



## INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' SELF-CONCEPT AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION ON THE RETENTION OF STUDENTS IN LAGOS STATE PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Private secondary school principals often face the problem of students' retention for many underlying reasons leaving a vacuum of increased running costs for the principal to battle with. This has been a major concern for educational stakeholders and therefore needs urgent attention. Hence, this study investigated the influence of principals' self-concept and intrinsic motivation on the retention of secondary school students in Lagos State private secondary schools, Nigeria. Survey research design was used in the study. The population of registered private secondary schools in Lagos that formed the study's population was 21,544 and a stratified random sampling technique was adopted. The schools were stratified in line with the three senatorial districts of the state and two stages of schools; early (schools that are less than five years in operation and advanced stages (schools that are above five years in operation). The sample size of 378 was determined by researcher's advisor table. A self-structured questionnaire titled Self-concept, Intrinsic Motivation and Private Secondary School Students' Retention (SIMPSSSR) with reliability coefficient of  $> 0.70$ , was used to collect data. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. F-statistic of (13.794) indicates that the model provides a meaningful improvement over a model without principals' self-concept as a predictor and the p-value (.001) shows that the relationship between principals' self-concept and students' retention is not due to chance. Findings revealed that while self concept of principals has positive significant influence on students' retention while principals' intrinsic motivation has an insignificant influence on students' retention. On the joint contribution of self-concept and intrinsic motivation, findings showed that while intrinsic motivation alone showed only a marginal effect, combining it with self-concept results in a model that is both statistically stronger and more meaningful. Among the recommendations made were that private secondary school owners should review and modify their policies and structures to ensure that they support the intrinsic motivation of principals, inclusion of policies that promote work flexibility, increased principal involvement in decision-making processes without undue interference and the creation of a supportive environment at work.

**KEYWORDS:** Intrinsic Motivation, Lagos state, Principal, Retention and Self-concept,.

### INTRODUCTION

The principal as an educational administrator plays an important role in the day to day running and administration of the school. This statement is corroborated by Hoxha, and Ramadani (2024) who asserted that how principals respond to problems and issues in their schools may determine their success or failure as school administrators. However, one of the obvious challenges facing secondary (especially private) school principals in Nigeria and many other developing nations today is students' retention. Some students either leave the school because of inability to cope with the rising school fees or their parents take them to better schools which to them, is better equipped. This observation is confirmed by the assertion of Oginga and Avienda (2023) that the issue of retention of students in secondary schools is a major concern all over the world.

Sivili and Baysah (2024) also emphasized that parents, guardians, and policymakers use students' retention to assess the school and that most parents want to find out the percentage of students graduating from a particular institution before sending their children to such an institution. The implication of this is that ability to retain students will not only make such students remain in the school but will also encourage their friends to stay. Compounding the problem of students' retention is the study of Duze (2011) who found that attrition rates are high for both primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. This made Gütl, Rizzardini, Chang (2021) to conclude that any school administrator experiencing a wide spread attrition will find it difficult to survive.



Also, according to Bua (2016), the withdrawal of students which is often sudden, cause interruption in the administrative practices of such schools. The implication of this sudden attrition of students is wastages of financial resources on payment of teachers' salaries and other recurring costs making such administrators face the challenge of administering a school ravaged by students' attrition. Also, while students who withdraw from one secondary school to another may find it difficult to adjust quickly to the academic activities of the new school, those who are retained within the school may not experience such difficulties. This opinion is supported by the study of Bermel (2014) who found that students who get enrolled and complete their programs in a particular institution are more behaved and have higher scores upon joining schools than their peers without secondary school education.

According to Ekundayo (2013), school administrators are expected to see themselves as change agents because they have the authority to act as coordinators, planners, and problem solvers in education. School management is an interactive social process between school management, teachers, students and the community. All these stakeholders are in one way or another engaged in problem-solving in school problems (Al & Zaid, 2015).

The ability to address the perceived interruption brought about by sudden massive dropout of students from a given school is important to educators and researchers in the field of educational psychology and administration. Aljohani (2016) discusses student retention over the last four decades and categorized the factors responsible for student withdrawal as institutions, policies, and rules, the student college fits, the student's integration into the college's academic and social systems, the student's academic abilities and educational and occupational goals, and commitments.

