

The Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Secondary School Teachers' Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the influence of Principals' leadership styles on secondary school teachers' job satisfaction in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The design of the study was a descriptive survey design. By application of stratified random sampling technique, a total of 28 public secondary schools were drawn from three Local Government Areas in the zone. Some 280 classroom teachers (10 from each school) were used as respondents for the study. In an attempt to focus the study, three research questions were posed and one null hypothesis was formulated and tested. The instrument for the study was a four-point likert type questionnaire. Answers to the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to verify the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that the principals adopted three leadership styles in their administration namely; autocratic laissez faire and democratic according to their dominance. Teachers irrespective of gender agreed that only democratic leadership enhances their job satisfaction. Recommendations include promotion of in-service training on the application of appropriate leadership styles for principals while teachers should be allowed to participate in decision making.

Keywords: Leadership styles, job satisfaction, principals, teachers, secondary schools.

Introduction

The principle factor for onset, smooth running and achievement in any organization is effective and realistic administration. Administration according to Hornby (2002) is perceived as activity done in order to plan, organize and successfully run a business, school or other institution, a process or act of organizing the way that something is done. Administration according to Edem (2006) involves planning activities which aim at the fulfillment of the goals of a particular organization. It calls for the ability of the administrator to make the right decisions to fulfil the required goals. In educational setting therefore, administration has been extended as a service activity or tool through which the fundamental objectives of the educational process may be more fully and efficiently realized. Its essence is the enhancement of teaching and learning processes.

Leadership is the key to the progress and survival of any organization whether it is an enterprise or institution. It is of inestimable importance in educational administration because of its far reaching effects on the accomplishment of school programmes, objectives and attainment of educational goals. Consequently, Ezeuwa (2005) sees it as the act of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of goals. In the same vane, Ukeje (1999) observes that leadership means influencing people to work willingly with zeal towards the achievement of the corporate goals. A leader cannot work alone; he must have people to influence, direct, carry along, sensitize and mobilize towards the achievement of the corporate goal.

Principals of secondary schools constitute dynamic leaders who influence classroom teachers who are their immediate subordinates in the school management system. Okafor (1991) noted that in Nigeria most of the successes or failures in secondary school administration or other institutions depend largely on the influence of these leaders on their subordinates.

Popoola (1984) defined job satisfaction as the totality of employees' social and psychological well-being relative to job performance. It culminates in satisfactory interpersonal relations, financial rewards, fringe benefits, training and promotion, decision-making and free channels of communication among others. This predisposes employees to hard work and optimum productivity.

Basically, such achievements in secondary schools are dependent on three identifiable leadership styles namely; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991). While the autocratic leadership style appears generally self-centered and allows minimum participation of the subordinates in decision making, the democratic style is rather people oriented and counts on the participatory contribution of the subordinates (Mgbodile, 2004). It permits initiatives, originality and creativity in school work operations and promotes hard work among the subordinates.

On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership style refers to the type which allows free contributions of ideas or opinions without interference by the leader. In this case, subordinates develop and maintain individual standards of performance, and correct themselves from their mistakes as need arises. Obi (2003) argues that such style predisposes to unproductive activities very often and could be detrimental to school welfare. On the whole, school principals are therefore assessed by their subordinates for credible performance based on application of these leadership styles.

A major concern of all modern organizations is goal attainment. There is therefore informed growing interest to determine which of these styles is capable of ensuring organizational goal's attainment and personnel job satisfaction. In Nigeria, particularly Nsukka education zone, teachers appear to be less satisfied with their jobs as is evidenced by occasional truancy, indiscipline, examination malpractice and drifting away from teaching profession (Onwurah, 1999). It has become necessary that relationship between leadership styles applied by principals on one hand and job satisfaction of secondary school teachers on the other hand be investigated.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the principals' leadership styles and determine how they influence teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. Specifically, the study aimed at finding out;

- 1) The leadership styles commonly adopted by principals in Nsukka Education Zone.
- 2) The influence of the leadership styles of principals on teachers' job satisfaction.
- 3) The extent to which the influence of leadership styles of principals on teachers' job satisfaction is gender dependent.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- 1) What are the leadership styles commonly adopted by Secondary School Principals of Nsukka Education Zone?
- 2) How do the principals' leadership styles influence teachers' job satisfaction?

- 3) To what extent is the influence of leadership styles of principals on teachers' job satisfaction gender dependent?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' leadership styles on their job satisfaction.

Research Method

The research was a descriptive survey aimed at investigating the influence of principals' leadership styles on classroom teachers' job satisfaction in Nigeria with emphasis on Nsukka Education Zone. The zone comprised Nsukka, Igbo-Etiti and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas. By application of stratified random sampling technique, 12, 8 and 8 secondary schools were respectively drawn from each of these Local Government Areas and used for the study. These numbers were based on the population of secondary schools in each Local Government Area. Some 120, 80 and 80 classroom teachers (10 per school) were drawn from each of the Local Government Areas respectively. Thus, 280 classroom teachers constituted the respondents for the study.

