towards the operation and productivity of the schools. It is not surprising that Majestie (2023), Onyali, Njoku and Okafor (2024), and Swain (2021) exhort principals to accord a central place to the principal-vice principal relationship in schools to succeed. Significantly, the relationship between principals and vice principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State, as employees of the Anambra State government and colleagues, deserves greater attention. Moreover, the complementarity of their roles makes this relationship even more crucial and demanding. Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025) strongly affirm that there is no function performed by principals that is not performed by vice principals, especially in the absence of the principals. This implies that vice principals represent principals in all ramifications. Despite these mutual and complementary roles, Nguyen (2018) and Swain (2021) clarify that vice principals' roles in schools depend on principals' delegation. This means that vice principals cannot act in isolation in school matters but must collaborate with principals. This is why van Niekerk (2020) urges principals and vice-principals to share a common goal and vision for the school to ensure success. In other words, a leader-mentor relationship should exist between principals and vice principals, rather than a superior-subordinate relationship (Swain, 2021), especially in Anambra State public secondary schools. This type of relationship will make vice principals work committedly and behave well towards other members of the school. This implies that principals in Anambra State must establish and sustain a strong, cordial, and mutually beneficial relationship with vice principals to enhance vice principals' work behaviours.

Work behaviours of employees are an aspect of their organizational relationship that impacts the interest, attraction, motivation, participation, support, commitment, and sustenance of organizational members towards organizational productivity. Employees' work behaviours are the explicit and implicit things they do while working and interacting with others in the organization. Simhon (2023) sees work behaviours as the way employees act at work. It is the response of an employee to a specific situation at work (Thompson and McKinney, 2023), and it includes both the outward actions workers take and the attitudes behind those actions (Simhon, 2023). Vice principals' work behaviours in Anambra State public secondary schools are the things they do that can either attract or repel other school members from associating with vice principals or the schools, thereby contributing to their success.

Work behaviours can be positive or negative, verbal or non-verbal, physical or emotional. Positive work behaviours include honesty, smiling, dedication, organizational citizenship, and altruism. Negative work behaviours include indifference, snobbery, anger, sarcasm, aggression, frowning, sullenness, sabotage, and theft. Positive work behaviours influence others and the entire organization, while negative work behaviours influence others negatively. In other words, positive work behaviours elicit positive responses from customers, while negative work behaviours elicit negative responses. Positive work behaviours exhibited by employees towards customers can cause the customers to identify with and patronize the organization. It can also make the customers refer the organization as a place of business or work patronage to their family members, friends, acquaintances and others. Conversely, negative work

behaviours can repel customers from an organization for life and cause them to convey the same image to other potential customers. Edeh, Edeoga, Chukwu, Adama, Oketa and Azubuike (2021) reiterate that potential customers' consistent patronage of an organization is consequent upon seasoned employees who have influenced their behaviours over time. In other words, some customers patronize some organizations as a result of one employee who has influenced them positively (Edeh, et al). Similarly, a customer who has been offended as a result of a work behaviour displayed by an employee can influence other potential customers by presenting the image of the organization in relation to his or her experience with the employee. This can damage the organization's image and reputation and affect its customer patronage, productivity, and continuity. This vindicates the assertions of Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025) and Thompson and McKinney (2023) that an employee's behaviour towards a customer can form a mirror culture through which the customer sees the entire organization.

In secondary schools, vice principals' work behaviours towards parents, students, teachers, and other customers of the schools can influence whether they patronize the schools. It can cause them to refer schools to their family members, friends, acquaintances, and others as places of work and for students' educational enrolment and achievement. This can even lead to successive generations of patronage by such stakeholders, especially families. This suggests that vice principals, as the bridge between principals, staff, students, and other stakeholders in secondary schools, can influence every aspect of the schools' operations through their attitudes and behaviours. It implies that principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State should ensure a cordial, respectful, and considerate relationship with the vice principals in order to induce, boost, and sustain positive work behaviours among the vice principals.

One way principals can ensure that vice principals exude and sustain positive work behaviours in secondary schools is through their organizational justice behaviours. Organizational justice is the fairness of organizational leaders in their interaction with school members. Rouch (2023) defines organizational justice as employees' perceptions of their organization's behaviours, decisions, and outcomes, and how these perceptions influence employees' own behaviours. In secondary schools, principals' organizational justice is teachers' and other school members' perception that principals' behaviours, decisions, and actions favour them and consequently affect their own attitudes and behaviours (Phiri, Hampopwe, Mutono-Mwanza, and Mwangi, 2024). Organizational justice in this context is vice principals' feelings of importance, happiness, and satisfaction in schools as a result of how principals consider and treat them, and how these feelings influence vice principals' work behaviours in schools.

