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## STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ON THE PRINCIPALS' USE OF PARTICIPATIVE AND COERCIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAFANCHAN EDUCATION ZONE, KADUNA STATE.

By

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examines the perceptions of teachers, principals, ministry officials, and PTA officials (stakeholders) on participative and coercive principals' leadership styles in Secondary Schools in Kafanchan Education Zone, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study has two research objectives which are to find out the prevalence of participative leadership styles and coercive leadership style in Secondary Schools in Kafanchan Education Zone, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Also, two research questions were asked based on the objectives and two hypotheses were formulated for the study. Literatures were reviewed based on the issues raised in the objectives. The population of the study comprised 68 principals, 233 teachers, 15 ministry officials and 35 Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) officials. Survey design was adopted for the study and data were collected using a researchers' designed questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and hypotheses tested at 0.05 significant level. The findings revealed among others that principals in Kafanchan Education Zone consult with their subordinates in taking decisions which is why the null hypotheses one was rejected, and that principals don't impose their ideas on their subordinates. In clear terms, there is prevalence of participative leadership style and non-prevalence of coercive style of leadership in the education zone. The researchers however recommend that the situation the leader finds himself should determine his choice of leadership styles. By extension a leader is expected to have understanding of all the styles of leadership and should know when, how, and where to use them. The researcher further recommend that the appointment of principals should not be strictly based on seniority or years of experience in job, but the criteria should include the capacity as a change agent to influence others through divergent use of leadership styles that guarantee collaborative problem solving with students, teachers, ministry officials, and other stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, leadership styles, participative leadership style, coercive leadership style.

### INTRODUCTION

In fostering the aims of Nigerian secondary education, the school principal has important roles to play. By and large, it seems any productive system, whatever its technology, requires efficient and effective leadership and the survival of our secondary educational

system hinges on the ability of our principals to harness the limited resources available towards maximizing their goal attainment. In fact, Aghenta in Dare (2009) strongly maintained that one of the numerous ways of evaluating the educational institutions effectiveness is to appraise their leader's achievement in relation to physical,

financial and human resource management. Leadership styles therefore entails a leader's attitude or behavior toward his subordinates on the process of discharging his duties Okonkwo (2011)

It is fallacious to presume that leaders will behave the same way to all their subjects in all situations and circumstances. Some leaders may be found utilizing their authority or traits in most extreme cases while others may be moderate in given situations affecting their subordinates in their institution (Yakubu 2015). Haven emerge as a leader, a leader develops his own style of leading people depending on his philosophy of management, which may either be scientific management thought or human relations school of thought

Leadership style research has been dominated by self-report perceptions of subordinates about their leader's behavior patterns in decision making, interpersonal relations, planning, instructional leadership, and management efficiency. The outcome of this opinion gathering would be helpful to school heads that will see themselves as democrat, inclusive leaders, while the data will portray them as authoritarians, aloof bureaucrat. A principal may organize for and believe in site-based decision making, but subordinates' perceptions may reveal that the principal "owns" the site and makes all decisions (Yakubu, 2015).

This research work is set out to explore the prevalence of participative and coercive leadership styles in the said zone. For instance participative leadership style builds consensus through participation. If this style were summed up in one phrase, it would be "What do you think?" The democratic style is most effective when the leader needs the team to buy into or have ownership of a decision, plan, or goal, or if he or she is uncertain and needs fresh ideas from qualified teammates. It is not the best choice in an emergency situation, when time is of the essence for another reason or when teammates are not informed enough to

offer sufficient guidance to the leader. On the other hand, if the participative leader is democratic as indicated above, the laissez-faire leader is super or highly democratic. Hardly does he take a decision alone without involving his subordinates. He shows high regard for subordinates' contributions and is ever ready to go with the group (Ngu, 2010). In most cases he is said to be enjoying leadership of position and not of functions. Such leaders are not prepared to shoulder blames for their failure but prefer to share praises for any achievement.

It appears leaders are addicted to definite leadership styles which will constitute a problem to them each time they may be faced with a challenge that does not appeal to the style. The fact that a leader sees himself or is perceived as an absolute democrat is already a problem because it will be difficult for him to play aloof when need be nor act urgently when occasions demands for that. The researchers intend to find out whether the two leadership styles prevail in the education zone.

The assumptions of people concerning the activities of leaders are that the leader should be democratic. They expect leaders to consult with them over issues or remain aloof so they can enjoy all the freedom that nature has given to them. (Yakubu, 2012). This is indeed a problem because this style of leadership cannot guarantee result in all situations and conditions a leader may be exposed to. In the same vein, a good number of people perceive the use of coercion by any leader as act of wickedness. This is also erroneous and misleading as circumstances would always demand for fresh approaches in order to ensure the effectiveness of the leader. The study is set correct all these perceptions. The fact that a leader uses definite styles of leading to the extent that he cannot use any other style when occasions call for it is already a problem to him/her. It appears that leaders are either into a particular leadership style or the other. This is bad because not all situations that a leader is face with that

such a style can serve him. It is worthy note that no single leadership style can guarantee result in all situations. Invariably, leaders are expected to have a better understanding and manipulations of all leadership styles, and also know when and how to put them into use.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. Explore the opinions of principals, teachers, parent teachers' association, and ministry officials (stakeholders) on the prevalence of participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.
2. Assess the opinions of stakeholders on the prevalence of coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.

