

Principal Leadership Styles and Secondary School Teachers Job Performance in Edo South Senatorial Zone, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Leadership in any organisation is pivotal to the success or failure of set goals. The Principal, being the chief Executive of the secondary school, galvanises the available human and material resources toward the attainment of the school goals. His personal characteristics as well as his work qualities contribute to the attainment or otherwise of group goals of the school. The study aimed at establishing the relationship between principal leadership styles and teachers job performance. The study investigated the relationship between principal leadership styles and teachers job performance attitude. The population of the study consisted of the 125 public secondary school principals and 1,523 teachers in Edo South Senatorial Zone, Nigeria. Of the seven Local Government Areas, three were selected for analysis while 175 teachers were sub-set sampled for the study. Three research questions were raised. While one was answered directly, the other two were hypothesised. The research instruments were designed to elicit responses from teachers of the Edo South Senatorial Zone of Nigeria. Self-developed questionnaire were subjected to experts validity while Cronbach's alpha was used to obtain 0.782 coefficient reliability. Descriptive statistics and Pearson moment correlation coefficient were used to analyse data. It was found that secondary school Principals in sampled schools predominantly employed democratic leadership style. It found also that teacher's involvement in co-curricular activities is not dictated by the leadership style being adopted by their principals in the school which is germane for the physical and emotional development of the human community. Recommendations were made to sustain the team spirit existing in the public secondary schools in the zone.

Keywords: Leadership style, Job performance, Lesson delivery, Curriculum activities, Postcovid-19 era.

Introduction

Leadership in education like every other organisation is pivotal to the success or failure of the group goals. When two or more persons have a task to accomplish there is a need for leadership to direct actions toward attainment of objectives. The principal is the leader or chief executive of a secondary school. He leads the team in implementing educational policies in the secondary level of education. The secondary school, according to the National Policy on Education is the educational institution that is the bridge between the primary and tertiary education. There are many forms of leadership styles in the literature. Some classified them as democratic, authoritative or laissez faire leadership styles. Some classified leadership styles into transformational or transactional leadership. Yet, others could see them as idiographic, nomothetic or transactional leadership styles. No matter the nomenclature, there are generally three sides to which leadership styles could tint toward. They are democratic or participatory, autocratic or dictatorial and the laissez faire leadership styles.

The principal being the secondary school manager could adopt any of them as the situation demands to run an effective administration. Personal characteristics of principals and their adopted leadership style are very germane to the success or otherwise of the group goals. Hence, Ijeoma (2005) believed that the leader is one who can get things done by enlisting the efforts of others. She believed that leadership involves the use of influence as distinct from forcible domination or coercion. The principal is the Chief Executive officer of the secondary school hence the success or otherwise of administrative and instructional achievements rest on his shoulder. He/she galvanises the available resources to provide the direction to which their energies should be channelled in order to achieve set goals. Pardosi and Utari (2022) defines principal leadership as the principal's effort to influence, encourage, guide, and direct teachers, staff, students, parents, and other related individuals to work together in achieving set goals.

All human resources of the school matters to the principal hence he motivates student, teaching and non-teaching workforce as well as community toward attainment of the school goals. Akpa (2002) asserted the expected qualities of the 21st century principals viz;

Having very clear and informed visions of what they want their schools to become-vision that focuses primarily on students and their needs;

Translating these visions into goals for their schools and expectations for the teachers, students and administrations;

Establishing a school climate that supports and encourages progress toward achieving these goals and expectations;

Continuously monitoring progress and

Intervening in a supportive or corrective manner, when and where necessary, such that optimal teaching and learning perpetually remain the goal.

These certainly call for professional leadership of the school. Leadership involves the use of influence or power to elicit the co-operation of subordinates in achieving group goals. Scholars have discussed various forms of leadership style. Ijeoma (2005), Edobor (2006), Peretomode (2012), and Ejiogu and Ogonor (2014) discussed different leadership styles that could be explored for the administration of the schools.

This study is anchored on the Fiedler's situation contingency leadership theory. Fielder (1967) assumed that leadership is composed from the experience one has and the situation one finds one self. He believes that good leadership results in team work and the ability to move subordinates along with well-defined task to the attainment of set goals. The school is such a place that individual efforts can hardly lead to the attainment of group goals. It is like a football team that thrives on team collaboration and cooperation of individuals and departments toward set target. Ijeoma (2004) discussed three leadership styles in the form of nomothetic, idiographic and transactional leadership. The nomothetic leadership style emphasises organisational rules and regulations in order to achieve goals. It is more concerned with production. Idiographic leadership on the other hand is more concerned with people rather than production while transactional leadership style tends to balance social relations among workers and environmental influence on productivity. It advocates for production while meeting workers needs and challenges. Thus, leadership styles adopted could influence the attainment of set goals.