Organizational justice has three major dimensions. These are distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. Distributive justice is the fair and equitable way in which principals share the school's resources among members, as well as the way they mete out rewards and punishments. Procedural justice is the way organizational leaders implement organizational outcomes by following established standards, rules, and regulations while meting out rewards and punishments. Rusdiana, Karnati, and Abdullah (2023) view procedural justice as the way managers make decisions by implementing rules, procedures, policies, and rewards that have been agreed on and should be followed. Interactional justice is the respectful and considerate manner in which

leaders relate to employees or subordinates, including when making decisions and taking actions and when distributing resources and implementing procedures. It is simply the fair and equitable way of making decisions and taking actions regarding resources and allocations (Rusdiana, Karnati & Abdullah, 2023), as well as in dispute resolution and conflict resolution (Gulati, Warr & Merkel, 2025). It is the way leaders regard their employees with dignity, respect and consideration while interacting with them. In this study, however, only interactional justice was investigated and linked to principals' behaviours towards vice principals in secondary schools, specifically in Anambra State.

Interactional justice is a dimension of organizational justice that concerns the considerate and honourable ways leaders relate to employees when distributing resources and implementing decisions and actions. Macías, Chapman and Rai (2023), Gulati, Warr and Merkel (2025) view interactional justice in organizations as the way managers and coworkers interact with employees, especially when delivering feedback and resolving conflicts. It is the kind, respectful and honourable treatment of managers towards the employees (Kocak and Kerse, 2022). It also includes the extent to which employees are treated with dignity and respect by their coworkers (Ayadi, Zhang, Zouauoi and Ohana, 2019). It is simply the degree of respect, dignity and sensitivity shown to employees (Gulati, Warr and Merkel, 2025). In secondary schools, interactional justice is the kind and respectful way in which school members treat one another. It includes the respect students receive from their teachers (Yang, 2021) and the friendly, caring manner in which they provide information to students. It also includes the extent to which teachers treat their fellow teachers with dignity and respect (Ayadi, Zhang, Zouauoi and Ohana, 2019) and, most significantly, the fair, respectful, and considerate manner in which principals treat teachers and other school members. Principals' interactional justice in public secondary schools in Anambra State is the friendly, kind, and dignified way principals treat vice principals as colleagues, communicate with them, distribute school resources, and resolve conflicts between vice principals and other school members.

Interactional justice has two dimensions. These are the relational (interpersonal) and informational justice dimensions. Shermerhorn (2013) views relational justice as the extent to which people are treated with civility, dignity and respect by authorities and third parties involved in carrying out procedures or determining outcomes. It concerns the dignity people receive from an organization (Sarhan, 2022) and from the work group (Ayadi, Zhang, Zouauoi, and Ohana, 2019) or coworkers. Informational justice refers to the ways organizational leaders provide information and feedback to employees, as well as how leaders and coworkers relay information to one another. Macias, Chapman and Rai (2023) see informational justice as the adequacy, timeliness and honesty of information and explanations provided to employees. It is simply the quality of justice treatment received by employees in interpersonal communication, including accurate, sufficient and timely expression and interpretation of information about positions, decisions and actions (Xu, Huang & Huang, 2021).

Agba (2019) testifies that there is hardly any human interaction that does not involve the communication of information. Moreover, informational justice, which concerns interpersonal communication, has been viewed by Krause (2019) as the bedrock of both personal and

professional relationships. Therefore, scholars such as Krause (2019) and Okpu and Eke (2020) have argued that there is no need to divide the two dimensions of interactional justice, as interactional justice encompasses both interpersonal and informational dimensions. It is therefore pertinent for these researchers to concur with Agba (2019), Krause (2019), and Okpu and Eke (2020) by collapsing the two dimensions of organizational justice into a single dimension (interactional justice) in this study. This suggests that when principals relate well to vice principals and communicate effectively with them, this is part of their interactional justice, which enhances vice principals' work behaviours.

