SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES: CASE OF IGBO-EZE SOUTH LGA, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the types of leadership styles practiced by principals in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State, Nigeria, and examines their influence on teachers' job performance across varying levels of teaching experience. Data were collected from secondary school teachers and principals through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA. The findings revealed that principals in the region employ a variety of leadership styles, with Transactional and Democratic styles being the most prevalent. The study also found that principals' leadership styles positively influence teachers' job performance, irrespective of their years of teaching experience. No significant difference was observed in the impact of leadership styles on teachers' performance across different levels of experience, suggesting that leadership practices have a consistent effect on teachers' performance. The study concludes that effective leadership is crucial for school administration, and it recommends continuous professional development for principals and teachers to enhance their leadership and performance.

Keywords: Principals' leadership styles, School administration, Teachers' job performance, Educational leadership

INTRODUCTION

School administration plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational environment, with the principal serving as the highest-ranking administrator responsible for the overall management and performance of the school. Principals not only oversee administrative tasks but also serve as instructional leaders who guide teaching, set goals, and maintain a productive school atmosphere. Their leadership styles have a profound impact on both the school's organizational culture and the performance of its teachers. The principal's role extends beyond traditional administrative duties to include fostering a supportive, efficient, and goal-oriented environment for staff and students alike (Feldman & Oklahoma, 2019).

Effective school leadership involves various complex roles, from managing curricula to addressing discipline, and from mentoring teachers to representing the school in the community. Principals are tasked with ensuring that the school's daily operations align with its long-term educational objectives. As such, their leadership styles—whether authoritarian, participative, or laissez-faire—directly influence the performance of teachers and the achievement of school goals (Wetherell, 2002). The principal's leadership capacity in managing both human and material resources within the school is essential to fostering a positive work environment for teachers and students.

Teachers' job performance, which is a critical aspect of educational outcomes, is closely linked to the quality of leadership provided by principals. Effective leadership can enhance teachers' motivation,

engagement, and overall job satisfaction, while poor leadership may lead to reduced performance and dissatisfaction (Briggs & Richardson, 2005). Leadership styles, therefore, serve as a key factor in determining the success of the school in achieving educational goals.

This study explores the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in secondary schools within Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria. The need for this research is underscored by the significant role principals play in school management, especially in light of the complex challenges faced by schools in the region, including teacher turnover, morale, and unfulfilled professional development needs. Understanding the relationship between leadership styles and job performance is crucial for improving school management practices and promoting effective teaching in secondary schools.

Literature review

Leadership

Leadership, in its broadest sense, refers to the ability to influence individuals and guide them toward achieving common organizational goals. In the context of school administration, leadership is pivotal to the success of educational institutions. According to Adeyemi (2010), leadership is the process through which an individual's behavior influences others to work together towards a common goal. This influence is a dynamic and interactive process involving the leader, followers, and the situation at hand (Bal et al., 2008). Effective leadership is not only about achieving organizational goals but also about creating an environment that motivates followers to strive for excellence. Nakpodia (2009) emphasizes that leadership involves guiding others through a process of social influence to accomplish a collective task, which is crucial in the context of school administration.

In the educational setting, leadership is integral to setting clear directions, articulating a vision, and fostering a culture of high expectations (Sisungo, 2002). School leaders, particularly principals, are responsible for guiding teachers and students toward achieving academic success. As noted by Atanda and Jaiyeoba (2011), the principal's leadership is considered one of the most crucial elements in determining the effectiveness of a school. Effective school leadership has been associated with improved teacher performance, student outcomes, and overall school performance. Conversely, ineffective leadership can lead to poor organizational performance and a decline in the quality of education (Babayemi, 2006; Ibukun, as cited in Ekundayo, 2010).

The relationship between leadership and teacher performance has been widely studied, with evidence suggesting that the leadership behavior of principals directly influences teachers' job performance. Teachers' productivity can be significantly impacted by the leadership style adopted by the principal (Babayemi, 2006). Effective leadership practices, such as supportive leadership, can motivate teachers, while poor leadership can lead to disengagement and reduced performance. As described by Osuala and Okeke (2006), leadership plays a vital role in managing human resources within schools, including teacher development, professional growth, and overall school climate.