Ejiogu and Ogonor (2014) handled leadership style through the path-goal leadership theory as applied to the school setting. The theory identifies four specific kinds of leadership styles viz; directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented leadership styles. The Directive leadership believes that the leader should provide guidelines, details of what subordinates should or should not do, set performance level or standards, ensures rules are strictly followed and punishment given for infractions. Here, subordinates participation is not welcome in making decisions. The supportive leadership believes that subordinate should be supported with their needs to achieve the group goals. Principals employing the supportive leadership style give all needed support in terms of advice, counsel, mentorship, guidance, coaching etc so that school targets are realised. Participative leadership expects to consult subordinates before decisions are taken. He respects their ideas and takes them into consideration when arriving at decisions. Achievement-oriented leadership is poised towards goal attainment no matter what. Under achievement oriented leadership style goals should be challenging hence principals employing them set such and expects that they should be attained. Pardosi and Utari (2022) viewed leadership as people-focused leadership orientation and task-focused leadership orientation.

Edobor (2006) discussed leadership style in terms of principal's attitudinal behavioural tendencies such as democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire and democratic manipulator. Democratic leadership practice provides liberty for all to co-operate in the spirit of fairness toward goal attainment. On the other hand, autocratic leadership style tends to be more coercive in eliciting workers contribution toward goal attainment. The laissez-faire leadership style is one that is more or less not concerned with whatever approach any of the teacher wishes to employ toward group attainment. The democratic manipulator hides under democratic tendencies to manipulate workers in order to achieve his goals. Even though democratic tendencies has become fashionable in modern society, the democratic manipulator may only hide under the guise of committee to appoint people of like minds in order to achieve his aims through manipulating the process to achieve his goal. The Nigerian society is still replete with autocratic behavioural tendencies probably because of her colonial experience and military incursion into Nigerian political terrain which has permeated all social sector of the society.

Waters (2013) in her examination of leadership styles felt that it could be transformational or transactional. Transformational leadership as applied to the school provides a platform for both the Principal and the teachers to

perform their jobs by encouraging one another to attain greater heights. Waters (2013) considers Transformational leaders to have high ethical and moral values and can motivate, influence and encourage people to work together. Transactional leadership style on the other hand is effective in completing specific tasks by managing each people individually, little room can be left for group decision making and at times such leadership style could be viewed as controlling, bossing and dictatorial.

Whatever angle with which one looks at leadership style, what is clear is that some persons want collaboration and motivation for the whole group to succeed together as we found in democratic, participative, supportive and transformational leadership style. On the other hand, a principal may be applying elements of coercion in dictating the tune while the others are expected to follow accordingly as found in nomothetic, autocratic, directive and transactional leadership style. Principals must weigh the goals, the teachers, and the environmental imperatives before arriving at the most suitable leadership style to adopt. In any case, whatever leadership style a principal adopts is not mutually exclusive of any other leadership style. Time and events influence the leadership style that could work best.

Leadership behaviour depends on the personal and professional dispositions of the principal, his staff and the situation they operate in. For example, in Edo State, public secondary schools Principals most often are not part of teacher recruitment, hiring, promotion processes and the like. The Ministry of Education or its agency; the Post Primary Education Board takes major decisions about the teaching personnel functions thereby limiting the principal personnel functions. Even then, 'leadership also depends very much on the personal characteristics of the leader, the nature of the task and the character of the social context in which leadership is to be exercised' (Peretomode 2012).

Audu and Oliha (2008) studied the relationship between principal leadership on teachers morale and students academic achievement in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. They adopted the descriptive survey design in which 200 subjects were randomly sampled. They used internal examination from which three core subjects; English language, Mathematics and Biology were sampled for academic achievement analysis. With a calculated X^2 49.48 and critical X^2 of 5.99 at 0.05 alpha level, they found significant relationship between principal leadership style and students academic achievement. Hence, the study found majority of respondents opined that their principals are autocratic. Pedroso, Siason and Tangco-Siason (2022), studied the subject matter in Philippines during the covid 19 pandemics era. It was a qualitative study. The study concluded that the Principal has the professional responsibility and operational accountability of leading the school stake-holders to safety during and after the pandemics and they were not found wanting.