Principals' interactional justice in secondary schools has been described by Bakotic and Bulog (2021) and Obalade and Mtembu (2023) as the most influential aspect of principals' organizational justice behaviours. Joe-Akunne and Oguebe (2019) and Macias, Chapman and Rai (2023) support the view that principals' ability to interact with subordinates in a dignified, respectful and empathetic manner is a very strong predictor of employees' behavioural outcomes. Moreover, interactional justice depends on both distributive and procedural justice of managers. This suggests that when school principals distribute school resources fairly and equitably and implement school procedures with impartiality and objectivity, this is part of their interactional justice. It is not surprising that Obiekwe, Emere and Uyanwa (2024) decry that principals' unfair distribution of work and resources among teachers (and other school members) can alter their psychological well-being, leading to the exhibition of negative behaviours. Conversely, principals' equitable distribution of school resources and adherence to due process when meting out rewards and punishments increase workers' perceptions of interactional justice, leading to positive manners and behaviours (Tan, 2014).

Principals' interactional justice behaviours include the way principals interact with the school members, especially the staff, when delivering feedback or resolving conflicts (Macias, Chapman and Rai, 2023, Gulati, Warr and Merkel, 2025), providing sufficient explanations for decisions, paying attention to employees' concerns and showing empathy for his predicament (Osaro, Ogbonda and Bassey, 2022), using appropriate not detrimental language (Ayadi, et al., 2020), involving employees in the decision makings of the leaders (Mambula, Francis and Oaye, 2021), coaching and counselling employees, taking disciplinary actions where necessary, creating a culture of respect and appreciation (Hamza, 2023), acknowledging the hard work of employees, appreciating them in front of others for them to feel motivated (Juneja, 2023). It also includes courtesy, honesty, effort, and the offering of apologies (Ha and Moon, 2023), especially when information is not timely disseminated or has the potential to cause misunderstanding or conflict. Dikeh, Anaetoh, Obiezekwem and Eboh (2021), for example, reiterate that offering an apology or explanation when a perceived injustice has occurred can reduce or eliminate the sense of anger generated. Adelakun (2023), Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025) clarify that principals' sharing of organizational resources based on need (to each person according to urgency) is not what causes conflicts between principals and other school members, but principals' failure to explain the rationale behind their decisions and actions to other concerned members of the schools. This implies that when principals explain their actions and decisions to staff, this is an aspect of their interactional justice that could mitigate feelings of unfair treatment among the concerned staff. Most significantly, principals can concretize their interactional justice with staff by leading

the staff (and even students and other school members) by example in their own attitudes and behaviours.

One of the greatest ways that principals build, consolidate, and shape their interactional justice behaviours towards school members is by leading by example. Leading by example is the hallmark of leadership integrity, modelling and justice. This implies that principals should possess and exude those ethical behaviours expected of good leaders. These behaviours include being open, truthful, honest, firm, transparent, impartial, objective, and caring. Onyali, Njoku and Okafor (2024), in agreement with Millicevic (2023) and Myatti (2012), buttress the view that principals' ability to maintain and sustain a trusting relationship with their colleagues and subordinates depends on their personal integrity and trustworthiness. This is because a leader's personal integrity motivates employees to invest time and energy in their tasks (Myatti, 2012) and to experience less interactional injustice. Conversely, if a leader has a reputation built on poor character or a lack of integrity, subordinates are afraid of him or her and would never trust him or her. Thus, Agbesanwa (2025) urges principals to be examples to their subordinates in their line of duty, as this will motivate subordinates and mitigate their sense of interactional justice. This aligns with Kleynhans, Heyns, Stander, and de Beer (2022) and Lewis (2022), who advise leaders to align their actions with their words. In other words, principals should be authentic and reliable, showing integrity, so that vice principals and other school members can trust them and display minimal levels of interactional injustice perception. When principals in Anambra State secondary schools lead vice principals by example, when they appreciate vice principals' contribution to the schools, show concern and empathy in vice principals' predicament, show respect and courtesy to vice principals, share in vice principals' joys, make other school members to value and respect vice principals, it motivates vice principals, and makes them to feel satisfied and happy working with principals. This consequently enhances vice principals' exhibition of positive work behaviours in the schools.

Interactional justice of organizational leaders (including principals) has been attributed to both good and bad behaviours displayed by employees. Obalade and Mtembu (2023) affirm that interactional justice is more important to workers than other forms of justice. According to Ajala (2019), interactional justice occurs when decision-makers treat people with respect and sensitivity and explain the rationale for their decisions thoroughly. Interactional justice increases employees' commitment to managers, loyalty to managers, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Koçak & Kerse, 2022). Also, good interactional justice within a work group improves their identification with the group (Ayadi, Zhang, Zouaoui & Ohana, 2019) and with the organization (Sarhan, 2022). When employees feel they are treated with respect and dignity by most colleagues, they are more likely to generate better ideas, share them with co-workers, and implement them successfully (Ayadi, Zhang, Zouaoui & Ohana, 2019).

