

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES ON TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LGA

¹ **Onyekwelu Raphael Azubuike, PhD.**

Article Info

Keywords: Principals, Leadership Styles, Teachers, Job Performance, Secondary schools

DOI

10.5281/zenodo.14529532

Abstract

The study investigated the perceived influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised of 1,616 principals and teachers from the 65 public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. This comprised of 65 principals and 1,551 teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for this research is 375 respondents. A structured validated questionnaire was used to collect data for the study and the reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot test. Mean was used to answer the research questions. The finding of the study revealed that democratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance to a high extent while autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles influences teachers' job performance to a low extent in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended among others that the Post Primary Secondary Schools Services Commission (PPSSC) should provide principals with training in more collaborative and inclusive leadership styles can help them develop skills that improve teacher motivation and performance.

Introduction

Secondary school education refers to the stage of education that students undergo after completing primary school and before transitioning to the tertiary level. It serves a dual role: bridging the gap between primary and tertiary education while equipping individuals for meaningful participation in society. Olorunsola and Bello (2018) posited that secondary schools operate in a mutually beneficial relationship with their environment, leveraging both human and material resources to produce well-educated and socially integrated graduates. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), secondary school education is broadly aimed at preparing individuals for a

¹ Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.

productive life in society and higher education. To achieve these goals, secondary schools are expected to provide trained manpower in applied sciences, technology, and commerce at sub-professional levels; inspire students toward self-improvement and excellence; and nurture individuals who think independently, respect diverse opinions, and value the dignity of labour. However, Olorunsola and Bello (2018) observed that these objectives remain largely unmet due to perceived deficiencies in teachers' job performance.

Teachers' job performance, as defined by Owan and Agunwa (2019), refers to the extent to which educators fulfil their primary responsibility of teaching and conduct themselves professionally. Similarly, Nwite (2016) described it as teachers' dedication to their duties, encompassing activities such as lesson preparation, maintaining student discipline, evaluating learning outcomes, and engaging in school activities, including extracurricular planning. Nyaga (2015) added that teachers' job performance involves efforts to achieve the school's goals and objectives. In this study, it is understood as teachers' effectiveness in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to enhance educational outcomes.

In Awka South LGA, the observed level of teachers' job performance appears suboptimal, as evidenced by cases of tardiness and engagement in personal activities during school hours, attributed to poor motivation (Obinna-Eze and Alex, 2023). This situation reflects ineffective management practices by school principals. As instructional supervisors, motivators, and coordinators, principals play a crucial role in shaping teachers' performance. David-West and Kaegon (2017) highlighted that principals influence outcomes by providing effective leadership and resource management.

Leadership, defined as the process of guiding a team towards shared objectives, involves inspiring, directing, and motivating subordinates (Okeke, Obilor, Nwogbo, & Ubah, 2023). Jideofor (2022) described leadership as the ability to influence group behaviour to achieve goals, emphasizing the role of leadership styles in fostering organizational success. Leadership styles, according to Okumbe (2015), are specific behaviours adopted by leaders to inspire subordinates. Achimugu and Obaka (2019) identified three principal leadership styles: authoritarian, laissez-faire, and democratic.

Authoritarian or autocratic leadership is characterized by a dominating approach that disregards opposing viewpoints. Leaders who adopt this style do not delegate responsibilities and often alienate themselves from their subordinates. This approach can lead to frustration, anger, and disengagement from school activities, which negatively impacts teaching and learning outcomes. Ogalo (2013) noted that autocratic leadership results in reduced collaboration between principals and teachers in lesson planning, the use of teaching aids, and classroom effectiveness.

The laissez-faire leadership style, on the other hand, relinquishes authority and responsibility to subordinates, allowing them to operate without oversight. In such environments, teachers and students may act without accountability, which can lead to a decline in teaching and learning standards. For instance, under a laissez-faire principal, unmotivated teachers might skip classes without consequences, which adversely affects students' academic achievements (Okumba in Igwe, Ndidiamaka, & Chidi, 2017).

Conversely, democratic leadership, often referred to as participatory leadership, involves the active involvement of subordinates in decision-making. This style fosters collaboration between teachers and students, enhancing their motivation and creativity, which in turn improves school performance and students' achievements (Bello, Ibe, & Buka, 2016; Saidu, 2017). Democratic leadership emphasizes collective decision-making and encourages a consultative approach, ensuring that the opinions of all stakeholders are considered. Achimugu and Obaka (2019) highlighted that this leadership style motivates teachers, enabling them to perform optimally and positively influence students' academic outcomes. Despite the theoretical benefits of democratic leadership, its impact on

teachers' job performance in Awka South LGA remains underexplored. Consequently, this study investigates the perceived influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school education in Nigeria is highly valued by both Federal and State governments, given its role in preparing learners for advanced studies, vocational training, and integration into the workforce. The quality of education at this level is expected to significantly contribute to national development. Unfortunately, the secondary education system in Nigeria appears to have fallen short of achieving these objectives. Scholars have attributed this shortfall, in part, to the suboptimal performance of teachers. Teachers are often criticized for their lack of commitment to their duties and responsibilities. This is manifested in their attitudes towards work, inadequate mastery of their subject areas, and lapses in professionalism. A notable factor contributing to poor teacher performance may be insufficient job satisfaction and motivation. In some cases, this lack of motivation stems from school principals failing to adopt effective management practices.