Saleem, Aslam, Yin, and Rao (2020) studied Principal leadership in China using the path-goal, directive, supportive, achievement-oriented and participative leadership styles. They found that the directive leadership style had a significant effect on teacher job performance in sampled schools. On the contrary, middle management did not find the participative leadership style as a significant predictor of teacher job performance. They explained that the result was not unexpected in a non-western setting where the research took place. Omekeand Onah (2012) studied the influence of principals' leadership styles in teachers' job satisfaction in Nsukka education zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. They found the principals adopted pre-dominantly autocratic leadership style. Though autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles have a negative influence on the job satisfaction of both the male and female teachers. Atasoy (2020) investigated the relationship between school Principals' leadership styles, school culture and organisational change in North Cyprus. Data collected from randomly selected 382 teachers were analysed using Pearson correlation, regression and path analysis. He found that school Principals exhibited transformational leadership style characteristics. The research established that teachers perceived their school culture as strong while transformational leadership style of the Principals strengthened organisational change process.

Adegbesan (2012) studied the phenomenon in Abeokuta South Local Government Area of Ogun State and found that principals are autocratic in their leadership disposition. The study also found that there was a significant relationship between the principal style of leadership and the teaching/learning atmosphere among teachers and students. Udegbunname, Ukuhor, Mbanugo, and Anigbogu. (2020) investigation was in Awka education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. They conducted a descriptive survey and established negative relationship between principals transformational leadership style and productivity of business studies teachers in secondary schools in the zone. On the contrary, they found a positive relationship between transactional leadership style and productivity of business studies teachers in secondary schools. It was recommended that Principals should adopt a transactional leadership style rather than transformational leadership style to enhance business studies teachers' motivation consistently.

Adeyemi (2010) focused on Ondo state of Nigeria where principal's leadership styles were investigated. The research found that democratic leadership style was predominant in the administration of secondary schools in her area of coverage. It was however revealed that Teachers' job performance was found to be better in schools having principals using autocratic leadership style than in schools having principals using democratic or Laissez-faire leadership styles. She recommended that a mixture of autocratic and democratic leadership style should be adopted in managing the secondary schools. Waters (2013) studied leadership styles and job satisfaction in the primary schools in Australia. Participants perceived that their principals employ more of transformational than transactional leadership style on the one hand and that they (teachers) were satisfied on their jobs. The finding suggests that teachers' perception of principals leadership styles are significantly related to teacher job satisfaction.

Adebowale (2020), focused on principal's leadership style and teachers motivation as correlates of classroom effectiveness in Ekiti State, Nigeria. He found that principal leadership style influences teacher effectiveness. Parveen, Tran, Kumar and Shah (2020) investigated impact of principal leadership styles on teachers job performance in Faisalabad city, Punjab Pakistan. They found that most Principals sampled utilized the autocratic leadership style while few explored the democratic leadership style to get the teachers accomplish set goals. The study found a strong and positive correlation between the Principal autocratic leadership style and teacher job performance in Faisalabad City.

Umezulike (2003) found in a study that Nigeria was more of an autocratic than democratic governance. However, democratic practices have been uninterrupted by the military in the country since October 1999 (over two decades). Perhaps, this could also be influencing the leadership style toward democratic tendencies. Chen, Ning and Bos (2022) compared the relationship between principal leadership style and student achievement in Germany and China. They found significant differences between leadership styles adopted in Germany and China. According to them, principals in Germany explored transformational, instructional and integrated leadership styles while in China; they explored transformational and instructional leadership style to drive their schools for set goal attainment. The study established also that 'compared with Germany, transformational and instructional leadership tend to greatly contribute to student achievement in China' (Chen, Ning and Bos 2022:13). Leadership and leadership styles can be influenced by contextual features of regional and educational systems. The advent of covid-19 impacted on education in many ways. With school closures during the era, online lesson delivery gained momentum in conventional schools. Moser, Wei and Brenner (2020) reported that to mitigate transmission of covid-19, rapid changes in instructional delivery moved from in-person to remote instruction. Zhao and Watterson (2021) agree that covid-19 has impacted on instructional delivery in synchronous and asynchronous learning .During the lockdown in Nigeria, governments made efforts to reach pupils/students with on-line instructional delivery (Nnaike 2020). Certainly, some of the lessons gained on instructional delivery during the lockdown may influence the post-covid 19 instructional delivery.