Conversely, interactional justice is associated with many negative outcomes (Alev, 2021) and therefore warrants higher priority in addressing organizational deviance (Obalade & Mtembu, 2023). Joe-Akunne and Oguebe (2019) emphasize that any organizational leader who subjects his employees to interactional injustice is likely to elicit workplace deviance from such employees. This is because interactional justice is negatively correlated with such negative outcomes as stress

and cynicism (Koçak and Kerse), job disengagement, demotivation, low enthusiasm, decreased job involvement, and concentration at work (Pan, Chen, Hao and Bi, 2018), decreased productivity, burnout and boredom, less communication (Jorgensen, 2021), and even industrial unrest/action (Odhiambo, 2022). Informational justice is negatively associated with evasive knowledge-hiding behaviours and playing dumb behaviours, but positively associated with rationalized hiding behaviours, through the mediation of organizational identification (Xu, Huang & Huang, 2023). Interpersonal and informational justice are negatively related to employees' distrust of their supervisor (Macias, Chapman, & Rai, 2019). Therefore, leaders should be mindful and practise caution when interacting with subordinates to ensure that interactional justice norms are not violated (Ayadi, Chapman & Rai, 2019). This suggests that principals can contribute to vice principals' motivation and support a positive work experience for vice principals by creating an atmosphere of trust, regularly checking with vice principals to find out what they need to succeed, celebrating their success, letting them know they are making an impact and facilitating their growth (Teney, 2023). This will surely induce positive work behaviours, especially organizational citizenship, and decrease turnover intentions among vice principals within and outside the school system.

Organizational citizenship and turnover intention behaviours are two major staff behaviours that can be triggered by a leader's interactional justice. When employees feel that they are treated fairly and with respect, they are more likely to exhibit behaviours that benefit the organization beyond their normal job duties. Okpu and Eke (2020) suggest that organizational justice can be achieved only when firms have employees who are fully committed to their vision, thereby enabling the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. The interactional relationship between workers and their leaders is a motivating factor that can make employees go beyond expected behaviours in carrying out their job duties (Okpu and Eke, 2020). In secondary schools, when students are treated reverently and politely by teachers and when teachers clearly convey information to students, this is an aspect of teachers' interactional justice, which boosts students' learning interest (Yang, 2021). In other words, when students receive feedback, it increases their enthusiasm for learning and fosters excellent rapport between teachers and students (Yang, 2021). Similarly, when teachers experience fair treatment from the school, they are more likely to exceed their formal job roles to help students, colleagues and others as they engage in the work of teaching and learning (Obiekwe, Emere & Uyanna, 2024). Furthermore, when teachers engage in collaborative decision-making with leaders, it increases their motivation to perform beyond their minimum level, which shows their organizational citizenship behaviours (Eziamaka, Okoye & Mokwe, 2025). Similarly, the quality of interaction among fellow employees and the work group climate will influence a person's mood and willingness to take action and help others (Annisa, 2021). In summary, when employees perceive their treatment as fair, they feel more positive towards their work, leading to organizational citizenship behaviour (Pham, Le, Nguyen, Phan & Nguyen, 2024) and decreasing or even eliminating turnover intention.

Turnover intention is another negative behaviour among workers, triggered by their perceptions of interactional justice with their leaders. Employee turnover intention behaviour arises from their desire to leave the organization due to a negative experience or treatment at the hands of organizational leaders or colleagues. Ike, Chuke and Nnamchi (2024) see turnover

intention as employees' conscious and deliberate intention to seek alternative job opportunities in another organization. Zhao, Ma, Li, Wang, and Ma (2024) highlight the prominence of interactional justice as a critical factor affecting turnover intention. Ike, Chuke, and Nnamchi (2024) and Ugoani (2018) confirm that a manager's unfair or unfriendly treatment of an employee will always make the employee feel like quitting. This can manifest in their behavioural outcomes related to turnover intention. These behavioural outcomes include neglecting one's job, job anxiety, burnout, loyal boosting, presenteeism (Ike, Chuke & Nnamchi, 2024), deliberate absenteeism, indifference, aloofness, aggression, sarcasm, cynicism (Joe-Akunne & Oguegbe, 2019; Njoku, Onyali & Ogbo, 2024), and withdrawal behaviours (Joe-Akunne & Oguegbe, 2019; Osara, Ogbonda & Bassey, 2022).

