

Principals' Path-Goal Leadership Practices and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between the principals' path-goal leadership practices and teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria. Correlational and descriptive research designs were adopted, its population comprised all Principals, and teachers in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State Education District V. The sample sizes were 351 respondents through the use of Taro Yamane Sampling Technique, however, 321 was used for the analysis. One instrument was used, but divided into two, these included 'Principals' Path-Goal Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PPGLPQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), to collect data after ensuring their validity and establishing their reliability using Cronbach Alpha method. Findings indicate that a positive relationship exist between participative leadership style and teachers' job performance in Lagos State Education District V ($r = .847, p > 0.05$); the study also found that there was a positive and significant relationship between directive leadership style and teachers' job performance in Lagos State Education District V ($r = .816, p > 0.05$); and study further found that achievement-oriented leadership style is positively and significantly related with teachers' job performance in Lagos State Education District V ($r = .787, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the research recommended that in order to support teachers in achieving their learning objectives, principals should adopt appropriate leadership effective styles that fit their unique setting.

Keywords: Path-Goal Leadership, Participative leadership, Directive leadership, Achievement-oriented, Teachers' job performance.

Introduction

The job performance of teachers in Nigerian public senior secondary schools is a critical issue that demands attention and concerted efforts to address. The quality of education in any country is intrinsically tied to the effectiveness and dedication of its educators. In the Nigerian

context, and Lagos State in particular the performance of teachers in public senior secondary schools has been a subject of concern due to various factors that impact their ability to deliver quality education to students. The relationship between principals and teachers within educational institutions is a fundamental factor in shaping the overall effectiveness and success of the learning environment. Principals play a pivotal role in providing leadership and guidance to teachers, impacting not only the organisational culture but also the job performance of teachers. One prominent leadership theory that has been extensively studied in the educational context is the path-goal leadership theory, which focuses on how leaders can motivate and support their followers to achieve their goals.

Path-goal leadership theory, developed by Robert House (1971) emphasizes the role of leaders in clarifying the paths to goal attainment for their followers and providing the necessary support to ensure their success. This theory posits that leaders can adopt different leadership styles, such as directive, participative, or achievement-oriented, based on the needs and characteristics of their followers and the situational context.

According to McShane and Glinow (2010), leadership is defined as the ability of a leader to persuade, inspire, and guide followers to contribute to the success and efficacy of the organisation they are a part of. Leadership is more of a process where one's influence inspires others to contribute to the goals of the organisation. Therefore, it is essential that managers and supervisors in the field of education understand how to inspire their staff to meet the objectives that have been set out (Malik, 2012). The effectiveness of workers' work is significantly impacted by leadership. According to Voon, Lo, Ngui, and Ayob (2011), an effective leader would provide an organisation direction and help subordinates achieve their goals.

According to the path-goal theory, followers are more likely to be satisfied when their leaders operate in a way that removes shortcomings and improves both individual and subordinate satisfaction (House, 1996). The Path-goal theory has been proposed by academicians as a means of comprehending leadership. According to the path-goal theory, a leader sets and clarifies goals with those under him or her and makes sure those goals are shared with them (House, 1971). provides assignments to subordinates in accordance with their credentials, knowledge, experience, and skill. Additionally, the leader helps the followers decide which path is best for achieving the desired goals, establishes roles and responsibilities by taking away obstacles to performance and

encouraging cooperation among team members. Finally, by lowering stress and establishing clear expectations for others and external controls, the leader creates personal prospects for fulfilment and greater job performance (House, 1971).

An effective leader may significantly impact workers' positive feelings and help them achieve excellent achievements. Participatory leadership, according to Puni and Okoe (2014), is the process by which superiors and subordinates in an organisation collaborate to make choices or share influence. Employee cooperation, engagement, and participation in decision-making and problem-solving processes are all used by participatory leadership styles (Bhatti et al., 2019). According to Akpoviroro et al. (2018), it is referred to as a democratic leadership style, which involves all team members in determining important objectives and creating plans and processes to reach those objectives. By incorporating people in the stages of planning, decision-making, and execution, leaders assign tasks to their team in this manner (Wiesenthal et al, 2015). One of the psychological motivating activities that might be used to raise employee morale and productivity is making sure that workers are involved in decision-making processes that impact them and their jobs (Brown, 2011).