### ***Research Questions***

1. What is the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone?
2. What is the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone?

### ***Research Hypotheses***

- H<sub>01</sub> There is no significance difference in the opinions of stakeholders on the prevalence of participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.
- H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant difference in the opinions of stakeholders on the prevalence of coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leadership is an act or process of leading. This could imply someone who goes in front physically in ideas or in any activity undertaken by a group of people. In relation to educational administration, leadership can be referred to as the act of guiding or influencing a

group of people in a particular situation that can guarantee or warrant the attainment of set goals. Effective management of any organization can only be made possible via good leadership. It is in light of the above that Musaaazi and Ezeoche in Edem (2011) perceived leadership as the process of influencing the activities and behavior of an individual or group in an effort towards goal achievement in a given situation. Conversely, Lipham in Yakubu(2015) maintained that "leadership is the initiating of new procedures or structures and procedures for achieving existing goals for the organization". Thus, a leader besides being a member of an organization is a custodian of the organizations overall interest. He defines both his role and that of the group and ensures that they are carried out in the best interest of the group or association. Note that a leader who is deficient in all these will certainly or surely undermine and frustrate the implementation of the group's goals.

The most important thing the leader does is to create team spirit around him and near him, not, in a school boy sense, but in realistic terms of mature adults. Note that the function of leadership pervades all organizations. A good leader therefore is one who is capable of persuading others to move enthusiastically towards, the achievement of the group goals (Nwanchukwu in Ojoand Olamiyan, 2008). Leadership is the exercise of power and authority, the mobilizing of resources and influencing the behavior of the followers to move towards chosen direction and to achieve the objectives and goals of the organization (Strategic management (2012).

Okonkwo (2011) maintained that leadership is everything that the leader does that affects the organization as objectives and their well-being. Of course effective leaders are conscious of what they (i.e. beliefs character), what they know (in tasks and human nature) what they do (such as implementing, motivating and providing direction). Also, Stogdill in Okonkwo saw

"leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards goal setting and goals achievement". Thus, it is clearly known that when an individual acts, he necessarily interact or transact with element of his environment. He both gives something and get something. This type of influence usually occurs within the structure of a social system and tends to contributes to its stability. Leadership therefore, refers to the attributes of a position in the social structure, the characteristics of a person and a category of behavior.

### ***Participative Leadership Style***

A participative leader builds consensus through participation. If this style were summed up in one phrase, it would be "What do you think?" The democratic style is most effective when the leader needs the team to buy into or have ownership of a decision, plan, or goal, or if he or she is uncertain and needs fresh ideas from qualified teammates. It is not the best choice in an emergency situation, when time is of the essence for another reason or when teammates are not informed enough to offer sufficient guidance to the leader (yakubu,2015).

Participative leaders strive to move away from the authoritarian boss-led mode of leadership to the human side of the enterprise espoused in Edem (2011:12) by Mary Parker Follett, Elton Mayo, Frederick Roethlisberger, and others. They found that productivity and human relationships were closely linked, and opened inquiry into informal structures and social systems. Follett's vision guided her to challenge the grip of scientific management on early twentieth-century industry. She believed managers should treat workers with dignity and change the workplace from strict authoritarian control over workers to a more collegial team concept.

Participative leadership, however, leads to delegation and communication about goals, processes of goal accomplishment, respect for diversity in team

members, and a collective effort to seek quality in each task and final product. This collaborative process brings a family atmosphere to the workplace and creates respect for the contributions by each member. The X generation believes in the participative leadership style, provided they have the support and opportunities from upper management to contribute to and influence team outcomes. A participative leader believes in people and relies on the functioning of a group or team to achieve results. Subordinates take part in the decision making process, and decisions result from a group consensus (Yakubu, 2015).

### ***Coercive Leadership Style***

An autocrat employ coercive tactics to enforce rules use Machiavellian cunning to manipulate people and decision making, and reward loyalty over merit. Control is the primary management strategy employed by authoritarian leaders (Sage, 2012). This form of leadership emphasizes objectivity in the workplace, tends to be impervious to human problems, is insensitive to race and gender, and displays little emotion or affection toward employees. Douglas McGregor's Theory X becomes the authoritarian's motif, believing that people must be forced to work, closely supervised, and rewarded or punished based on individual productivity. They believe in a top-down, line and-staff organizational chart with clear levels of authority and reporting processes.