The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire developed through extensive literature and based on three research questions. It was divided into three sections; A, B & C. Section A of the instrument sought information on the personal data of the respondents. Section B contained 15 descriptive statements designed to elicit responses about the leadership styles adopted by the secondary school principals, while Section C considered other fifteen items concerned with ways in which leadership styles of principals influence teachers' job satisfaction. The responses were placed on a 4-point rating scale of A Strongly Agree (SA), B Agree (A), C Disagree (D) and D Strongly Disagree (SD) and were rated 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. An estimate of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha formula was chosen because the items were in cluster form. An overall internal consistency index of 0.54 was obtained. This coefficient showed that the instrument was internally consistent.

The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from Educational Administration and Planning, and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Validation points were to assess the structuring of the instrument, verification of the adequacy of those instruments and the weighting of responses expected from the respondents. Services of some Research Assistants were employed in collecting all the data.

Data Analysis Technique

Data collected were analyzed using mean values and standard deviation. The t-test statistic was used in testing the null hypothesis formulated for the study with 28 as degree of freedom (df).

Results

The results are presented in Tables 1-4 according to research questions and hypothesis that guided the study.

Research Question One

What are the leadership styles commonly adopted by secondary school principals in Nigeria particularly in Nsukka Education Zone?

Data collected with items 1-15 of the instrument, which dwelt on leadership styles adopted by secondary school principals were used to answer this research question.. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Summary of the results is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of the leadership styles adopted by secondary school principals. in Nsukka education zone

$N = 280$

S/NO	LEADERSHIP STYLE	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
1.	Laissez-faire	2.99	0.97	A
2.	Autocratic	3.14	0.93	A
3.	Democratic	2.53	1.25	A

Table 1 above showed that the three leadership styles listed in the study were adopted by secondary school principals. The highest rating was assigned to Autocratic leadership style ($\bar{X} = 3.14$) followed by Laissez-faire ($\bar{X} = 2.99$) and lastly Democratic leadership style ($\bar{X} = 2.53$).

Research Question Two

How do the Principals' Leadership Styles Influence Teachers' job satisfaction?

Data collected with items 16-30 of the instrument, which dwelt on influence of leadership styles of principals on teachers' job satisfaction were used to answer this research question. Summary of the results is presented in tables 2a, 2b and 2c with respect to the three leadership styles listed in the study.

Table 2a: Mean Ratings of the Influence of the Autocratic Leadership style of Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction.

$N = 280$

S/NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
16	The Principals' attitude of not considering teachers' suggestions and ideas in decision making makes teachers to loose interest in their job	2.83	1.091	A
17	The use of threat and punishment to get the objectives of the school achieved by the principal does not make teachers to feel satisfied with their job	2.14	1.02	D
18	The tendency for the principal to neglect the rights and personal needs of the teachers leads to teachers' lack of interest in their job.	2.91	1.03	A
19.	The principals' style of regarding teachers with opposing views as enemies of his administration does not discourage teachers from contributing to the administration	2.01	0.97	D
20.	The principals' strict insistence on teachers' absolute obedience and compliance to his dictates or directives may lead to teachers' insubordination.	2.94	0.99	A

Table 2a above indicated that items 16, 18 and 20 were rated positive while items 17 and 19 were rated negative and were above and below the criterion mean of 2.50 respectively. The mean scores 2.83, 2.91, 2.94 and their corresponding principals' autocratic leadership style affect teachers' job satisfaction negatively.

Also, the mean scores of 2.14, 2.01 and their corresponding principals' autocratic leadership style do not as well ensure teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 2b: Mean ratings of the Influence of the Democratic Leadership Style of Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction.

N = 280

S/NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
21.	The free communication style applied by the principal in his administration does not encourage teachers to be part of the administration	1.80	0.84	D
22.	The idea of the principal taking the interest and welfare of the teachers into consideration in decision making makes the teachers to feel happy with their job	3.09	0.97	A
23.	The principals' ability to allow teachers high degree of initiative and creativity in their work makes them to be more dedicated	2.99	1.64	A
24.	The ability of the principal to encourage interpersonal relationship among the teachers does not create positive work environment	1.60	0.52	D
25.	The ability of the principal to use praise and encouragement as motivational strategies induces better commitment to productivity.	3.48	0.55	A

From Table 2b each of items 22, 23 and 25 whose mean values were greater than 2.50 implied that teachers were satisfied with the principals' democratic leadership style unlike items 27 and 30.

Table 2c: Mean Rating of the Influence of the Laissez-faire Leadership Style of Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction

N = 280

S/NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
26.	Allowing teachers go about their work the way they want by the principal does not promote productivity	3.04	0.97	A
27.	Principal's inability to take necessary decisions does not affect the teachers' job satisfaction	2.12	0.98	D
28.	The principal's attitude of shying away from his responsibilities as the leader makes teachers to loose interest in their job.	2.77	1.08	A
29.	Inability of the principal to specifically consider the welfare and feelings of teachers may lead to teachers being dissatisfied with their job.	2.96	1.02	A
30.	Inability of the principal to engage in strict supervision of teachers does not create undesirable behaviour among the teachers.	1.94	0.93	D

Table 2c showed that items 26, 28 and 29 with their corresponding mean scores do not ensure teachers' job satisfaction. Moreover items 27 and 30 were not acceptable leadership style and hence could create undesirable behaviour among the teachers.