The main duty of a teacher is instructional delivery to students. They have several other roles to fulfil for the intellectual and emotional development of the learners. Empirical studies have shown that principals' leadership style influences the culture of the school. Teacher job performance cannot be divorced from the social milieu in which it operates. The school system is undergoing changes as a result of better educated workforce, increasing enrolment and diversified curriculum as well as the challenges posed by the advent of covid 19 pandemics in the education sector. Any of them could be influencing the school leadership style being operated in Edo South Senatorial zone. In view of the environmental imperatives surrounding the Nigerian educational system, what leadership style is currently influencing the administration of the public secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone? Could it be that co-operation and team spirit rather than the command system now prevail in the secondary school leadership in Edo South Senatorial Zone? Could the public school principal leadership style be influencing teachers' job performance in a post-covid 19 era in the Edo South Senatorial Zone? It is imperative to find out the leadership style being predominantly adopted by school principals to manage their schools in the Edo South Senatorial Zone.

Research Questions

Three research questions were raised to guide the study. Two of them were hypothesised.

- 1: What leadership style do Principals predominantly employ in the administration of secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone?

- 2: Is there significant relationship between principals' leadership style and teacher's co-curriculum activities in Edo South Senatorial Zone?
- 3: Is there significant relationship between principal's leadership style and teachers' delivery of class lessons in Edo South Senatorial Zone?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership style and involvement of teacher's in co-curriculum activities in public secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between principal's leadership style and teachers' delivery of lessons in public secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone.

Methodology

This Study was limited to the public Senior Secondary Schools in South Senatorial Zone of Edo State. Junior secondary school otherwise called the Upper Basic Education in Nigeria is three years programme. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of the 125 secondary school principals and 1,523 teachers deployed in the 2020/2021 academic session in the seven Local Government Areas that make up South Senatorial District of Edo State, Nigeria. Questionnaire titled Principal Leadership Style and Teachers Job Performance (PLSTWJP) was designed to elicit responses from teachers of secondary schools in South Senatorial Zone of Edo State. Two experts in Educational Management validated the instrument while cronbach's alpha was used to obtain coefficient reliability of 0.782 showing the instrument is reliable for the study. Edo South Senatorial Zone is made up of seven local government areas. Previously, the zone was made of three local government areas from which the seven were created. Two of them had two local government created from each while the third had three local government areas created from it. Of these Stratified sampling technique was employed to obtain the three Local Government Areas sampled for the study, one from each strata of the former local government arrangement. It was also adopted for obtaining schools which principals and teachers formed the object of the study. A sample size of 13 (approximately 10%) principals of secondary schools were involved because, we feel the 10% was representative enough for the study while 11.5% of the 1,523 teachers (that is 175 teachers) were randomly sampled from the sub-set schools used for the study. Research Question 1 was analysed using the descriptive statistics; frequency and percentages while Pearson moment correlation was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance in Research questions 2 and 3. One research assistant per Local Government was employed to assist in administering and retrieving research instruments.

Result

Research Question 1: What leadership style do Principals predominantly employ in the administration of secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone?

Table 1: Predominant Leadership style in Edo South Senatorial Zone

Leadership Style	N	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez faire	Total
Frequency	175	75	32	18	
Percentage distribution		60	25.6	14.4	100

Source: Researchers' field work.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the leadership style used by Principals in the Secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial Zone. A total of 75 respondents representing 60% believe their principals used democratic leadership style while 25.6% respondents believe their principal employ autocratic style whereas 18 teachers (14.4%) feel their principals are neither democratic nor autocratic but laissez faire in their style of leadership.

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership style and involvement of teachers in co-curriculum activities in Edo South Senatorial Zone.

Table 2: Relationship between Principals' Leadership Style and Co - Curricular Activities

Leadership style	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig.	Remark
Principals Leadership Styles	175	45.70	6.113	0.065	0.392	Not Significant
co-curriculum activities involvement	175	12.15	4.751			

Source: Researchers' field work.

The findings in Table 2, show that correlation coefficient between leadership styles and teachers involvement in co-curriculum activities is $r = 0.065$ the numerical value of the correlation coefficient r was 0.065 which means that in terms of strength and direction, there is a weak positive relationship between the variable of the determination, $df = 34$, $p = 0.392 > 0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted showing that there is no significant relationship between leadership style and teachers involvement in extra curriculum activities.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between principal's leadership style and teachers' class lessons delivery in Edo South Senatorial Zone.