In Awka South LGA, the situation is not significantly different. Observations suggest that many school principals in the state invest limited time and effort in organizing and planning school activities. Evidence of this includes reports of role conflicts, duplication of responsibilities, and an overall lack of direction in task execution among school administrators. These challenges contribute to inefficiencies in resource utilization, diminished teacher morale, and reduced commitment to their roles. If this trend continues unchecked, it may undermine the achievement of the stated objectives of secondary school education in Awka South LGA and Nigeria as a whole. This alarming situation underscores the need for this study, which seeks to assess the perceived influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA.

Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this study was to examine the perceived influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which principals' autocratic leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA.
2. Determine the extent to which principals' laissez-faire leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA.
3. Investigate the extent to which principals' democratic leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study

1. To what extent do principals' autocratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA?
2. To what extent do principals' laissez fair style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA?
3. To what extent do principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA?

Methodology

The research design adopted in this study was descriptive survey. The study was conducted in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. The population of the study comprised of 1,616 principals and teachers from the 65 public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. This comprised of 65

principals and 1,551 teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for this research is 375 respondents. The researcher sampled the entire population of principals because they are small compared to the number of teachers in the zone. This amounted to 65 principals from the 65 public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. The researcher will use simple random technique to select 20% of teachers from the public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. This amounted to 310 teachers from the 65 public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. The combination of the sample of principals and teachers will amount to a sample size of 375.

Instrument for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument is titled “Questionnaire on Influence of Principals Leadership Style on Teachers Job Performance (QIPLSTJP)” and has two main sections- A and B. Section A contains one item on respondents’ background information covering name of school. Section B contains 18 items arranged in three clusters of B1, B2 and B3 according to the three research questions guiding the study. Sections B1 to B3 have 6, 6 and 6 items respectively with 4- point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE). To ascertain the validity of the instrument for the study, the research questions, purpose of the study and the 18 items questionnaire were given to three experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation unit of Educational Foundations Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka for face validation.

To establish the instrument’s reliability, it was administered on a sample of 20 teachers in public primary schools in Awka South LGA who are not included in the population of the study. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded a score of .84 for internal consistency which was deemed reliable for the study. As a result of the fact that the instrument is in three clusters, the researcher had to ascertain the reliability of each cluster using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded coefficient values of 0.84, 0.82 and 0.86 for clusters B1, B2 and B3 respectively. These coefficient values indicate that the instrument is highly reliable. This was based on Nworgu (2015) who stated that coefficient value of 0.70 and above is reliable.

Data was collected by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. The research assistants were briefed by the researcher on the mode of the instruments content and administration. They visited the principals and teachers in their offices or classrooms and delivered copies of the questionnaire and wait for on-the-spot completion and collection. This procedure lasted for three weeks. Out of the 375 copies of questionnaire distributed, 332 copies were returned in good condition. This amounted to 89 percent return rate. The data collected for the study was analyzed using mean. The mean value was used to answer the research questions. The decision rule was that any item with mean rating between 2.50 and above was regarded as high extent while any item with mean rating below 2.50 was regarded as low extent.

Research Question 1

To what extent do principals' autocratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Extent Autocratic Leadership Style Influence Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Awka South LGA (N=332)

S/No.	Item Statement	X	Decision
1.	Autocratic principal might create an environment of order	2.50	High Extent
2.	Autocratic leadership allows for quick decision-making	2.85	High Extent
3.	Autocratic leadership style can lead to increased morale among teachers	2.01	Low Extent
4.	Autocratic leadership style increases teachers' creativity	2.12	Low Extent
5.	Autocratic leadership increase teachers satisfaction on the job	2.09	Low Extent
6.	Autocratic leadership style will reduce teachers absenteeism	2.50	High Extent
Cluster Mean		2.35	Low Extent

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents rated items, 1, 2 and 6 to a high extent with mean ratings of 2.50, 2.85 and 2.50 respectively as the extent autocratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA. Conversely, they rated items 3, 4 and 5 to a low extent with mean ratings of 2.01, 2.12 and 2.09. The cluster mean of 2.35 indicate that the respondents opined that principals' autocratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA to a low extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent do principals' laissez fair style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Extent Laissez Fair Leadership Style Influence Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Awka South LGA (N=332)