Research Question Three

To what extent is the Influence of Leadership Styles of Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction Gender Dependent.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of the Influence of Leadership Styles of Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction According to Gender.

Male = 170; Female = 110

Leadership Style	Item	Gender	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
Autocratic	16	Male	2.98	1.03	A
		Female	3.13	0.96	A
	17	Male	1.93	0.89	D
		Female	1.98	0.83	D
	18	Male	3.21	0.88	A
		Female	3.31	0.86	A
	19	Male	1.88	0.87	D
		Female	1.94	0.83	D
	20	Male	3.01	0.94	A
		Female	3.39	0.89	A
	21	Male	1.75	0.75	D
		Female	1.81	0.84	D
22	Male	3.07	0.99	A	
	Female	3.38	0.76	A	
Democratic	23	Male	3.40	0.63	A
		Female	3.48	0.62	A
	24	Male	1.60	0.52	D
		Female	1.60	0.53	D
	25	Male	3.51	0.55	A
		Female	3.56	0.55	A
	26	Male	3.10	0.86	A
		Female	3.15	0.83	A
	27	Male	2.01	0.89	D
		Female	1.87	0.85	D
Laissez-Faire	28	Male	3.12	0.90	A
		Female	3.42	0.76	A
	29	Male	3.17	1.63	D
		Female	3.07	0.87	D
	30	Male	1.03	0.87	D
		Female	1.96	0.81	D

Table 3 showed that Autocratic and Laissez-faire leadership styles have a negative influence on the job satisfaction of both the male and female teachers. Both agreed that the two leadership styles do not enhance their job satisfaction. Moreover, the mean scores of both male and female

teachers on the items under Democratic leadership style showed that both agreed that Democratic leadership enhances their job satisfaction.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' leadership styles on their job satisfaction.

Table 4: *t-test of Male and Female Teachers with Respect to the Principals' Leadership Styles Influence on their Job Satisfaction.*

GENDER	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	t-Cal.	t-Crit.	DECISION
Female	110	2.74	2.75	28	0.16	2.05	Not significant
Male	170	2.58	2.61				

Table 4 showed that the calculated t-value is 0.16 at 28 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value of 0.16 is less than the table value of 2.05, the null hypothesis is accepted as postulated. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the leadership style influence of the principal on the job satisfaction of male and female teachers.

Discussion

From the results of the data analysis made, it is obvious that Secondary School Principals in Nsukka Education Zone adopt the three leadership styles under study. This finding is consistent with the view of Mgbodile (2004) who stated that despite the varying terminologies used by experts to describe management styles of leadership, it has been generally agreed that styles used by men in leadership position can be put into three main types namely; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Accordingly, heads of institutions belong to the category of men in leadership positions who exhibit those leadership styles in the school system.

The result also indicated that dominant styles of leadership were in the following order; autocratic, laissez-faire and then democratic. This showed that principals of secondary schools exhibit more of autocratic leadership style than democratic and laissez-faire styles. Autocratic leader is highhanded in his administration; he is self-centred and a leader who is the center of all the activities that go on in the establishment where he is a leader. The problem in this approach is that the principal may neglect other dimensions of leadership which when blended with autocratic style will enhance their leadership effectiveness as well as sustain the teachers' job satisfaction.

However, secondary school teachers agreed that only democratic leadership exerts a positive influence on their job satisfaction. According to Obi (2003), employees are satisfied with democratic leadership because their opinions, comments and suggestions are needed for decision-making. This finding also agreed with that of Ezeuwa (2005) who observed that democratic leaders see their subordinates as colleagues and partners in progress with objective ideas for solving organizational problems. The democratic dimension of leadership style is therefore a better predict of teachers' job satisfaction and school achievement.

On the influence of gender on teachers' job satisfaction, data indicated that all the teachers, irrespective of gender agreed that only democratic leadership enhances their job satisfaction. However, they expressed no satisfaction with autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles of the principals. This tendency of both male and female teachers showing satisfaction with democratic leadership is not in doubt because their opinions, comments and suggestions were always needed for decision-making.

The result of the t-test on the influence of principals' leadership styles for male and female teachers indicated that the null hypothesis was sustained. The result showed that statistically significant differences do not exist between male and female teachers with respect to the influence of the principals' leadership styles on their job satisfaction. This finding appears compatible with the finding of Eneasator (1993), which reported that there is no significant difference in satisfaction levels of males and females.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded from this study that secondary school teachers in Nsukka education zone adopted the following leadership styles; Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire. The highest rating was given to autocratic leadership style. Teachers however, expressed satisfaction with democratic leadership, whereas they were dissatisfied with autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Consequently, the following recommendations are made;

- Principals should undergo in-service and refresher courses on the modern rudiments of leadership styles.
- The appointment of principals should be based on competence and dedication to duty.
- School administrators should give teachers more opportunities to participate in decision-making.

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