Michael (2017) also asserts that competent management is ability to meet organizational objectives and use available resources efficiently. This implies that, the school manager could be blamed for not being competent where attrition of students becomes frequent in such a school. It suggests that students' retention rate is a factor of school administration. Thus, although the school administrator/principal may not be the sole cause of students' attrition (as other variables may also be responsible), the school principal as the leader and initiator of the overall activities within the school, play a vital role in the issue of students' retention.

This study therefore focuses on two psychological factors of the Principal: Self-concept and intrinsic motivation. Self-concept, which has become an important subject in Psychology because of its influence on behavior is defined by Bala (2014) as the assessment, presumption and evaluation of a person's abilities. A person's self-concept according to Aliyah (2022) is an assessment of himself which encompasses physical, psychological, social, emotional, aspirational, and achievement aspects. He defined physical self-concept as an individual's sense of look and gender which is connected to conduct and the prestige that their body confers on them in the eyes of others. While the psychological self-concept is perceived as individual's perception of their strengths and disabilities, self-esteem, and interactions with others. The social self-concept describes adolescent relationships with others, such as peers, family, and others. The ability to hold emotions, anger, despair, joy, vengefulness, forgiving, and other adolescent self-feelings are examples of emotional self-concept. Achievement self-concept is a young person's impression of development and achievement in academic and life challenges.

Intrinsic motivation which is the second variable that is being considered for this study is defined by Ryan and Deci (2017) as engaging in an activity for its inherent satisfaction which means that the individual is driven by the pleasure of the activity itself and not by external rewards or pressures to perform. This means that if principals are intrinsically motivated, they will not be moved by challenges they are facing in the running of the school. Also according to Hoxha and Ramadani (2024), employee motivation and engagement are crucial in attaining optimum



workplace productivity because when employees are driven and interested in their duties, they are more likely to give more of themselves, be more innovative, and actively contribute to the organization's success.

Based on the self-determination theory (SDT) Ryan and Deci (2017) describes intrinsic motivation as doing something with desire and will that comes from within and is independent of any external advantages or the threat of punishment at work. Okechukwu and Ogunsola (2020) also found that employee intrinsic motivation is an important concept that has a substantial influence on productivity, engagement, and work performance. This implies that the key to reaching optimal productivity at work is having engaged and motivated employees. Although according to Hoxha and Ramadani (2024), there are many ways of encouraging employees, it is generally acknowledged that intrinsically driven employees work more effectively. Ryan and Deci (2017) also studied the relationship between intrinsic motivation (which are a component of SDT) and found that when an employee's psychological needs are met, intrinsic motivation rises; conversely, failing to meet these needs has a negative influence on intrinsic motivation.

While many studies have found the influence of teachers' self concept and motivation on students' academic achievement, there is a dearth of research on both the influence of Principals' self concept and intrinsic motivation on the retention of students in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State. This present study is also important because it deepens the current literature on these study variables. Moreover, the study is timely as it addresses the pathetic situation of students' attrition which often interrupt the administrative practices of schools. It is against this backdrop that this research intends to investigate the influence of principals' self-concept and intrinsic motivation on the retention of students in private secondary schools in Lagos State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The focus of this study is to investigate the influence of Principal's intrinsic motivation and self-concept on students' retention in Lagos State Private Secondary schools and to specifically:

1. Find out the relationship between Principals' level of self-concept and the retention of students in Lagos State Private Secondary schools.
2. Investigate the relationship between Private secondary school Principal's intrinsic motivation and students' retention
3. Determine the joint contribution of Private secondary school Principals' self-concept and intrinsic motivation on retention of students in Lagos State private schools.
4. Draw out implications for Counseling

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between Lagos State Private secondary School Principals' level of self- concept and students' retention.
2. There is no significant relationship between Lagos State Private Secondary Schools' intrinsic motivation and students' retention,
3. There is no significant joint contribution of Lagos State Private secondary School Principals' level of self- concept and intrinsic motivation on students' retention.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

#### Vroom's Theory of Expectancy(1964)

The Expectancy theory of also known as Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation assumes that an individual will be motivated to put in more efforts if they believe that their efforts will lead to higher performance and better rewards. Thus, the three components of this theory are expectancy, performance and reward. Thus, for individuals to perceive whether they will succeed in the accomplishment of any task, they must have the ability to belief and have expectation of success. By implication, principals who have high expectation of success will be intrinsically motivated and not procrastinate any task, neither will they be negatively affected by any challenge that hinder success. According to this theory, the decision to act in a particular way is influenced by the anticipated rewards and the belief that the behavior will lead to the desired result. Factors that affect expectancy are self-efficacy of individuals, the level of goal difficulty, trust in the people who decide the outcome and transparency of the process. This is relevant to the assertion of National Association of School and Psychologists (2014) that positive academic motivation is reflected in willingness to learn, liking related learning activities and believing that education is important.