Edeh, Edeoga, Chukwu, Adama, Oketa, and Azubuike report that a staff member would begin making arrangements to leave his or her job (turnover intention) if he or she perceives that the organization pays him or her less than his or her co-workers. Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025) support the idea that principals' preferential treatment or action in matters concerning staff increases their feelings of being victimized, discriminated against, neglected, and unsafe, leading to turnover intentions. Osaro, Ogbonda, and Bassey (2022) agree that employees who perceive interactional justice as unfair are highly likely to engage in negative, unproductive psychological and physical withdrawal behaviours. These behaviours impact negatively on the organization's performance. A school staff member who withdraws from other staff or from the affairs of the school because of negative interactional justice is as good as one who has left the school and therefore has nothing to contribute to its productivity. This confirms Schnaidman (2020)'s reaffirmation that teachers who experience a poor relationship with principals may be physically present at their job, but they may not be committed to their students or their schools. A teacher's behaviour like this is a form of turnover intention or even an implied turnover, which negatively impacts the teaching and learning process and outcomes.

In the same way, a vice principal who experiences poor interactional justice from principals may feel rejected and display the same attitude and behaviour. This indifference towards schools' activities was also observed by Onyali, Njoku and Okafor (2024) during the instrument administration, when interacting with vice principals. For instance, in the absence of the principals, some vice principals refuse to attend to official or even unofficial matters of the schools. Some of these vice principals even refuse to answer questions from visitors who come to make enquiries about the schools or respond to such enquiries with sarcastic comments about principals and the schools. Instead, they refer such stakeholders (parents, visitors, students) affected by these matters to the principals' typists, who inform the principals when they return. These behaviours show that such vice principals feel neglected. They are evidence that such vice principals are not on good terms with the principals. This kind of relationship spells doom for harmonious interaction and school productivity and progress. Secondary school principals should therefore ensure good interactional justice behaviours towards vice principals and other members of the school to enhance and sustain their good work behaviours.

In Nigeria, particularly in Anambra State, the situation in secondary schools indicates that many principals engage in various forms of unjust practices (Obiekwe, Emere & Uyanwa, 2024).

Positive interactional justice behaviours do not seem prevalent among many principals of public secondary schools in Anambra State and some other staff, especially vice principals. Okeke, Okaforcha and Ezinine (2021) observed a lack of respect and courtesy in the way some principals talk to staff. Some principals communicate with staff as if they are slaves rather than colleagues (Akudo & Ibeh, 2021). They even hoard information from the staff (Ofojebe and Akudo, 2021). Some principals display rigid, unsupportive, and dishonest attitudes towards staff, which deter staff from taking on additional roles in schools (Oshia, Chukwudi & Obionu, 2022). These attitudes show that such principals lack good ethical behaviour (Dunu, Ughamadu & Ezeaku, 2025; Obiekwe, Emere and Uyanne, 2024), which are the hallmarks of personal integrity in leading subordinates and influencing their positive behaviours. Emengini, Sam-Omenyi, and Nwankwo (2021) found that some principals in the state do not make time to visit staff or communicate with them. Some teachers claim that their school principals do not allow them to participate in or voice their preferences when decisions are made in the schools (Obiekwe, Emere & Uyanwa, 2024). Some principals exclude some vice principals (Njoku, Ogbo & Umeh, 2025) and teachers (Ofojebe and Akudo, 2021; Oshia, Chukwudi & Obionu, 2022) from decision-making and actions in schools. They do not seem to care or make provision for staff professional development (Ewim, Unachukwu & Ugwu, 2020). In fact, these principals forget that teachers' morale will be raised and they will develop confidence in discharging their duties when they are professionally developed (Nwagbata, 2024).

Equally, research has shown that disregarding others with disfavour and relying on others are aspects of leaders' interactional injustice (Joe-Akunne & Oguebe, 2019). This shows that people in organizations expect their leaders to communicate with them the same way they communicate with other workers, and they seek justice in this communication (Osaro, Ogbonda & Bassey). But this expectation does not seem to work in Anambra State, as some principals show contempt and indifference towards vice principals, their colleagues, and immediate-ranking subordinates in the schools (Onyali, Njoku & Okafor, 2024). Some principals in Anambra State public secondary schools do not talk directly to vice principals. They would rather pass information to vice principals by proxy, such as through a teacher or a non-teaching staff member, even when the vice principals are available (Onyali, Njoku & Okafor, 2024). This behaviour makes some vice principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State feel neglected by their principals. Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025), and Onyali, Njoku & Okafor (2024) observed that these vice principals exhibit a cold attitude, aloofness, aggression, and indifference toward the schools' activities. These behaviours are all indicators of turnover intention in the schools.

