

## Leadership Style and Business Educators' Job Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in a Changing Environment

Ozuruoke, A. A  
Ordu, Pac  
Abdulkarim, Musa

*Department of Secretarial Education, Federal College of Education (Technical)  
Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria*

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**Abstract** *This paper investigated leadership styles and Business Educators' job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Study population comprised all the 288 secondary schools in the State. Out of this population, a sample of 240 senior secondary schools that offers Business subjects was taken and selected through the stratified random sampling techniques. Out of 3,466 teachers of business subjects (including principals) in the schools, a sample of 2040 teachers was selected through the stratified random sampling techniques. This sample was made of 240 principals who are considered to be the leaders and 1800 teachers. Two instruments were used to collect data for the study. There were the leadership style questionnaire and the teachers' job performance questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, correlation matrix and t-test. It was found that the democratic leadership style was the most commonly used leadership style among leaders of senior secondary schools in the State. Teachers' job performance was also found to be at moderate level in the schools. Teachers' job performance was found to be better in schools having leaders using autocratic style than in schools having leaders using laissez-faire styles. It is then recommended that leaders generally should imbibe a mixture of autocratic and democratic styles of leadership in their school administration in order to enhance better job performance among teachers. The use of the laissez-faire leadership style should be discouraged among school leaders as it could not bring a better job performance.*

**Keywords:** *leadership styles and job performance*

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### Introduction

Education in Nigeria is an instrument for effecting national development. The country's educational goals have been set out in the National policy on education in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and the society. Towards this end, the National policy on education set up certain aims and objectives which were to facilitate educational development in the country. In fostering these aims and objectives, the school principal has important roles to play. Among this roles include providing effective leadership in secondary schools, thereby enhancing better job performance among teacher. How effective the principal is in performing these roles has been a matter of concern to many educationists. It needs to be mentioned that senior secondary education in Nigerian schools is for period of 3 years and it is for students who had successfully completed the junior secondary educational programme.

It is therefore not surprising that there is pressure mounted on effective leadership among principals of secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria. It seems however that many principals have not considered their styles of leadership as determinants of teachers' job performance in their schools. Hence, some of them seem to find it difficult to effectively administer their schools. As such, leadership style occupies an important position in school management in Rivers State, Nigeria. The school principal is in a unique position as the manager or administrator who controls school resources for the purpose of attaining organizational goals.

### Literature Review

Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of a group of people by a leader in efforts towards goal achievement. It involves a force that initiates actions in people and leader. It could be described as the ability

to get things done with the assistance and co-operation of other people within the school system.

Certain theories of leadership have been identified by researchers. These include the Trait Theory, Situational Theory, Contingency Theory, Behavioural Theory and path Goal Theory. The traits theory tends to emphasize the personality traits of the leader such as appearance, height, initiative, aggressiveness, enthusiasm, self-confidence, drive, persistence, interpersonal skills and administrative ability. The situational theory stipulates that leaders are the product of given situations. Thus, leadership is strongly affected by the situation from which the leader to exercise influence depends upon the group task situation and the degree to which the leader's personality fit the group

The behavioural theory could either be job-centered or employee-centered. The job-centered leader's practices close supervision while employees-centered leaders practiced general supervision. The path goal theory is based on the theory of motivation. In this theory the behaviour of the leader is acceptable to the subordinate only if they continue to see the leader as source of satisfaction.

In view of the foregoing, leadership style could be described in various ways. It refers to the underlying needs of the leader that motivate his behaviour. It is the manifestation of the dominant pattern of behavioural of a leader. It is also process through which persons or group influence others in the attainment of group goals.

As such, Ibukun (1997) argued that the main task of the principals is to create a conducive atmosphere for the teachers to be able to achieve desired changes in students' learning. Supporting this argument Ijaiya (2000) remarked that teachers in Nigeria express a desire for more participation in decision-making. The way the principal relates with his or her staff could contribute immensely to their effectiveness or otherwise. Researchers have identified certain leadership behaviour used in organization. These are the nomothetic, idiographic and transactional leader behaviour. The Nomothetic leadership behaviour is the characteristics of a leader to the latter. Everything is by bureaucratic rules and procedure to all subordinates. The leadership behaviour is commonly used by autocratic leaders.

The idiographic leadership behaviour focuses on individual needs rather than organization needs. The leader accepts subordinates to work things out for themselves. Hence, organization demands are minimized. Authority is delegated while the relationship to others is in line with individual's personal needs.