Table 3: Relationship between Principals' Leadership Style and lesson delivery

Leadership style	N	M	SD	r	Sig.	Remark
Principals Leadership Styles	175	45.70	6.113	-0.089	0.239	Not Significant
Lesson delivery.	175	15.15	3.439			

Source: Researchers' field work.

The finding in Table 3 shows that correlation coefficient between leadership styles and teachers class management is $r = -0.089$ which means that in terms of strength and direction, there is a weak negative relationship between the variable of the determination, $df = 34$, $P = 0.239 > 0.05$, we therefore accept the null hypothesis and we concluded that there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and teachers lesson delivery.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this research shows that democratic leadership style is predominant in the senior secondary schools in South Senatorial District of Edo State. It reveals that principals are adapting to civil ways of administering their schools. This finding contrast Umezulike (2003), Audu and Oliha (2008), OmekeandOnah (2012) and Adegbesan (2012) who found that school administration in some states in Nigeria covered in their study was autocratic. It agrees with Adeyemi (2010) who found that principals used democratic leadership style in the administration of Secondary schools in Ondo State of Nigeria. It is also in consonance with Atasoy (2020) and Waters (2013) who found in studies outside Nigeria that Principal of sampled schools employ predominantly transformational leadership style to run the schools. This finding is therefore consolidating the new found democratic practices permeating the nation's social sector including education.

Moreover, it was found that teacher's involvement in co-curricular activities is not dictated by the leadership style being adopted by their principals in the school. Teacher's participation could be as a result of personal interest in these activities. It also consolidates the fact that democratic tendencies are permeating the administration of schools hence teachers have a free will to choose the type of co-curricular activities they get involved in. Rather than being in a straight-jacket, the teachers could be selective.

Ho2 investigated whether there was significant relationship between principal's leadership style and teachers' delivery of class lessons. The null hypothesis was accepted. Teachers' lesson delivery was not dictated by the leadership style being adopted in the school by the principals. Thus shows personal commitment to duty which implies that teachers are not coerced into adopting one lesson delivery method in the performance of the instructional task assigned to them. Under democratic atmosphere where teachers enjoy the freedom to deliver their lessons without autocratic

tendencies, teachers could explore new methods of instructional delivering. The advent of Covid 19 increased the tempo of online delivery as well as other forms of offline e-learning. Rather than adhering to a specific method of lesson delivering learnt over many years ago, democratic tendencies allowed the experimentation with emerging media. This fosters cordial working relationship between the principals and the teachers on the one hand and between the teachers and the learners on the other hand. On the contrary, Omekeand Onah (2012) found that autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles have a negative influence on the job satisfaction of both male and female teachers. Democratic leadership broaden cordiality of workers as it tends to be firm also in directing all school personnel toward goal attainment.

Conclusion

This study investigated Principal leadership style as correlate of secondary school teachers job performance Edo-South Senatorial Zonr, Nigeria. It founds that Principals predominantly employ democratic leadership styles. This robs off well on teachers' job performance under the democratic atmosphere prevailing in the public secondary schools even though the educational system was passing through a tempestuous situation occasioned by the advent of covid-19 pandemics. Lessons learnt from the literature reviewed and the findings of this study show that adoption of a particular leadership style is a factor of many variables. The context in which the school operates, the personal and job traits of the leadership influence what leadership style could best support the attainment of set goals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to strengthen school leadership in the post-covid 19 era.

- (1) Principals should not only sustain the democratic leadership, they should allow it to permeate all aspects of school life in maintaining a sustainable working atmosphere. Government should therefore provide secondary school leadership opportunity to deepen democratic practices by getting them involved in all teaching personnel issues such as recruitment, remuneration, promotion, disciplines etc
- (2) School leadership is designed to provide the teachers with the support to succeed in their task. It provides the teachers the necessary resources to translate intentions into reality. Leadership style determines whether suggestions are heartily or haphazardly translated to the learners. It is here recommended that teachers can explore new development in lesson delivery to fit into the set goal of school management.
- (3) Co-curriculum activities are very important in developing the total being hence teachers should key into democratic practises in supporting the various school co-curricular activities according to their interest and pedigree. They must move along with the school in sustaining developmental strive at all times bearing in mind that school effectiveness is a function of group task accomplishment.

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