There is also inappropriate delegation of duties by principals (Oshia, Chukwudi & Obionu, 2022). In fact, delegation of tasks and positions is not based on merit but by loyalty to the principals (Obiekwe, Emere & Uyanwa, 2024). Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025) bewail that some principals' delegation of vice principals' statutory duties to teachers and even non-teaching staff of the schools without any explanations to vice principals for such delegation simply demeans vice principals and destroys their morale and worth, thereby making them feel neglected and helpless in the schools. It is simply evidence of the rejection of vice principals by such principals. A rejected member of an organization can hardly contribute anything positive to its growth and progress. This vindicates Leary (2015)'s outcry that leaders' interpersonal rejection of staff constitutes some of

the distressing and consequential events in their lives. This implies that when principals ignore or reject vice principals in the decision-making and activities of the school, when they give vice principals' jobs to other school members in contempt of vice principals' importance to them (principals), it is an aspect of their interactional justice which devastates vice principals and affects their work behaviours negatively.

Additionally, some principals assign heavy workloads to staff without any extra compensation. They ignore some staff when assigning duties, or give them very little or no work to do (Njoku, Onyali & Ogbo, 2024). For example, some teachers work more hours and teach more subjects but receive the same compensation as their colleagues who put in fewer hours and teach fewer subjects, leading to low organizational citizenship behaviours (Obiekwe, Emere & Uyanwa, 2024) and high rate of turnover intention (Okeke, Okaforcha & Ezinine, 2021) and even turnover proper (Thompson & Unachukwu, 2020). These are some of the prevalent interactional injustice behaviours exhibited by principals in Anambra State public secondary schools. Principals should value the importance of the staff, especially vice principals, to them. Principals should relate well with vice principals so that vice principals can be happy and fulfilled in the schools, leading to the exhibition of good work behaviours. The need to foster awareness of positive interactional justice behaviours among principals and vice principals in Anambra State public secondary schools spurred the investigation for this research study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Vice principals work very hard in schools, but their efforts and contributions are taken for granted and are therefore rarely recognized or appreciated. The problems they encounter while working with/under principals in schools, and how they feel about working with/under principals, are hardly considered by other school members. Scholars and researchers have hardly explored their experiences and feelings in schools. One of the researchers, who was a vice principal of a private secondary school in southeastern Nigeria for many years, experienced principals' interactional justice in both positive and negative forms. These (especially the negative interactional justice) affected her work behaviours in the school and her relationship with other school members so much that she sought to bring this relationship to public awareness in Nigeria, particularly in Anambra State and other parts of the world.

In Nigeria, there is a significant paucity of empirical studies on the relationship between principals and vice principals, two prominent leaders within schools. One of the areas of this great paucity/neglect is principals' interactional justice with vice principals and how it affects vice principals' work behaviours. When principals' interactional justice towards vice principals is positive, it elicits positive work behaviours from vice principals. When it is negative, it invariably elicits negative work behaviours from vice principals. These negative work behaviours can invariably affect vice principals' interaction with students, parents and other school members. In Anambra State, numerous research studies conducted in public secondary schools have shown poor quality of interactional justice between principals and the staff, mainly teachers. These research studies have shown that many principals in Anambra State show favouritism, bias, and prejudice in their decision-making and actions towards the staff. They display certain behaviours, such as unfriendliness, harsh words, or a lack of, or untimely, communication with staff. There is

a failure to involve some staff in school decision-making and to allow staff to air their views on school matters. Some staff are assigned heavier workloads than others, with little or no extra compensation, while others are neglected in the assignment of duties. Some principals in Anambra State do not communicate directly with the vice principals. They relay information to vice principals through other staff. They deprive some vice principals of their statutory tasks and assign them to teachers or non-teaching staff, without informing the vice principals or explaining the rationale for the assignments. Some do not respect the personal worth of some staff. They talk to the staff as if the staff were not worthy of respect. Some principals exhibit poor ethical behaviour, which the staff, especially vice principals, can emulate as part of the principals' interactional justice behaviours. These are some of the interactional injustice behaviours exhibited by some principals in the state. This relationship between the principals and staff is very inimical to school progress. Principals must therefore provide vice principals with a good work environment through a fair, respectful, cordial, friendly and considerate interpersonal relationship, evidenced in their interactional justice behaviours towards vice principals. This will make vice principals feel satisfied with their job, collaborate with principals in their complementary partnership and exhibit positive work behaviours.