#### Covington's 1992 theory of self-worth

This theory assumes that individuals are primarily motivated by the need to protect their sense of self-worth and this often lead them to avoid situations where failure could threaten their perceived ability, even if it means sacrificing optimal performance. The implication of this is that principals could prioritise maintaining a positive self-image over achieving the best possible outcome in a given situation, since failure in the achievement of the school goals can be seen as reflecting their level of intelligence. Thus, principals of secondary schools will fear to fail because they have their image/self worth to protect making them to engage in behaviours that could make them to succeed and run away from the ones that will make them fail. . In summary, this theory shows that individuals will go to any length to live meaningfully just to get the approval of others. That is, all human beings have capacity to build and keep constructive and optimistic self-image and a sense of pride for self-acceptance.

#### Empirical Studies on Principals' Self-concept and Students' retention

There is dearth of adequate research on the relationship between Principal's self concept and students' retention as many studies have focused majorly on teachers' self concept and students' academic performance (Ajmal and Rafique, 2018; Glotova and Wilhelm, 2013), principals' self concept and students' academic performance This literature will therefore focus on some of these studies because of their relatedness.

According to Ajmal and Rafique (2018), teachers' academic self-concept is defined as how an individual teacher feels about himself as a teacher and plays his role in academic settings through conceptualized pupils' awareness and perception of their academic capacities. Glotova and Wilhelm (2013), observed that positive self-concept in teachers encourages student's self-regulation, motivation and a high level of self-esteem. The researcher noted that the way students behave in

#### Empirical Studies on Principals' Intrinsic Motivation and Students' retention

There is dearth of adequate research on Principals' intrinsic motivation and students' retention but there are some studies that have been carried out on principal's motivational techniques and students' academic performance (Tobin, 2014; Ekundayo, 2013; Odumodi, 2011; Khan et al. 2012; Ai & Zaid, 2015; Oguniola & Okechukwu, 2023), Principals' motivation and teachers' job



performance (Du Plessis, Douangphichit and Dodd, 2015), Some of these studies will be considered as they are somehow related to the present study.

Principals with intrinsic motivation are more engaged and devoted to attaining the school's goals. Early studies have established a substantial association between employee motivation and work performance. For instance, Grant (2007) found a direct and immediate positive effect of motivation on staff productivity and job performance. More recently, Kuvaas, Buch, Gagne, Dysvik and Forest (2016) examined the behavior and intrinsic motivation employees from gas station stores in Norway, and their work performance and found internal motivation was the most crucial component in increasing employee productivity and performance at work.

The study of Hoxha and Ramadani (2024) found that principals who demonstrate motivating leadership by recognizing and applauding accomplishments, offering professional development opportunities, and cultivating a positive school culture help to boost teacher morale and dedication and that successful secondary school reforms rely heavily on principals' ability to communicate a vision that is shared by teachers, students, and the school community. The study of Ogunsola and Okechukwu, (2023) investigated the impact of principals' motivational techniques on students' academic performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) junior secondary schools, Abuja, Nigeria and found a significant relationship between principals' motivational techniques and students' academic performance.

Also, findings from many studies found that motivation improves work performance. For instance, the study of Van Loon et al. (2018) showed that motivation positively influences job performance and organizational goal achievement. These results correspond with those of Andersen, Heinesen, and Pedersen (2016), who discovered that increased employee motivation in the public sector has a good effect on the performance of Danish teachers. Other researchers like Du Plessis, Douangphichit and Dodd (2015), (which included hotel employees) Ryan & Deci, 2008; Ryan & Moller 2017), showed similar findings. Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 41 studies using samples of children and adults revealed that intrinsically motivated people were significantly more engaged in work activities (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008).

Also, according to Mungai and Mungai, (2024), employees who are intrinsically motivated tend to increase their psychological engagement at work, long work hours, and have more energy when performing tasks of work.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study was conducted in Lagos metropolis, Lagos State, Nigeria and made use of research survey design because of its suitability.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised 21,544 private secondary school principals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Stratified sampling techniques was adopted to group private secondary school principals in different local government areas. These principals were conveniently selected from the population judging by their readiness to participate in the study.