Engaging managers motivate educators to explore novel prospects and enhance their knowledge by gathering, disseminating, and integrating data (Somech, 2010). According to Chen and Tjosvold (2006), opinions are utilized to solve issues in cooperative decision-making and constructive controversy—a process in which people actively share their beliefs and try to understand those of others. Thus, it can be concluded that innovative thinking and organisational learning possibilities are fostered by participatory leaders.

According to Fiedler (1995) and Sagie (1997), directive leadership is the practice of giving subordinates guidelines for action and decision-making that support the leader's viewpoint. According to Cruz, Henningson, and Smith (1999), it is also often seen as a task-oriented behaviour with a strong propensity to dominate encounters, manage conversations, and directly oversee job completion. In contrast to leaders who see their subordinates' growth as the most crucial component of successful leadership, those who issue orders to their subordinates place less emphasis on involvement (Fiedler, 1995; Sagie, 1997). As a result, this leader encourages followers to be less independent by making them more reliant and rigid (Euwema, Wendt & Van Emmerik, 2007).

By giving clear instructions to subordinates with the assumption that they will follow established operational procedures, a directive leadership style enables staff members to comprehend the expectations of management (Mullins, 2005). Because of its propensity to control and compel subordinates to conduct certain actions towards task achievement, this leadership style is seen as autocratic. As a result, the only way to effectively communicate with them is via force. In a fast-paced work setting where subordinates must make snap judgments to direct their daily activities, a directive leadership style is seen suitable. When a manager uses a directive leadership style, they instill confidence in their employees' abilities to take appropriate action when needed. This allows employees to grow accustomed to the leader's familiarity with organisational procedures, which in turn makes them more motivated and productive in helping the organisation meet its goals and objectives (Bass, 1990).

Directive leadership, according to Fiedler (1995) and Sagie (1997), gives staff members a standard by which to make decisions and recommendations, with the understanding that leaders will direct their thoughts and opinions in a direction that will help the organisation achieve its goals and objectives. Cruz, Henningson, and Smith (1999) analyze the data and conclude that managers who issue directions to their subordinates place less value on their participation in daily decision-making in an effort to cut down on the amount of time they spend deliberating. Employees inside an organisation thus depend on the leader's ideas and opinions on the most effective ways to achieve the original goals with great ease and accuracy, and this influences how motivated these subordinates are to work (Euwema, Wendt & Van Emmerik, 2007). In addition, directive leadership helps subordinates to understand and meet the expectations of their superiors, which in turn allows them to perform to the best of their abilities in the organisation's priority areas as they become the established standard operating procedures. Regardless of the approach chosen by the leader, they must decide how to motivate staff to produce.

A directive leadership style is appropriate in situations when choices need to be taken quickly and immediately, according to Adair (2005). In such a scenario, the leader acquires complete control and jurisdiction over the actions of subordinates in the workplace. Because of this, followers completely embrace the leader's views and directives as the organisation's standard operating procedure, suggesting that they have no option but to behave in accordance with the established moral and performance standards. This is due to the fact that followers of such leaders

consider them to be infallible, since they assume all management responsibilities inside the company, including ideation, execution, and termination. Employers may take supervisors more seriously when they use a directive leadership style, which also informs staff members of the organisation's rules and regulations.

Despite the above, it is believed that a directive leadership style is harmful to workers (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Because they have the potential to mislead their followers into doing activities that are counterproductive to achieving desired goals, organisations that depend on one individual to make all of the choices for the others to follow may find themselves in a difficult position. This viewpoint is supported by other academics, including Probst and Raisch (2005), who claim that the majority of organisations have failed because they relied too heavily on directive leadership styles, which prevent followers from thinking outside of their immediate surroundings because they are obligated to follow predefined paths, which negatively impacts employee performance.