Despite the myriad of research studies in Anambra State, no study has examined the relationship between principals' interactional justice and vice principals' organisational citizenship and turnover intention behaviours. This study, therefore, sought to explore principals' interactional justice towards vice principals and its correlation with vice principals' work behaviours, specifically vice principals' organizational citizenship and turnover intention. The question of the study was, "What is the value of the relationship between principals' interactional justice and vice principals' work behaviours in public secondary schools in Anambra State?"

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate principals' interactional justice and vice principals' work behaviours in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study specifically sought to ascertain the

1. value of predicting principals' interactional justice from vice principals' organizational citizenship and turnover intention behaviours in Anambra State.

Research Question

One research question guided the study.

1. What predictive value of relationship exists between principals' interactional justice and vice principals' work behaviours in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals' interactional justice has an insignificant value of prediction on vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

2. Method

The study employed a correlational study. It involved 798 participants, comprising 266 principals and 532 vice principals from the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The

study sample comprised all 532 Vice Principals, comprising 266 Vice Principals Administration and 266 Vice Principals Academics (VP Admins and VP Acads, as they are fondly called in Nigerian parlance). The census technique was used to draw the entire population. Two instruments were used to collect data. These were “Principals’ Organizational Interactional Justice Scale for Vice Principals (POIJSVP) and “Vice Principals’ Work Behaviours’ Scale (VPWBS). POIJSVP was adapted, while VPWBS was constructed by the researchers. POIJSVP measured principals’ interactional justice with vice principals, while VPWBS measured vice principals’ organizational citizenship and turnover intention behaviours of vice principals. The two instruments were validated by three research experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. One of the research experts is a professor of Educational Measurements and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations. The other two are professors of educational management in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The two instruments were administered in Enugu State to 20 vice principals from the two categories (VP Admins and VP Acads) chosen for the study. The results from the pilot population were computed using the Cronbach’s alpha reliability test. Internal consistency of the instruments was assessed by yielding an average reliability coefficient of 0.80. The instruments were thereafter administered to the 532 vice principals.

Four research assistants were involved in administering the instruments to the target population. With the help of these assistants, the researchers were able to cover the six education zones in Anambra State. The questionnaires were answered on the spot, while the researchers solicited those who could not answer on the spot to give them a date to come to the schools to collect the instruments or drop them at the headquarters of each education zone for easy accessibility. The researchers collected the vice principals’ mobile phone numbers and followed up. 500 out of the 532 instruments administered were completely filled and retrieved. This yielded an approximate return rate of 94%. The simple regression analysis was employed, using this percentage (94%). The data were analyzed using simple regression analysis. Muijs’ (2004) suggestion, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), for assessing the goodness of fit of a regression model using the squared multiple correlation (R^2) was adopted for the research questions. Model fit was assessed as 0-0.1 (weak prediction), 0.2-0.3 (modest prediction), 0.4-0.5 (moderate prediction), and >0.5 (strong prediction). P-value was used to determine the significance of the prediction of the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis was accepted, where the calculated p-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected, where the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05).

3. Results

Research Question: What is the predictive value of principals' interactional justice on vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis of the Predictive Value of Principals' Interactional Justice on Vice Principals' Work Behaviours in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	B	SE B	B
Constant				17.33	1.30	
Interactional Justice	.62	.46	.46	1.85	.08	.68

Data in Table 1 shows that principals' interactional justice has a moderate predictive value on vice principals' work behaviours in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is shown by the regression coefficient ($R = .62$) and the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .46$).