S/No.	Item Statement	X	Decision
7.	Allows torchers to perform well in their teaching responsibilities without direct supervision from the principal.	2.00	Low Extent
8.	Lack of feedback from the principal has no negative effect on teachers' job performance.	2.10	Low Extent
9.	Teachers are able to manage their classroom effectively without the principal's guidance.	2.48	Low Extent
10.	Teachers feel more motivated to work independently due to the principal's laissez-faire approach.	2.34	Low Extent
11.	principal's laissez fair leadership style helps teachers to develop professionally on their own initiative	2.25	Low Extent
12.	Allow teachers to be more creative in their classrooms	2.28	Low Extent
Cluster Mean		2.24	Low Extent

Data in Table 2 reveal that the respondents rated items, 7-12 to a low extent with mean ratings ranging between 2.00 and 2.48 as the extent principals' laissez fair leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public

secondary schools of Awka South LGA. The cluster mean of 2.24 indicate that the respondents opined that principals' laissez fair leadership style influences teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA to a low extent.

Research Question 3

To what extent do principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA?

Table 3: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Extent Democratic Leadership Style Influence Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Awka South LGA (N=332)

S/No.	Item Statement	X	Decision
13.	Teachers get constructive feedbacks on their job	3.24	High Extent
14.	Principals encourages teachers professional development opportunities	3.40	High Extent
15.	Principals supports collaborative efforts among teachers	3.55	High Extent
16.	Teachers feel more motivated to work because they are involved in the decision making process	3.28	High Extent
17.	Principals listens to teachers concerns about issues	3.23	High Extent
18.	Influence teachers classroom management skills through team work	3.13	High Extent
Cluster Mean		3.31	High Extent

Data in Table 3 reveal that the respondents rated items, 13-18 to a high extent with mean ratings ranging between 3.12 and 3.48 as the extent principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA. The cluster mean of 3.31 indicate that the respondents opined that principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA to a high extent.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that principals' autocratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA to a low extent. The finding of the study may have resulted because teachers may not feel comfortable expressing their concerns or seeking guidance, leading to frustrations that negatively affect their job performance. Additionally, without regular, positive reinforcement, teachers might struggle to understand how to improve their teaching methods or classroom management. This finding is in agreement with Owenbiugie and Ibadin (2017) who revealed that autocratic principals' leadership style influenced teachers' job performance to a low extent. In the same vein, Saidu (2017) revealed that autocratic leadership style had a negative impact on teaching and learning in secondary schools. Jideofor (2023) teachers expressed dissatisfaction with autocratic leadership styles.

Findings of the study revealed that principals' laissez-faire leadership style influences teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA to a low extent. The finding of the study may have resulted because laissez-faire leadership is characterized by minimal interference, guidance, and support from the principal. In schools where teachers require consistent direction, feedback, and supervision to perform well, this hands-off approach can lead to confusion, a lack of accountability, and poor performance. Without clear expectations and regular feedback, teachers may struggle to stay motivated or improve their teaching methods,

thus leading to low job performance. This finding is in agreement with Owenvbiugie and Ibadin (2017) who revealed that laissez-faire principals' leadership style influenced teachers' job performance to a low extent. In the same vein, Saidu (2017) revealed that laissez-faire leadership style had a negative impact on teaching and learning in secondary schools. Jidefor (2023) teachers expressed dissatisfaction with laissez-faire leadership styles in school administration.

Findings of the study revealed that principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Awka South LGA to a High extent. The finding of the study may have resulted because democratic leadership involves teachers in decision-making processes and creates an environment where their opinions are valued. This participatory approach motivates teachers by fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the school's goals. When teachers feel that their contributions matter, they are likely to invest more effort in their duties, leading to improved job performance. This finding is in line with Imakpokpomwan and Erhabor (2022) revealed 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. Obinna-Eze and Alex (2023) reported that teachers work better and productively under a democratic leadership style. Obinna-Eze and Alex further suggested that secondary school principals should try as much as possible to adopt a democratic leadership style of administration to improve the standard of secondary education in the country.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that principal's leadership styles influences teacher's job performance in public secondary schools in Awka South LGA. Furthermore, It is therefore imperative that measures are put in place to enhance teachers' job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

1. The Post Primary Secondary Schools Services Commission (PPSSC) should provide principals with training in more collaborative and inclusive leadership styles can help them develop skills that improve teacher motivation and performance.
2. Principals should provide clear guidelines and establish support systems to help teachers succeed. This includes setting clear expectations, offering resources, and being available for guidance.
3. Since democratic leadership positively influences teachers' performance, principals should continue to strengthen their democratic practices. This includes involving teachers in decision-making, encouraging open communication, and fostering a collaborative work environment.

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