A leader who is achievement-oriented motivates their followers to provide their best effort and exhibits a high level of confidence in their capacity to complete the task at hand (Mat, 2008; Jones & Geroge, 2011). Achievement-oriented leadership establishes clear and difficult objectives for subordinates. The leader sets a high bar for performance and encourages ongoing development in followers; the leader has great faith in followers (Northouse, 2013). Considering the aforementioned, some leaders can claim that they push their staff to reach the greatest standards of performance, yet followers seldom experience constant development.

Achievement-Oriented leaders have faith in their subordinates' talents and expect them to meet demanding standards and objectives (Jones & George, 2011; Northouse, 2010). Conversely, this is partially due to a lack of trust between the leader and followers in the educational setting. When followers are capable, have an external locus of control, are receptive to authoritarian leadership, the task at hand is straightforward, authority is strong, and coworkers' job performance is either excellent or poor, achievement-oriented leadership is suitable (Lussier & Achua, 2010). However, this research makes the case that achievement-oriented leadership may improve performance by identifying, supporting, and assigning tasks to followers. The study generally agrees with observations made by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) that successful school leaders influence achievement through the development and support of effective

teachers as well as the implementation of effective organisational processes. These observations are part of a growing consensus regarding the attributes of effective head teachers.

According to Negron (2008), an achievement-oriented approach is appropriate for tasks that are not entirely apparent and for subordinates who may want encouragement to feel more confident about their abilities to do the assigned work. An achievement-oriented strategy works well in complicated work environments with ambiguous conditions. This is due to the fact that it might boost subordinates' self-assurance that they can accomplish the objectives. On the other hand, achievement-oriented leadership is thought to boost followers' effort and happiness in complicated and unstructured tasks by boosting their self-assurance and anticipation of successfully completing a difficult work or objective. This is clarified by the notions of the Path-Goal Theory, which holds that the environment and staff elements both moderate the link between work happiness and leadership style and staff performance (Northouse, 2016). Path goal theory states that in order for a leader to be effective, they must: identify the needs of the people they lead and make an effort to meet these needs at work; provide incentives to people who achieve their goals; and assist subordinates in determining the best routes to follow in order to accomplish their objectives (Northouse, 2016).

Effective leadership is a major problem for many in a variety of organisations, the educational system included. Within the secondary education system, school administrators have a leadership role, while instructors' function as subordinates. The Part-Goal Theory of Leadership identified the following behaviours (styles) of successful leadership: directive, participatory, supporting, and achievement-oriented. These behaviours inspire teachers to give their all at work. How can school administrators' actions encourage, empower, and motivate teachers to meet the required learning outcomes? When it comes to using any certain leadership behaviour that will result in the accomplishment of a given outcome or school target, path-goal leadership theory has a lot to offer the field of education. The question at hand is how educators—teachers and school principals—view, utilize, and carry out path-goal leadership techniques in order to maximize academic objectives.

Path-goal theory suggests that leaders should adapt their style based on the characteristics of their subordinates and the nature of the task. However, in the education sector, there may be constraints on the extent to which leaders can adapt their style due to institutional policies,

curriculum requirements, and standardized assessments. This lack of flexibility can hinder the effectiveness of path-goal leadership practices in optimizing teachers' job performance.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the principals' path-goal leadership practices and teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

- i. examine the influence of participative leadership style on teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria.
- ii. examine the influence of directive leadership style on teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria.
- iii. find out the relationship between achievement-oriented leadership style on teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between participative leadership style and teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between directive leadership style and teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between achievement-oriented leadership style and teachers' job performance in public senior secondary schools, Education District V, Lagos, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey gives room to study both small and large population through a careful study of the sample chosen in order to discover the relative incidence and distribution of variables. The researcher used this type of survey design for this study as it would help to limit the response of the respondents to the scope to which this study was conducted. Population for this study consisted of all principals and teachers in the public secondary schools in Lagos State Education District V. The total population of principals in senior secondary school Education District V, Lagos State is 69 and that of teachers is 2,825 (Lagos State Education, 2023). Therefore, the total population of the study is 2,894. The total population of principals in Education District V was utilised for this study due to their small size while the sample size of teachers were deduced using Taro Yamane formula was utilised and the total sample size

selected for this study is 351 using the simple random technique because it gives equal opportunity to the entire respondents to participate in the study without bias. However, 321 copies of questionnaire were finally collected and used for analysis.