### **Research Instrument**

A Self structured questionnaire titled Self-concept, Intrinsic Motivation and Private Secondary School Students' Retention (SIMPSSSR) was validated with reliability coefficient of > 0.70 and was used to collect data through the Google form format with a six-point likert-style scale to



capture the responses of principals' self-concept, intrinsic motivation and influences on the retention of students in Lagos State Private Secondary schools.

### Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the responses of the samples.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### ANALYSIS OF RESULT

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Selected Principals)**

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	38.6%
	Female	61.4%
Educational Status	SSCE	0.0%
	OND/HND	6.8%
	BSc.	70.5%
	MSc.	18.2%
	PhD.	4.5%
Years of Operation	0-5 years	13.6%
	6-10 years	11.4%
	11-15 years	13.6%
	16-20 years	0.0%
	Above 20 years	61.4%
Number of Students	1-500 students/pupils	70.45%
	501-1000 students/pupils	22.72%
	1001-2000 students/pupils	2.28%
	2001-5000 students/pupils	4.55%
Number of Teachers	1-90 teachers	95.46%
	91-180 teachers	2.27%
	181-250 teachers	2.27%

The demographic characteristics of the respondents provide valuable insights into the profiles of principals managing educational institutions in Lagos State. There is a strong female representation, with 61.4% of respondents identifying as women, indicating their significant role in school leadership and contributing to diverse leadership styles in educational management. The majority of respondents are well-educated: 70.5% holds a Bachelor's degree (BSc), 18.2% have a Master's degree (MSc), and 4.5% possess a PhD. This high level of educational attainment suggests a skilled group capable of making informed decisions in school management. Experience is also a key factor, with 61.4% of respondents having over 20 years of experience managing their institutions, reflecting a wealth of expertise and commitment to education. Additionally, most respondents oversee smaller schools, with 70.45% managing 1-500 students and 95.46% employing 1-90 teachers, fostering intimate learning environments that allow for personalized attention and a close-knit community. On the whole, the demographic data shows a group of highly experienced and educated principals predominantly managing smaller, more personalized educational settings.

## TRODUCTION

**Table 2: Analysis of Response for Self-concept and Intrinsic Motivation**

S/ N	Items	Self-concept and Intrinsic Motivation RESPONSES						DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	
		Very High (VH)	High (H)	Moderately High (MH)	Moderately Low (ML)	Low (D)	Very Low (SD)	Mean	STD
1	Intrinsic Motivation	20.5%	47.7%	27.3%	2.3%	2.3%	0.0%	4.82	0.870
2	General Self-Concept	27.3%	43.2%	25.0%	2.3%	2.3%	0.0%	4.91	0.910

The analysis of intrinsic motivation and self-concept factors among respondents reveals very high and positive perceptions, A majority rated their intrinsic motivation (68.2%) and self-concept (70.5%) as "High" or "Very High," This shows that the two psychological factors (self-concept and intrinsic motivation) are seen as key personal strengths. Intrinsic motivation was strong, while general self-concept was positive though with more variability.

**Table 3: Analysis of Response for Students' Retention**

S/ N	Items	School Management (SchMgt) RESPONSES						DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	
		Very High (VH)	High (H)	Moderately High (MH)	Moderately Low (ML)	Low (D)	Very Low (SD)	Mean	STD
1	Students' Retention	15.9%	47.7%	29.5%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.73	0.817

The analysis of students' retention while generally positive, shows room for improvement, as 29.5% of respondents rated it "Moderately High," indicating challenges in long-term engagement. This implies that there is a problem with retention of students in private secondary schools.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis One: Principals' Self-concept and Students' Retention**

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant influence of Principals self-concept on the retention of Lagos State private secondary schools students.**

**Model Summary**

**Table 4: Regression Analysis of Principals' Self-concept and Students' Retention**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.497 <sup>a</sup>	.247	.229	.718	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Self-Concept

The model summary offers a compelling insight into the profound impact of principals' self-concept on student retention. At its core, the findings suggest that the way principals perceive themselves

as leaders has a measurable influence on whether students remain committed to their educational journey.