Moreover, various leadership theories and models have evolved over the years, offering frameworks for understanding how leaders can influence organizational outcomes. Leithwood et al. (1999) highlight the importance of

leadership in fostering a positive school environment. The principal's ability to adopt different leadership styles—whether directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented—can determine how effectively they manage school operations and motivate their staff.

Critical thinking is another important aspect of leadership, enabling leaders to make informed decisions that align with organizational goals. Lipman (2002) defines critical thinking as responsible thinking that promotes good judgment and effective decision-making. In the context of school leadership, principals who engage in critical thinking are better equipped to analyze educational issues, adopt the most appropriate leadership style, and foster a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

Given the significant role of leadership in school administration, it is crucial to explore how principals' leadership styles impact teachers' job performance. The effectiveness of principals in managing school activities and motivating their staff is central to achieving the educational objectives of the school. This study aims to examine the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria, with the goal of identifying effective leadership practices that can enhance school performance.

Leadership styles in secondary school administration

Leadership style refers to the methods employed by leaders to provide direction, implement plans, and motivate individuals toward achieving organizational goals (Harvard Business Review, 2016). Ukeje (1999) highlights leadership as the ability to influence individuals to work enthusiastically towards shared objectives. A leader's style significantly impacts their ability to guide, influence, and motivate subordinates in achieving these goals. Chandan (1987) defines leadership style as a reflection of a leader's personality that drives followers to align with their vision. Okumbe (1998) further emphasizes that leadership style encompasses the behaviors leaders adopt to inspire subordinates to fulfill organizational objectives.

In secondary school administration, the principal's leadership style is a critical factor in managing resources, motivating staff, and driving educational success. Principals are uniquely positioned to influence school development through their leadership practices, which can either foster growth or hinder progress (Oyedeji, 1998; Adeyemi, 2004). Leadership styles are diverse and can be strategically implemented to guide organizational outcomes, with each style offering specific approaches to motivation and management (Hopkins, 1993). Oboegbulam and Onwurah (2011) suggest that leadership style is shaped by the leader's personality and the environment, which influence their behavior in different contexts. The four primary leadership styles in school administration are autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, and charismatic.

Autocratic leadership style

An autocratic leadership style is characterized by a leader making unilateral decisions without input from subordinates. This approach often focuses on task completion rather than human relations (Bogler, 2001). While it can lead to quick decision-making and high control, it may also result in disengaged employees who lack development opportunities (De Cremer, 2006). Although effective in situations requiring rapid decisions, it can

limit subordinates' autonomy and stifle creativity.

Democratic/Participative leadership style

In contrast, the democratic or participative style encourages collaboration, where the leader seeks input from subordinates before making decisions (Peteman, 2000). This approach fosters a sense of inclusion and motivates employees to contribute ideas, which can enhance creativity and decision-making processes (Goleman, 2007). However, the democratic style can be time-consuming, as it requires discussions and consensus-building, which may delay decision-making and affect the efficiency of operations (Peteman, 2000).

Directive, supportive, and consultative styles

Directive leadership, akin to a task-oriented approach, provides specific guidance and structure, particularly when subordinates are less experienced or the task is complex (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Supportive leadership focuses on building relationships and addressing the emotional needs of staff, which can improve job satisfaction in stressful environments (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Consultative leadership involves the leader seeking opinions from subordinates before making final decisions, fostering engagement and trust (Owens, 1981). These styles are often employed based on the task's complexity and the team's competency.

Achievement-oriented leadership style

The achievement-oriented leadership style involves setting challenging goals and providing high levels of support and direction to motivate subordinates to meet high expectations (Lussier & Achua, 2001). This style is particularly effective when subordinates are highly motivated and capable of reaching ambitious targets.

Laissez-faire leadership style

Laissez-faire leadership allows subordinates significant autonomy, with the leader offering minimal direction and allowing followers to make decisions independently. While this style can promote creativity and ownership, it may lead to low productivity and dissatisfaction if not properly managed (Kocker, 2009). It is most effective in environments where employees are highly skilled and self-motivated (Nsubuga, 2008).

Transformational and transactional leadership styles

Transformational leadership is focused on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes by providing a clear vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and offering individualized support (Gunter, 2001; Brown & Reilly, 2008). This style emphasizes long-term development and empowerment of subordinates, motivating them to exceed expectations. In contrast, transactional leadership is based on a system of rewards and penalties, where subordinates are motivated by the exchange of efforts for rewards (Sarros & Santora, 2001). While transactional leadership can be effective in achieving short-term goals, it may not foster the same level of commitment and innovation as transformational leadership.