A self-structured questionnaire titled “Principals’ Path-Goal Leadership Practices Questionnaire (PPGLPQ)” and Teachers’ Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) was used for collection of data. This questionnaire was in two sections. Section A was on demographic data while section B was on the variables selected from the study. The questionnaire was developed in line with Likert-type such as Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Responses were scored by indicating appropriate information with (√), with 27 items for (PPGLPQ) and 15 items for (TJPQ) respectively. To ensure the reliability of the study instrument was subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and the result yielded 0.89 for Principal Path-Goal Leadership practices Questionnaire and 0.70 for Teachers Job Performance Questionnaire. The instrument were therefore considered highly reliable. Inferential statistics was employed to analyse data that was collected, that is the three hypotheses formulated was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance with the aids of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 24.0.

Results

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between principals’ participative leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V.

Table 1: Correlation Showing Relationship between Principals’ Participative Leadership Style and Teacher’ Job Performance

		Principals’ Participative Leadership Style	Teacher’ Job Performance
Principals’ Participative Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.847*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	321	321
Teacher’ Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.847*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	321	321

The result of the test performed indicates that there exists a significant relationship between principals’ participative leadership style and teachers’ job performance in public senior secondary schools in Education District V of Lagos State ($r = .847, p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principals’ participative leadership style and teachers’ job performance in public senior secondary schools in Education District V of Lagos State is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between principals’ directive leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V.

Table 2: Correlation Showing Relationship between Principals’ Directive Leadership Style and Teacher’ Job Performance

		Principals’ Directive Leadership Style	Teacher’ Job Performance
Principals’ Directive Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.816*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	321	321
Teacher’ Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.816*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	321	321

The result of the test performed indicates that there exists a positive but low relationship between principals’ directive leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V of Lagos State ($r = .816, p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principals’ directive leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V of Lagos State is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between principals’ achievement-oriented leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V.

Table 3: Correlation Showing Relationship between Principals’ Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style and Teacher’ Job Performance

		Principals’ Achievement- Oriented Leadership Style	Teacher’ Job Performance
Principals’ Achievement-Oriented Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.787*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	321	321
Teacher’ Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.787*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	321	321

The result of the test performed shows that there exists a significant relationship between principals’ achievement-oriented leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V of Lagos State ($r = .787, p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between principals’ achievement-oriented leadership style and teachers’ job performance in Education District V of Lagos State is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Participative leadership styles play a crucial role in shaping an organisation's culture and influencing the performance and satisfaction of its employees. In the educational sector, effective leadership is paramount to fostering a positive environment that supports teachers' job performance and overall well-being. One leadership style that has gained significant attention in recent years is participative leadership. When teachers feel that their voices are heard and their opinions matter, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work. Participative leaders create a supportive and inclusive environment where teachers feel valued and respected, leading to higher levels of job performance.

Sharing authority and responsibility among subordinates was approved by the participatory leadership method (Nahavandi, 2014). Ford (2006), on the other hand, emphasized that giving employees a say in decisions made at work might raise their degree of happiness and improve performance. This claim is backed by an empirical research by Sarti (2014), which found that using a participatory strategy improves subordinates' performance and satisfaction. This theory is used in educational institutions by encouraging leaders to take a participatory leadership stance,

focusing on fostering innovation and creativity by gathering fresh ideas, making recommendations, and proposing solutions that would increase institutional efficacy.