The R-value (.497) indicates a moderate yet meaningful positive relationship between principal's self-concept and student retention. More strikingly, the R Square value (.247) reveals that 24.7% of the variation in student retention can be attributed to principals' self-concept alone. This means that nearly a quarter of the reasons students choose to stay or leave can be linked to how principals see themselves in their leadership roles. While other factors—such as faculty engagement, institutional culture, and student support—certainly play a role, this result underscores the power of leadership identity in shaping educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the adjusted R Square (.229) suggests that even after adjusting for minor variations, the relationship remains consistent and reliable. The F Change statistic (13.794) and its highly significant p-value (.001) confirm that principals' self-concept is a crucial predictor of student retention, significantly improving the explanatory power of the model.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Principals' Self-concept and Students' Retention**

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.102	7.102	13.794	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	21.625	.515		
	Total	28.727			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Self-Concept

The ANOVA results provide further confirmation of the significant relationship between principals' self-concept and student retention. At the heart of these findings is the understanding that leadership identity within educational institutions is not just a personal trait but a factor that directly influences student persistence. The regression sum of squares (7.102) demonstrates the proportion of variance in student retention that can be explained by principals' self-concept. In contrast, the residual sum of squares (21.625) represents the variation left unexplained by the model, attributed to other factors not included in this analysis. While students' retention is undoubtedly influenced by multiple variables—including institutional policies, faculty engagement, and student support systems—the fact that principals' self-concept alone accounts for a significant portion of this variance is noteworthy.

A particularly striking aspect of the analysis is the F-statistic (13.794), which is considerably high. This indicates that the model provides a meaningful improvement over a model without principals' self-concept as a predictor. More importantly, the p-value (.001) is highly significant, leaving little doubt that the relationship between principals' self-concept and students' retention is not due to chance.

**Table 6: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of Principals' Self-concept and Students' Retention**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.536	.600		4.227	.000
	Principals' Self-Concept	.446	.120	.497	3.714	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Retention

The coefficients table provides a deeper understanding of the precise influence principals' self-concept has on student retention. The constant (B = 2.536, p = .000) represents the expected level of student retention when principals' self-concept is at its minimum. This suggests that even



in the absence of a strong leadership self-concept, some level of student retention exists, likely due to other institutional factors.

However, the real insight lies in the impact of principals' self-concept. With a B value of .446, this means that for every one-unit increase in principals' self-concept, student retention increases by approximately 0.45 units. The standardized beta coefficient (.497) further highlights the strength of this relationship, showing that principals' self-concept is a moderately strong predictor of student retention.

The t-value (3.714) is notably high, with a significance level of .001, confirming that the relationship between self-concept and retention is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance. This reinforces the idea that leaders who see themselves as capable, competent, and influential play a direct role in fostering an environment where students feel encouraged to stay and complete their education.

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant influence of Principals' Intrinsic Motivation on the Retention of Lagos State Private Secondary School Students.**

**Model Summary**

**Table 7: Regression Analysis of Principals' Intrinsic Motivation and Students' Retention**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.288 <sup>a</sup>	.083	.061	.792	.058

a. Predictors: (Constant), principals' Intrinsic Motivation

The model summary provides a glimpse into the relationship between principals' intrinsic motivation and students' retention, revealing a connection that, while present, appears relatively weak. The correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.288$ ) suggests a positive but modest association, indicating that as principals' intrinsic motivation increases, students' retention may also improve—though not significantly. However, when looking at the R Square value of 0.083, it becomes clear that principals' intrinsic motivation accounts for only 8.3% of the variance in student retention. This implies that while motivation may play a role, a vast majority of the factors influencing student retention lie elsewhere, perhaps in areas such as institutional policies, teaching quality, or student engagement strategies.

The Adjusted R Square value (0.061) refines this estimate, ensuring that the model does not overstate the impact of the predictor. Since this value is close to the R Square, it reinforces the idea that intrinsic motivation alone does not hold strong predictive power in this scenario. Meanwhile, the standard error of the estimate (0.792) indicates the degree of deviation in the predictions, suggesting that actual student retention levels fluctuate considerably around the estimated values.

A deeper dive into the change statistics unveils a subtle but intriguing detail. The F Change value of 3.810 tests whether the inclusion of intrinsic motivation as a predictor significantly enhances the model. The Sig. F Change value of 0.058, though slightly above the conventional 0.05 threshold, signals that the predictor is on the verge of statistical significance. This suggests that with a larger sample size or the inclusion of additional influencing factors, principals' intrinsic motivation could emerge as a more meaningful predictor of student retention.

**Table 8: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> of Principals' Intrinsic Motivation and Students' Retention**

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.389	2.389	3.810	.058 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	26.338	.627		
	Total	28.727			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Intrinsic Motivation

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table provides further insight into the regression model, assessing whether principals' intrinsic motivation significantly predicts students' retention.