In the context of school administration, the principal's leadership style is integral to shaping school culture, influencing teacher performance, and achieving educational objectives. Effective leadership can enhance teachers' job satisfaction, foster a collaborative environment, and ultimately lead to improved student outcomes. As such, understanding the various leadership styles and their impact on secondary school administration is crucial for improving

school performance and achieving sustainable educational success. This study examines the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria, with the aim of identifying the most effective leadership approaches for enhancing school administration.

Review of related empirical studies
Studies on Principals' leadership styles

Uduji (2004) conducted a study on principals' leadership styles, demographic factors, and teachers' performance in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria, using a correlational survey design. The study employed a proportionate stratified random sampling technique, selecting 52 secondary schools, 52 principals, and 340 teachers. Data were collected using the Principals Leadership Style Rating Scale, Teachers Performance Rating Scale, and a questionnaire on principals' demographic factors. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses. The study found a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and teacher performance, a negative relationship between autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles and teacher performance, and recommended that principals adopt a democratic leadership style. The current study is similar in that it also explores the impact of principals' leadership styles on teachers' performance but differs in its geographic focus—this study investigates secondary schools in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria, compared to Uduji's focus on Anambra State.

Adeyemi (2010) explored principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria, using a descriptive research design. The sample included 240 principals and 1,800 teachers. Data were collected using the Principals' Leadership Style Questionnaire (PLSQ) and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), with Pearson product-moment correlation used for data analysis. The study found that the democratic leadership style was the most commonly used among principals. It recommended that effective leadership styles enhance classroom teaching and improve school administration. While both studies focus on principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance, the current study differs by focusing exclusively on public schools, whereas Adeyemi's study included both private and public schools in Ondo State.

Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014) examined the influence of leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in Songea and Morogoro Districts, Tanzania, using a cross-sectional research design. The study involved 200 teachers from 20 selected primary schools. Data were collected through interviews, documentary analysis, and questionnaires, and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The study found that the democratic leadership style was most prevalent in high-performing schools and suggested adopting it in lower-performing schools. While this study shares the current study's focus on leadership styles in school administration, it differs by focusing on teachers' job satisfaction rather than job performance, as this study aims to investigate.

These studies collectively highlight the significant impact of principals' leadership styles on various aspects of school administration, particularly on teachers' performance and satisfaction. While they share common themes, each study addresses different geographic

locations, school types, and dependent variables, offering a broader understanding of how leadership styles influence school outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area (LGA), Enugu State, Nigeria. The research adopts a descriptive survey design, which is ideal for documenting, describing, and explaining the current status of a phenomenon (Ali, 2006). The survey method is chosen due to its suitability in capturing opinions from school principals and teachers, who directly contribute to the management and performance of schools (Nworgu, 2006).

Area of the study

The study is conducted in Igbo-Eze South LGA, located in the southeastern region of Nigeria, comprising ten communities and a population of 147,364 people (National Population Commission, 2006). The selection of this area was driven by observed leadership challenges in public secondary schools, including conflicts, high teacher turnover, and dissatisfaction among teachers, often attributed to ineffective leadership.

Population and sample

The target population includes 436 respondents: 11 principals and 425 teachers from 11 public secondary schools in Igbo-Eze South. A sample of 176 respondents was randomly selected, consisting of 15 teachers from each school and one principal per school. This ensures equal representation and minimizes selection bias.

Sampling technique

A simple random sampling technique was employed to select participants. This method ensures that every individual in the population has an equal chance of being chosen, thereby promoting fairness and reducing bias.

Instrument for data collection

The primary instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire, the *Influence of Principals' Leadership Style on Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (IPLSTJPQ)*. The questionnaire consists of two sections: Part A collects demographic information, while Part B includes two clusters. Cluster one contains 9 items related to the types of leadership styles, and cluster two comprises 19 items exploring the impact of these leadership styles on teachers' job performance.

Validation and reliability of the instrument

The instrument was face-validated by three experts from the Department of Social Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their feedback was used to refine the instrument. A pilot test was conducted with 35 respondents from 5 schools outside the study area. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.791 and 0.753 for the two clusters, and a total score of 0.809, indicated good reliability.