Hypothesis: Principals' interactional justice does not significantly predict vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Principals' Interactional Justice as a Predictor of Vice Principals' Work Behaviours

Predictor	R	R ²	F(1,542)	p-value	Decision
Interactional Justice	.68	.46	455.59	.00	Significant

Table 2 shows that principals' interactional justice is a significant predictor of vice principals' work behaviours in secondary schools in Anambra State, $R = .68$, $F(1,542) = 455.59$ and p -value < 0.05 . Since the obtained p -value was less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

4. Discussion

The result of the study on Table 1 reveals a moderate predictive value of principals' interactional justice on vice principals' work behaviours. The significance of this outcome is shown in Table 2. The result supports Bakotic and Bulog (2021) and Obalade and Mtembu (2023) whose study found principals' interactional justice as the most influencing aspect of principals' organizational justice. It is also supported by Ayadi, Zhang, Zouaoui and Ohana (2021) who found out a positive correlation between interactional justice and employee identification. Subsequently, Ayadi, Macias, Chapman and Rai (2023)'s finding agrees that principals' ability to interact and communicate with subordinates in a dignified, respectful and empathetic manner is a very strong predictor of employees' behavioural outcomes. The study confirmed the authenticity of poor interactional justice behaviours observed by the numerous studies conducted in Anambra State, such as Akudo and Ibeh (2021), Dunu, Ughamadu and Ezeaku (2025), Njoku, Ogbo and Umeh (2025), Obiekwe, Emere and Uyanwa (2024). This suggests that when principals in Anambra State

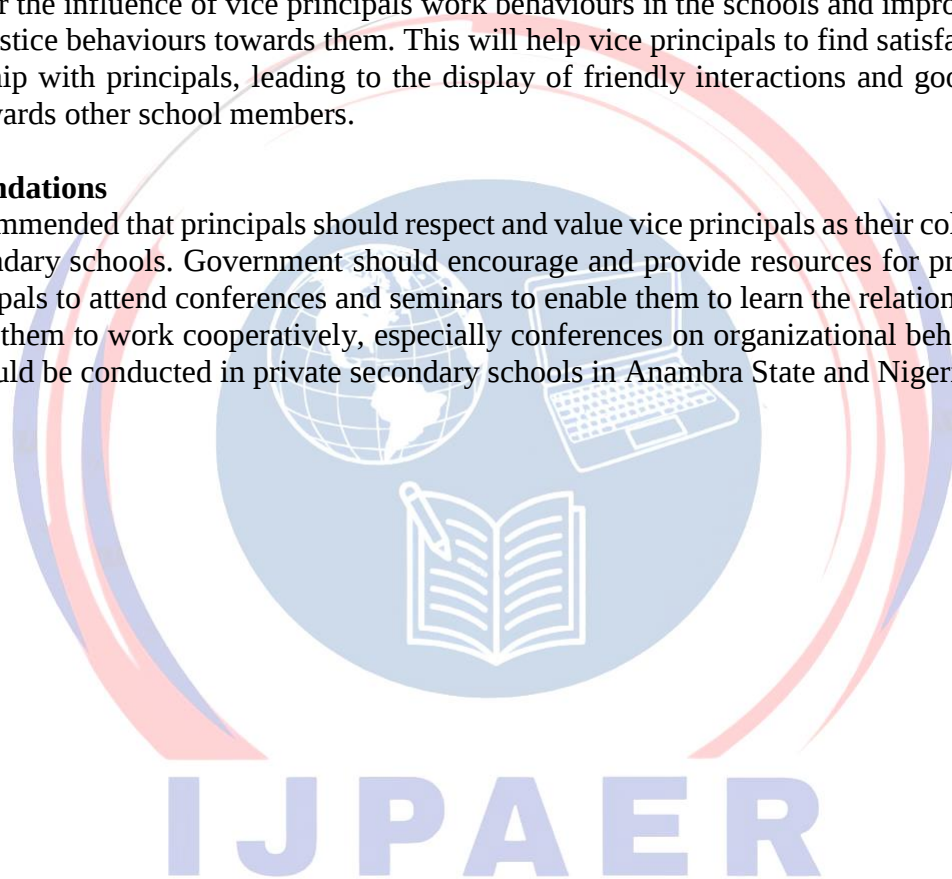
secondary schools interact positively with vice principals, it enhances their positive work behaviours and reduces or even eliminates their propensity to negative work behaviours.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that principals' interactional justice towards vice principals determines vice principals' work behaviours. Therefore, principals in Anambra State public secondary schools should consider the influence of vice principals work behaviours in the schools and improve their interactional justice behaviours towards them. This will help vice principals to find satisfaction in their relationship with principals, leading to the display of friendly interactions and good work behaviours towards other school members.

6. Recommendations

The study recommended that principals should respect and value vice principals as their colleagues in public secondary schools. Government should encourage and provide resources for principals and vice principals to attend conferences and seminars to enable them to learn the relational skills that will make them to work cooperatively, especially conferences on organizational behaviours. This study should be conducted in private secondary schools in Anambra State and Nigeria.



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