At the core of this analysis is the F-statistic (3.810), which tests the overall significance of the regression model. The associated p-value (Sig. = 0.058) is slightly above the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that the model is marginally insignificant. This suggests that while principals' intrinsic motivation has some influence on students' retention, it is not strong enough to be deemed statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. However, the result is very close to significance, implying a possible effect that could be more pronounced with a larger sample size or additional predictors.

Breaking down the sum of squares, the Regression Sum of Squares (2.389) represents the portion of the total variability in students' retention that is explained by principals' intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, the Residual Sum of Squares (26.338) accounts for unexplained variance—factors not captured by this model. Since the Total Sum of Squares (28.727) represents the overall variance in student retention, we can infer that only a small portion of this variability is explained by the predictor, aligning with the earlier R Square value of 0.083 (8.3%). The Mean Square values (Regression = 2.389, Residual = 0.627) further emphasize that the unexplained variation in student retention remains considerably high. This reinforces the idea that intrinsic motivation alone is not a dominant predictor and that other factors, such as institutional policies, leadership styles, or student engagement strategies, likely play a more substantial role. While principals' intrinsic motivation appears to have some influence on student retention, the results suggest that it is not a statistically strong predictor on its own. The findings hint at a possible trend, but further research incorporating additional variables could provide a clearer picture of what truly drives student retention in educational settings.

**Table 9: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of Principals' Intrinsic Motivation and Students' Retention**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.422	.679		5.037	.000
	principals' Intrinsic Motivation	.271	.139	.288	1.952	.058

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Retention

The coefficients table offers a closer look at the relationship between principals' intrinsic motivation and students' retention, revealing both the strength and significance of this predictor. At the heart of the model is the constant value (B = 3.422, p = .000), which represents the predicted level of student retention when principals' intrinsic motivation is entirely absent. This baseline suggests that even without intrinsic motivation, certain institutional or structural factors contribute to retention, setting a foundation upon which motivation may further build.

A deeper dive into the unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.271) reveals an encouraging yet modest effect. For every one-unit increase in principals' intrinsic motivation, students' retention improves



by 0.271 units. While this indicates a positive relationship, the relatively small coefficient suggests that intrinsic motivation alone is not a dominant driver of retention but instead plays a supporting role in a larger system of factors influencing students' persistence in school.

Looking at the standard error (0.139) and t-value (1.952), we see that while the effect is present, its strength is not overwhelmingly convincing. The p-value of 0.058 tells an intriguing story—just barely missing the conventional 0.05 threshold for statistical significance. This places the predictor in an area of potential significance, where a slightly larger sample size or additional contextual factors could amplify its impact. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.288) further confirms that while principals' intrinsic motivation contributes somewhat to student retention, it is not the sole or primary influence.

**H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant joint influence of Principals Self-concept and Intrinsic Motivation on the retention of Lagos State private secondary schools students.**

**Model Summary**

**Table 10: Regression Analysis of the Joint Contribution of Principals' Self-concept and Intrinsic Motivation on Students' Retention**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.514 <sup>a</sup>	.264	.229	.718	.002

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Intrinsic Motivation, Principals' Self-Concept

The model summary now incorporates both principals' intrinsic motivation and principals' self-concept as predictors of students' retention, offering a clearer picture of their combined influence. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.514) suggests a moderate positive relationship, indicating that as principals' intrinsic motivation and self-concept improve, students' retention also increases.

A key highlight is the R Square value of 0.264, which reveals that 26.4% of the variance in students' retention can be explained by these two predictors. This is a significant improvement over the previous model that included only intrinsic motivation (which explained just 8.3% of the variance). The Adjusted R Square (0.229) further confirms that, even after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model still accounts for a notable proportion of retention variability, reinforcing the meaningful contribution of these leadership qualities.

Examining the standard error of the estimate (0.718), we see a slight reduction from the earlier model (0.792), suggesting improved prediction accuracy. This indicates that adding principals' self-concept as a predictor has refined the model, reducing unexplained variations in student retention outcomes.

The change statistics offer compelling evidence of this improvement. The R Square Change value (0.264) confirms that adding self-concept increased the model's explanatory power by 26.4%. The F Change value (7.370, p = .002) is statistically significant, indicating that the addition of self-concept significantly improves the model's ability to predict student retention. The p-value of 0.002 is well below the conventional 0.05 threshold, signaling that this enhancement is not due to chance.