Data collection

The questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents, and completed forms were collected immediately to ensure a 100% response rate.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and percentage. T-tests were used to test the two null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, allowing for a robust evaluation of the relationships between leadership styles and teachers' job performance.

Results

Research question 1: What are the types of principals' leadership styles practiced in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation responses regarding the types of principals' leadership styles practiced in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the types of principals' leadership styles practiced in Igbo-eze South Local Government Area of Enugu state

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	S.D.	Decision
1	Authoritative/autocratic	231	3.40	1.03	Accepted
2	Democratic	231	3.25	1.02	Accepted
3	Laissez-faire/permissive	231	3.06	0.74	Accepted
4	Transformational	231	3.09	0.77	Accepted
5	Transactional	231	3.42	0.89	Accepted
6	Participative	231	3.12	0.81	Accepted
7	Affiliative	231	3.36	0.49	Accepted
8	Achievement-oriented	231	3.39	0.97	Accepted
9	Coaching	231	3.28	1.09	Accepted
	Grand Mean	231	3.26	0.86	Accepted

The results in Table 1 show that all nine leadership styles—Authoritative/Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-faire/Permissive, Transformational, Transactional, Participative, Affiliative, Achievement-Oriented, and Coaching—have mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, indicating that they are practices of principals in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State. Specifically, the leadership style with the highest mean score was Transactional (3.42), while the Laissez-faire/Permissive style had the lowest mean score (3.06). The grand mean score of 3.26 further confirms that these leadership styles are prevalent among principals in the area.

Research question 2: What is the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in secondary schools by teaching experience?

Table 2 summarizes the responses on the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance by teaching experience.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance by teaching experience

S/N	Teaching Experience (Years)	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	1-5	2.54	0.87	Accepted
2	6-10	2.52	0.86	Accepted
3	11 and above	2.50	0.85	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.52	0.86	Accepted

The mean scores for all categories of teaching experience (1-5 years: 2.54, 6-10 years: 2.52, and 11+ years: 2.50) indicate that principals' leadership styles positively influence teachers' job performance across all teaching experience levels. The grand mean score of 2.52 suggests a consistent influence of

principals' leadership styles on teachers' performance, irrespective of teaching experience.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in secondary schools by years of teaching experience.

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA analysis on the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance by years of teaching experience

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.511	2	0.255	1.99	0.14
Within Groups	12.387	228	0.128		
Total	12.898	230			

Table 3 shows the results of the ANOVA test, where the calculated F-value (1.99) is not significant at the 0.14 level, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that there is no significant difference in the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance across different levels of teaching experience.

Summary of findings

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. Principals in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State practice a range of leadership styles, including Authoritative/Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-faire/Permissive, Transformational, Transactional, Participative, Affiliative, Achievement-Oriented, and Coaching.
2. Principals' leadership styles positively influence teachers' job performance across all levels of teaching experience.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance based on years of teaching experience.

Discussion of result

Types of Principals' leadership styles practiced in Igbo-Eze South LGA

This study aimed to explore the types of leadership styles employed by principals in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State and to assess their impact on teachers' job performance across different levels of teaching experience. The results revealed a diverse range of leadership styles, including Authoritative/Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-faire/Permissive, Transformational, Transactional, Participative, Affiliative, Achievement-Oriented, and Coaching styles. Transactional leadership emerged as the most prevalent style, with a mean score of 3.42, followed by Democratic leadership. This finding is consistent with Uduji's (2004) study, which identified a preference for democratic leadership among principals in Anambra State, and with Adeyemi's (2010) research in Ondo State, which highlighted democratic leadership as the most commonly used approach. Both studies suggested that democratic leadership fosters positive teacher outcomes, an assertion corroborated by the present study's findings.

Conversely, Laissez-faire/Permissive leadership had the lowest mean score (3.06), which is in agreement with the findings of Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014). These authors noted that laissez-faire leadership often results in ineffective school administration and poor teacher performance. This is significant, as it suggests that while some principals in Igbo-

Eze South LGA may adopt a more permissive leadership approach, the dominant leadership styles, particularly Transactional and Democratic, tend to better promote a productive school environment.