The transactional leadership behaviour is a hybrid between the nomothetic and idiographic leadership behaviours. It is situation-oriented. However, unlike the idiographic leadership behaviour which emphasizes individual's needs, the transactional leadership behaviour recognizes the importance of institutional roles and expectation. The leader assumes that pursuing institutional goals could result in the fulfillment of individual personality drives. Transactional leadership allows for the practices of good human relationship.

Three other styles of leadership have also been identified by researchers. These include the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The autocratic leadership style is also known as the authoritarian style of leadership. Power and decision making resides in the autocratic leader.

The autocratic leader directs group members on the way things should be done. The leader does not maintain clear channel of communication between him/her and decision making resides in the autocratic leader.

The autocratic leader directs group members on the way things should be done. The leader does not maintain clear channel of communication between him/her and the subordinated. He or she does not delegate authority nor permit subordinates to participate in policy making the democratic style of leadership emphasizes group and leader participation in the making of policies. Decisions about organizational matters are arrived at after consultant and communication with various people in the organization. The leader attempts as much as possible to make each individual feel that he is an important member of the organization. Communication is multidirectional while ideas are exchanged between employees and the leader. In this style of leadership, a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced.

Laissez-faire leadership style allows complete freedom to group decision without the leader's participation. Thus, subordinates are free to do what they like. The role of the leader is just to supply

materials. The leader does not interfere with or participate in the course of events determine by the group.

Performance could be described in various ways. It could be an act of accomplishing of executive given task. It could also be described as the ability to combine skillfully the right behaviour towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Teachers' job performance could be described as the duties performed by a teacher or teachers at a particular period in the school stem in achieving organizational goals. It could also be described as the ability to teachers to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. However, Peretemode (1996) argued that job performance is determined by the workers' level of participation in the day to day running of the organization. It is noted that employees behave differently under different situations.

Leaders here can therefore encourage effective performance of their teachers by identifying their needs and trying to satisfying or meeting them. Supporting this argument, Owoeye (1999) asserted that variable of job performance such as effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of students work and disciplinary ability are virtues which teachers should uphold effectively in the school system. In this regard, the teachers performance could be measured through annual report of his/her activities in terms of performance in teaching, lesson preparation, mastery of subject matter, competence, teachers' commitment to job and extra-curricula activities. Other areas of assessment include effective leadership, effective supervision, effective monitoring of students' work, motivation, class control and disciplinary ability of the teachers.

It is based on this background that this study was set out to examine critically the relationship between leadership styles and teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The concern of the study was to determine the best style of leadership out of the autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership style that would enhance better job performance among teachers in senior secondary schools in the State.

### Statement of the Problem

The relationship between principal's leadership style and teachers' job performance has been a subject of controversy by researchers. The controversy was centered on whether or not the style of leadership of principals influences the level of job performance among teachers. Common observation in the school system shows that the style of leadership of principal could perhaps have serious impact on teachers' performance. the problem of this study therefore was to determine what relationship exists between school leaders' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. In addressing this problem, the following research questions were raised:

- Which leadership style is most commonly used by school principals in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the level of job performance among teachers in senior secondary schools in the State?
- Is there any significant relationship between leadership styles and teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- Is there any significant difference in teachers' job performance in schools having leader using autocratic leadership style and schools having leader using laissez-faire leadership style in the State?
- Is there any significant difference in teachers' job performance in schools having leader using democratic leadership style and schools having leader using laissez-faire leadership style in the State?
- Is there any significant difference in teachers' job performance in schools having leader using democratic leadership style and schools having leader using laissez-faire leadership style in the State?

## Method

This work adopted the descriptive research design. The population comprised all the 288 senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Out of this population, a sample of 240 schools was taken and selected through the stratified random sampling techniques. Out of the 3466 teachers was taken and selected through the stratified random sampling techniques. This sample was made up of 240 principals who are the leaders of the schools and 1820 teachers. These principals and teachers were the respondents in the study.

Two instruments were used in collecting the data. These were the Leadership Style Questionnaire (LSQ) and the Teachers' job performance questionnaire. The 'LSQ' was in two parts A and B. Part A was demographic. It sorted information on personal information about each establishment, number of teachers and number of students. Part B consisted of two sections. Section 2, sorted information on how effective was a school principal in utilizing the leadership style in his or her school.