These findings suggest that principals' self-concept plays a crucial role in shaping students' retention alongside intrinsic motivation. While intrinsic motivation alone showed only a marginal effect, combining it with self-concept results in a model that is both statistically stronger and more meaningful. This implies that when principals view themselves positively and are internally motivated, their leadership is more effective in fostering an environment that supports student retention.

**Table 11: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> of the Joint Contribution of Principals' Self-concept and Intrinsic Motivation on Students' Retention**

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.597	3.798	7.370	.002 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	21.130	.515		
	Total	28.727			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Retention

The ANOVA results offer compelling evidence that principals' intrinsic motivation and self-concept significantly influence students' retention. By breaking down the total variation in student retention into explained and unexplained components, this analysis provides a clearer picture of how much these leadership qualities contribute to keeping students engaged.

The regression sum of squares (7.597) tells us how much of the variability in student retention can be attributed to principals' intrinsic motivation and self-concept. Meanwhile, the residual sum of squares (21.130) reflects the portion of variability that remains unexplained, indicating that while these two factors are important, other elements—such as institutional policies, faculty engagement, and student support systems—also play a role.

A closer look at the F-statistic (7.370) and its p-value (.002) reveals something significant. The low p-value confirms that this model is highly statistically significant, meaning that the relationship between principals' intrinsic motivation, self-concept, and student retention is not due to chance. This is a major improvement from the earlier model, where intrinsic motivation alone was only marginally significant. The addition of self-concept has strengthened the model, reinforcing the idea that principals who see themselves positively and are internally motivated create environments that enhance student retention.

From a practical standpoint, these results suggest that fostering strong self-belief and internal motivation among principals can translate into tangible benefits for students. Institutions should consider leadership development programmes, mentorship initiatives, and motivational workshops to help principals cultivate a strong self-concept and intrinsic motivation. In doing so, they are not just enhancing their own leadership effectiveness but also creating a lasting impact on student engagement and retention.

**Table 12: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of the Joint Contribution of Principals' Self-concept and Intrinsic Motivation on Students' Retention**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.109	.742		2.844	.007
	principals' Self-Concept	.405	.127	.451	3.179	.003
	principals' Intrinsic Motivation	.131	.133	.139	.980	.333

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Retention

The coefficients table paints a compelling picture of how principals' self-concept and intrinsic motivation shape student retention. It reveals that while both factors play a role in educational leadership, their individual impacts differ in strength and significance.

At the core of the findings lies the powerful influence of self-concept. With an unstandardized coefficient of B = 0.405, the results suggest that as a principal's self-concept strengthens, student



retention improves significantly. The t-value (3.179) and p-value (.003) confirm that this effect is not a coincidence but a statistically meaningful relationship. The standardized beta coefficient (0.451) further highlights that self-concept is the strongest predictor among the two variables, reinforcing the idea that principals who have a strong sense of identity and confidence in their leadership abilities create environments where students are more likely to stay engaged and committed.

In contrast, intrinsic motivation tells a different story. While principals' internal drive is undoubtedly important, its direct effect on student retention appears weaker and statistically insignificant ( $B = 0.131$ ,  $p = .333$ ). The low t-value (.980) suggests that, when considered alongside self-concept, intrinsic motivation alone does not substantially impact student retention. However, this does not mean motivation lacks value—it may simply play an indirect role, potentially influencing self-concept or shaping leadership behaviours in ways that were not directly captured in this model.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first hypothesis of no significant influence of Principal's self-concept on students' retention was not rejected as results showed a considerably stronger correlation ( $R = .497$ ,  $R^2 = .247$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Even when both self-concept and intrinsic motivation were analyzed together, self-concept remained the dominant predictor ( $Beta = .451$ ,  $p = .003$ ), whereas intrinsic motivation lost statistical significance ( $Beta = .139$ ,  $p = .333$ ). These results indicate that principals who have confidence in their leadership abilities, decision-making skills, and overall impact on institutional processes are more effective in fostering an environment conducive to student retention. The ANOVA results further confirmed the statistical significance of self-concept, as its inclusion in the regression model notably enhanced its explanatory power ( $F = 13.794$ ,  $p = .001$ ). The coefficient analysis ( $B = .446$ ,  $p = .001$ ) reinforces that for every one-unit increase in an administrator's self-concept, student retention improves substantially, further underscoring the transformative role of leadership identity in educational success.