The directive leadership style according to this study showed a positive and significant relationship with teachers' job performance. This result conflicts with that of Mendez et al. (2013), whose investigation of workers in construction firms revealed a negative and significant correlation between the use of financial resources by employees and directed leadership style ($r = -0.145, P \leq .05$). The results of the research also conflict with those of Euwema et al. (2014), who found that leaders who pushed for the adoption of regular behaviours, regulations, and procedures undermined follower confidence and had a negative impact on production quality ($r = -.15, p \leq .05$). Nonetheless, the results of this research concur with those of two studies involving school personnel and head teachers. For example, Ijah (2012) found that the use of a directive leadership style had a positive and significant relationship with the job performance of the teaching staff in secondary schools in Nigeria, where 70% of the principals applied the style. ($r = 0.5007, p \leq .05$). A different research conducted in 2016 by Wachira, Tanui, and Kalai with employees in public primary schools in Kenya's Nakuru County discovered a strong and favourable correlation between teaching staff and administrators' directed leadership style ($\rho (305) = 0.592, p \leq .05$).

A leader sets clear expectations for everyone under their supervision, maintains complete control over all planning and schedules, and requires that all workers follow all protocols and perform to the required levels. To put it simply, leaders who use this approach clearly define the duties of their followers and what is expected of them. In public primary schools in Nakuru, a research by Wachira, et al. (2016) discovered a positive and significant link between head teachers' directed leadership style and teachers' work performance ($\rho (305) = 0.592, p < 0.05$). In a 2015 research, Chege, Wachira, and Mwenda investigated how 354 small and medium-sized organisations' strategic plans were implemented in relation to their leadership styles. The findings showed that the execution of strategic plans was favourably and substantially impacted by a directed leadership style. However, other research has shown a negative correlation between employee performance and a demanding leadership style. A research on the impact of leadership styles on worker performance in a private Malaysian organisation was conducted by Basit, Sebastian, and Hassan (2017). The research used many components to ascertain the presence of a directive leadership style, such as leader evaluations, clearly defined rules, instructions and

procedures, incentives and penalties for improved performance, and a leader's reluctance to provide an explanation for their actions. Their study's conclusions showed that a directive leadership style significantly and negatively impacted worker performance.

Leaders that are achievement-oriented communicate their expectations to their subordinates. They frequently create attainable objectives with potential for high performance standards, have faith in their subordinates' talents, and support their ongoing efforts to enhance performance (Saleem, et al. 2020). The results of this research suggest that an achievement-oriented leadership style, which is tempered by the need for performance, positively enhances teachers' recognition and hence raises work happiness. In complicated work environments with unpredictable outcomes, headteachers are shown to benefit from an achievement-oriented approach as it boosts their confidence in achieving their objectives (Martin, 2012). The findings of this study, however, conflicted with those of a 2016 study by Sagnak, who found a negative relationship between an achievement-oriented leadership style and the performance of employees with low levels of psychological stability and conscientiousness. It has already been proven that goal-focused leadership results in high emotional exhaustion and burnout.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have successfully proved a significant relationship between the principal's path-goal leadership practices (participative, directive and achievement-oriented) and teachers' job performance. The result of this study indicated that the more principal applied path-goal leadership practices the more satisfied the teachers will performance their job effectively. In addition, the enhancement of teachers' job performance can be predicted by principal's path-goal leadership practices. The dimension of path-goal leadership style which was significantly affecting teachers' job performance were participative leadership, directive leadership and achievement-oriented dimension. Obviously, leaders must lead the organisation according to the situation and condition in the organisation. The success and failure of an organisation either in business or public sector is usually perceived as the success or failure of the leader. This study is expected to broaden the existing knowledge in the educational administration. Findings of this study will have its practical implication to help school leaders to enhance their leadership style with a better leadership approach.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. In order to support teachers in achieving education-related objectives, principals need to embrace appropriate leadership effectiveness methods that are tailored to their unique setting.
2. Before being assigned to leadership roles, educators should have access to chances for professional growth, especially in the area of leadership.
3. Education stakeholders should keep emphasizing how important it is for school administrators to demonstrate strong leadership in the day-to-day management of the institution.
4. Given the importance of the relationships and outcomes between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance, it is imperative that participatory leadership practices be positively embraced. Specifically, teachers' autonomy and independence need to be fostered in order to significantly improve their job performance in secondary schools.

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