Teachers Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPO) was also in two parts A and B elicited demographic information about each school such as the name of the school and its location, the rank of the teachers and years of teaching experience. Part B consisted of 5 section. Section 1 required information on the qualification of the teacher. Section 2 required information on the competence of the teacher in terms of mastery of subject matter. Section 3 elicited information on the teacher's job performance in terms of lessons note relationship. Preparation, effective teaching, class control, use of teacher's materials, method of teaching, class participation and evaluation of teaching. Section 4 required information on teacher's personality in terms of loyalty, integrity and human relationship. Section 5 requested on the teachers' extra curricula activities such as participation in school sports and other activities.

The content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in test and measurement who marched the items of the instruments with the research questions in order to determine whether or not the instruments measured what they were supposed to measure. The reliability was determined through the test-retest reliability technique. In doing this, the instruments were determined to 30 respondents in 5 senior secondary schools outside the study area. After a period of two weeks, the instruments were re-administered. The data collected on the two tests were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A correlation coefficient of 0.81 was obtained indicating that the instruments were reliable for the study.

The instruments were administered by the research through the help of research assistants. Returns were received from 1782 respondents out of which 42 were badly completed and hence discarded. Returns from the remaining 1720 respondents were duly completed and used for the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, t-tests and Pearson Product Moment Correlation while the hypotheses were testes at 0.05 alpha levels.

## Results

### Question 1

*Which leadership style is most commonly used by school principals in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?*

In answering this question, data on the leadership styles used by school principals in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria were collected from teachers' responses to the principal's leadership style questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings are presented in table 1.

As indicated in table 1.the democratic style of leadership style among principals of senior secondary schools, in Rivers State, Nigeria. 1720 respondents (68.4%) gave this response. This was followed by the Laissez-faire leadership style. Only 380 respondents (22.1%) claimed that the Lassies-faire leadership style

is another common style of leadership used by principals of senior secondary schools in the state. Although some principals used the autocratic leadership style, the number of principals using the style was negligible.

## Question 2

*What is the level of job performance among teachers in senior secondary schools in the state?*

In answering this question, data on teacher's job performance in senior secondary schools in the state were collected from the principal's responses to the teacher's job performance questionnaire. Responses were measured in terms of teachers' competence, lesson note preparation, lesson presentation, use of teaching materials, and method of teaching, effective supervision, monitoring pupils work, class control, class participation, evaluation of teaching loyalty, integrity, human relationship, motivation, participation in schools sports, participation in school activities and disciplinary ability. In table 2, the analysis shows that the level of teaching job performance in senior secondary schools in the state was moderate. The findings revealed some disparities on the responses of the principals to items on teacher's job performance in the schools. While a large number of the respondents that is 130 (54.2%) claimed that the teachers' competence was at a moderate level, 68 of the respondents (28.3%) reported that teachers competence in the school was at a low level. However, a large of the respondents that is 104 (43.3%) reported that lesson preparation by the teacher was at a low level. This shows that many of the teachers was perhaps might not been preparing adequately for their lesson. Although a large number of the respondents 115 (47.9%) reported that many teachers were in the habits of evaluating their teaching, 110 (45.8%) of the respondent claimed that monitoring pupils work by teachers was at a moderate level. However, a large number of the respondent that is 104 (43.3%) reported that the disciplinary ability of many teachers was at a low level. on the average, out of the 240 respondents, 92 respondents (38.3%) reported that teachers job performance was at a moderate level. 87 respondents (36.3) claimed that the level of teachers job performance was low. These findings suggest that teacher's job performance in the schools was not at its best.

## Question 3

*Is there any significant relationship between principals leadership styles and teachers job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.*

In addressing this problem, the question was transformed to the following hypothesis.

**Ho:** *there is no significant relationship between principals leadership styles and teachers job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.*

In testing this hypothesis, data on leadership styles questionnaire were collected from the responses and. Data on teachers performance were collected from the responses to the teachers job performance questionnaire. The data collected were collated and analyzed using frequency chi-square test. The hypothesis was tested with the use of correlation matrix (table 3). In the table 3, the correlation matrix shows a large correlation.