The result of this study agrees with similar studies on teachers' self concept and variables like students' academic performance. For instance, the study of Ajmal and Rafique, 2018 and that of Glotova and Wilhelm (2013) found positive relationship between teachers' self-concept and students' academic performance. The result of this study also agrees with the Covington's 1992 theory of self-worth which assumes that individuals are primarily motivated by the need to protect their sense of self-worth and can avoid situations where failure could threaten their perceived ability. This means principals could do anything to protect their self worth of failing to retain students in the school since they know that is an indication of perceived failure or achievement by outsiders.

On the second hypothesis of no significant influence of principals' intrinsic motivation on students' retention, the null hypothesis of no significant influence was rejected. While intrinsic motivation, defined as a principal's internal drive and passion for their role, was initially expected to strongly predict students retention, the results indicate a relatively weak relationship ( $R = .288$ ,  $R^2 = .083$ ,  $p = .058$ ). Although motivation fosters enthusiasm and commitment, it does not necessarily translate into institutional effectiveness in retaining students. This suggests that while principals' dedication is important, their perceived ability to lead and make impactful decisions plays a more crucial role in student persistence. Intrinsic motivation alone, without a strong leadership identity, may be insufficient in creating a structured and supportive educational environment that encourages students to remain engaged.

Although there is a dearth of adequate research on the influence of principals' intrinsic motivation and students' retention, similar studies that sought relationship between principal's motivational techniques and students' academic performance found significant positive relationships between the variables. For instance, the study of Ogunsola and Okechukwu, (2023) found a significant relationship between principals' motivational techniques and students' academic performance in



Federal Capital Territory (FCT) junior secondary schools, Abuja, Nigeria. This finding is different from the result of the present study as it showed a positive significant whereas this present study showed non-significance. This may be due to the fact that while the previous study focused on students' academic performance, this present study focused on students' retention. The implication of this is that other factors apart from intrinsic motivation of principals could significantly influence private secondary school students' retention.

The result of this study does not also agree with the Vroom' expectancy theory that anchored this study as it posits that performance of employees is dependent on their expectations of reward. This means other factors apart from principals' high performance influences their ability to retain students.

The third hypothesis which sought for the significant joint contribution of self-concept and intrinsic motivation, the result showed self-concept as the strongest predictor among the two variables. This implies that principals who have a strong sense of identity and confidence in their leadership abilities create environments where students are more likely to stay engaged and committed, whereas, the influence of intrinsic motivation on student's retention is weaker and statistically insignificant. This means when considered alongside self-concept, intrinsic motivation alone does not substantially impact students' retention.

Ultimately, the results suggest that principals who perceive themselves as capable leaders create academic environments where students feel supported, motivated, and more likely to complete their educational journey.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that principals' self-concept has positive significant influence on students' retention, while intrinsic motivation of principals do not have such significant influence. This implies that private secondary school principals could go to any length to enhance students' retention in order to sustain their self-concept (self worth) but they may not be intrinsically motivated to drive students' retention. It can therefore be concluded that certain institutional or structural factors contribute to retention without intrinsic motivation,

Nevertheless, while intrinsic motivation alone showed a marginal influence on students' retention, combining it with self-concept leads to a statistically stronger and more meaningful relationship. This implies that when principals view themselves positively and are internally motivated, their leadership is more effective in fostering an environment that supports student retention. Thus, the joint contribution of the influence of both self-concept and intrinsic motivation of principals is significant as the significant effect of principals' self-concept has robbed off the negative effect of intrinsic motivation on students' retention..

## Recommendations

These findings have critical implications for institutional policies and leadership development initiatives. Thus, from the above foregoing, the study recommends:

- i. Strengthening principals' self-concept through leadership training, mentorship and strategic empowerment can enhance their perceived ability to drive more of students' retention.
- ii. Educational institutions should prioritise programmes that cultivate principals' confidence in their roles, fostering a culture where leadership efficacy translates into meaningful student engagement and persistence.
- iii. Implementation of operational strategies that will boost the intrinsic motivation index of principals should be put in place.
- iv. Government policies that could enhance productivity and engender administrators interest including introducing a capacity building framework that not only increase knowledge, but also enhance professional practices



- v. Regulatory body could help the school administrators to improve through continuous unbiased assessments that could facilitate improvement of schools, students and generally enhance the quality and standard of private schools.
- iv. Private secondary school owners should review and modify their policies and structures that can enhance intrinsic motivation of principals.
- v. Inclusion of policies that promote work flexibility, increased principal involvement in decision-making processes without undue interference and the creation of a supportive environment at work
- iv.** Future research should further explore the interaction between self-concept, leadership styles, and institutional culture to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underpinning student retention.



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