Influence of Principals' leadership styles on Teachers' job performance

The study also sought to examine the impact of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance, with a focus on varying levels of teaching experience. The results indicated that leadership styles exerted a positive and consistent influence on teachers' performance across all experience levels, with a grand mean score of 2.52. This finding aligns with Adeyemi (2010), who demonstrated that effective leadership practices positively impact teachers' performance, regardless of their years of teaching experience. Similarly, Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014) found that democratic leadership positively influenced teachers' job satisfaction and performance. These results underscore the significance of principals' leadership styles as a key determinant of teacher performance, irrespective of experience.

ANOVA test on the influence of leadership styles by teaching experience

The ANOVA analysis showed no significant difference in the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance across various levels of teaching experience. The F-value of 1.99 was not significant at the 0.14 level, suggesting that leadership styles have a uniform effect on job performance, irrespective of the teachers' years of experience. This is in line with Uduji (2004), who found that democratic leadership had a consistent positive impact on teacher performance, regardless of their experience level. However, Adeyemi (2010) suggested that certain leadership styles might be more effective for teachers with different levels of experience—for instance, transactional leadership for experienced teachers and transformational

leadership for novice educators. The present study's finding of no significant difference suggests that the leadership styles in Igbo-Eze South LGA are equally effective across all experience levels, or it could imply that other factors, such as resources and institutional support, play a significant role in influencing teacher performance.

Implications for School administration

The results of this study have crucial implications for school administration. The diversity of leadership styles practiced by principals in Igbo-Eze South LGA, with an emphasis on Transactional and Democratic approaches, highlights the importance of adopting flexible and context-appropriate leadership styles. Effective school administration requires principals to understand and implement leadership styles that foster collaboration, motivation, and empowerment among teachers. Both Transactional and Democratic leadership styles have been shown to have a positive impact on teachers' job performance (Uduji, 2004; Adeyemi, 2010). Therefore, principals should be encouraged to cultivate these styles to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

Moreover, the absence of significant differences in the influence of leadership styles based on teaching experience suggests that effective school leadership has a broad, inclusive impact across various teacher experience levels. This reinforces the idea that principals' leadership is a critical factor in fostering a high-performing school environment, regardless of staff experience (Haruni & Mafwimbo, 2014).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study confirm that principals in Igbo-Eze South LGA employ a variety of leadership styles, with Transactional and Democratic styles being the most prominent. These leadership styles have a positive influence on teachers' job performance across all

levels of teaching experience. The study also found that these leadership styles exert a uniform effect on job performance, highlighting the importance of effective school leadership in promoting a high-performing educational environment. Future research could explore how specific leadership styles interact with other contextual factors, such as school culture or resource availability, to further understand the dynamics between leadership and teacher performance.

Educational implications of the study

The findings of this study hold significant implications for various stakeholders in the educational sector. For school principals, the study emphasizes the need to adopt a variety of leadership styles to foster positive teacher-principal relationships and enhance teachers' job performance. Principals should focus on improving their managerial skills, including instructional supervision, communication, human relations, and decision-making. By doing so, they can create an environment that supports and motivates teachers, ultimately contributing to better student outcomes.

For teachers, the study highlights the importance of adapting to the leadership styles of their principals. Understanding and aligning teaching practices with principals' leadership approaches can foster a collaborative and productive work environment, leading to enhanced job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, students benefit indirectly from the improved performance of their teachers, as a positive and supportive relationship between principals and teachers contributes to a better learning environment.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the impact of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance:

1. **Ministry of Education**: The Ministry of Education should develop and promote leadership training programs for principals that emphasize effective leadership styles. These programs should focus on fostering positive teacher-principal relationships and promoting leadership practices that enhance teachers' job performance.
2. **School Principals**: Principals should engage in continuous professional development to address gaps in their leadership abilities, particularly in areas such as instructional supervision, communication, human relations, and decision-making. This will help improve their leadership effectiveness and better support their staff.
3. **Teacher development**: The training and retraining of teachers should be prioritized to enhance their job efficacy. This will enable teachers to align their practices with the leadership styles of their principals, ensuring a collaborative approach to achieving educational goals.
4. **Policy formulation**: The Ministry of Education should formulate, implement, and regularly evaluate policies and programs that aim to improve the performance of secondary school principals. These policies should focus on reducing inefficiencies and poor performance among teachers, leading to better educational outcomes in Igbo-Eze South LGA.

By addressing these recommendations, educational stakeholders can foster a more supportive and effective school administration environment, leading to improved teacher performance and better student outcomes in Igbo-Eze South LGA.

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