variables	No	HIG H	%-AGE	MODE RATE	%-AGE	LOW	%-AGE
Teachers competent	240	42	17.5	130	54.2	68	28.3
Lesson note preparation	240	86	35.8	112	46.7	42	43.3
Lesson presentation	240	58	24.2	78	32.5	104	58.7
Use of teaching material	240	34	14.2	65	27.1	141	58.7
Method of teaching	240	52	21.7	54	22.5	134	55.8
Effective teaching	240	36	15.0	86	35.8	118	49.2
Effective supervision	240	53	22.1	106	44.2	81	33.7
Monitoring pupils work	240	45	18.8	110	45.8	85	35.4
Class control	240	42	17.5	76	31.7	122	50.8
Class participation	240	48	20	105	43.7	87	36.3
Evaluation of teaching	240	115	47.9	79	32.9	47	19.2
Loyalty	240	78	32.5	121	50.4	41	17.1
Integrity	240	67	27.9	124	51.7	49	20.4
Human relationship	240	106	44.2	83	34.6	51	22.2
Motivation	240	44	18.3	60	25.0	136	56.7
Participation	240	51	21.3	81	33.7	108	45
Participation	240	87	36.2	101	42.1	52	21.7
Disciplinary ability	240	58	24.2	78	32.5	104	43.3
Average total	240	61	25.4	92	38.3	87	36.3

**Table Showing Percentage Analysis of Leaders/ Teachers Performance**

## Discussion

The foregoing shows the analysis of data collected for this study. In the analysis, it was found that the democratic leadership style was the commonest style of leadership used by principals of senior secondary schools in the states. These findings were considered with the findings of earlier researchers (Ajibade, 1990; Obilade, (1999). The findings indicating a moderate level off teachers job performance in the senior secondary schools in the states. A situation whereby the level of teachers job performance in the schools was just 38.3% on the average does not auger well for effective teaching and learning in the schools. The reason for this could not be unconnected with the low level of motivation of teachers found in this study. The finding was in consonance with the findings made in previous studies (Adepoju, 1996; Bolarinwa, 2002).

The findings of this study indicating significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance shows that in certain situations, the more authoritarian a leader is, the more effective the subordinates. This implies that many teachers need to be coerced by the principals before they could improve on their job performance. This findings was contrary to the findings was contrary to the findings made by Akerele (2007) who found no significant relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Lagos state, Nigeria. The findings also neglected the findings made in some earlier studies (Siskin, 1994; Gronn, 2000). The findings of this study indicating significant relationship between democratic and teachers' job performance implies that principals using democratic leadership style could also enhance job performance among teachers. The findings agreed with the findings made by previous researchers (Evans, 1998; Ijaiya, 2000). The findings indicating no significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership roles would normally expect a low level job performance among their teachers. This finding was consistent with the findings made by previous researchers (Meindi, 1995; Oluwatoyin, 2003).

The findings indicating better job performance among teachers in schools having principals using autocratic leadership style implies that in certain situation people need to be forced in order to enhance better productivity. The finding was related to the findings made in some previous studies (Nias, 1994; Okeniyi,

1995). The finding was however contrary to the findings made by Akinyemi (1993) and Akerele (2007) who found that teachers perform better in schools having principals using autocratic style of leaderships.

The findings indicating better job performance among teachers in schools having principals using autocratic leadership style shows that in schools using laissez-faire leadership style, is not good style that could enhance better job performance among teachers. The findings were consistent with the findings made in previous studies (Nworgu, 1991; Obilade, 1998).

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that principals leadership style is a critical variable in teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is evident in the findings of this study which isolated the style of leadership used by a principal as a function of teachers' job performance is valued added. In some situations, people need to be forced before they could improve productivity. The findings of this study have therefore led the researcher to conclude that the autocratic leadership style is the best style of leadership that could enhance better job performance among teachers in senior secondary school the State.

## Recommendations

Considering the findings of this study, it was recommended that school principals should imbibe a mixture of autocratic and democratic styles of leadership in their schools administration in order to enhance better job performance among teachers. As such, principals could use the democratic style of leadership in some occasions. They should apply autocratic leadership style in certain situation in order to increase productivity among teachers. The use of laissez-faire leadership style should be discouraged by school principals as it could not bring a better job performance among teachers. The State Ministry of Education should organize regular inspection to schools to monitor the style of leadership used by principals that could enhance better job performance among teachers. Also the Ministry in collaboration with relevant institutions should organize workshop and seminar for principals at regular interval to strengthen and enhance principals utilizations of styles of leadership that would ensure effective teachers' job performance. This is very necessary in order to achieve the objectives of secondary education as entrenched in the National Policy on Education.

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