The fundamental element of the Coercive autocratic leadership style is control – control of jobs, rewards, and people's actions to the extent an autocrat can achieve it. Results are obtained through direct, explicit instructions on expectations of a job and how the work is to be performed. This style of leadership demands obedience and requires a good deal of reporting back to the leader. Negative, personalized feedback and punishment or threats of discipline are the most common methods the Coercer uses to achieve

results. Ngu (2010) liken this group to McGregor's Theory 'X' management style. He believes workers are lazy and lack initiative and therefore must be compelled to carry out their functions.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey method of descriptive research design. The population consisted of all the teachers, principals, PTA members, and ministry officials, totaling 4000 stakeholders from kafanchan education zone, Kaduna state, out of which a sample of 68 principals, 233 teachers, 15 ministry officials and 35 PTA officials were drawn from Kafanchan Education Zone making the total of 351 respondents. The sample size was reached via Kredji and Morgan method of determining sample size (Baba, 2005). Meanwhile, the above stakeholders were used because of their close working

relationship with the principals. The use of principals was to pave a way for self-assessment for the principals. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed instrument titled: "Perceptions of stakeholders on principals' leadership styles questionnaire" (PSPLSQ). The instrument was validated and used with a reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.82$ . Descriptive analysis was used to analyze and interpret the data collected while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance

## DATA ANALYSIS

This table shows the opinions of respondents on the prevalence of Participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.

**Table 1:** Opinions of respondents on prevalence of Participative leadership style in Secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone

| S/N | Item statement  | SA  | A   | UD | D  | SD | $\bar{X}$ | STD   |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Decision making is the function of both the principal and the staff.  | 155 | 106 | 46 | 21 | 10 | 4.109     | 1.049 |
| 2   | When the principal imposed a decision on the staff the reason is explained to the group.                                  | 159 | 172 | 3  | 2  | 2  | 4.432     | .608  |
| 3   | The principal welcomes subordinates' ideas.   | 189 | 103 | 20 | 17 | 9  | 4.319     | .979  |
| 4   | Feelings of responsibility are developed when a principal operates an open door policy.                                   | 221 | 86  | 21 | 5  | 5  | 4.517     | .801  |
| 5   | Criticism and praise are objectively given in a participative leadership style.   | 225 | 97  | 4  | 4  | 8  | 4.559     | .791  |
| 6   | There is collective responsibility in schools due to the principal's leadership style.                                    | 117 | 203 | 6  | 6  | 6  | 4.239     | .734  |
| 7   | The subordinates are encouraged to share ideas and opinions, even though the leaders retain the final say over decisions. | 111 | 167 | 27 | 25 | 8  | 4.029     | .958  |
| 8   | The principal always allows us to develop a   | 52  | 160 | 91 | 25 | 10 | 3.647     | .929  |

|                               |  |     |     |   |    |    |              |       |
|-------------------------------|--|-----|-----|---|----|----|--------------|-------|
|                               | plan and then vote on the best course of action.   |     |     |   |    |    |              |       |
| 9                             | The principal's democratic leadership style can lead to higher productivity among staff in the school. | 145 | 127 | 8 | 50 | 8  | 4.038        | 1.122 |
| 10                            | The principal is concerned with both the needs of staff and the goals of school.                       | 64  | 210 | 2 | 30 | 32 | 3.716        | 1.159 |
| <b>Aggregate mean</b>         |  |     |     |   |    |    | <b>4.160</b> |       |
| <b>Decision mean = 3.0000</b> |  |     |     |   |    |    |              |       |

Details of the table above, participatory leadership styles prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone. This is because the overall aggregate mean responses on the ten items of participatory leadership styles was 4.160 which is higher than the 3.0000 decision mean. Specifically, most are of the opinion that criticism and praise are objectively given in a participative leadership style, as this attracted their highest mean response of 4.559 with details showing that 225 strongly agreed, while 97 agreed as against 4 that were undecided while 4 disagreed and the rest 4 strongly disagreed with this item. In the same vein it is believed by most of the

respondents were of the opinion that when the principal imposed a decision on the staff the reason is explained to the group as this attracted a mean response of 4.432 with details showing that while 159 were in strong agreement, 172 were in agreement as against 3 that were undecided while 2 disagreed and the rest 2 strongly disagreed with this item. In summary it can be said that participatory leadership styles prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.

Table 2 shows the opinions of stakeholders on prevalence of Coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone.

**Table 2;** Opinions of stakeholders on prevalence of Coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone

| S/N | Item statement   | SA  | A   | UD | D   | SD | $\bar{X}$ | STD   |
|-----|--|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----------|-------|
| 1   | The school principal is only concerned about the goals of the school.                    | 3   | 184 | 10 | 104 | 37 | 3.035     | 1.152 |
| 2   | The school principal has no trust on his/her subordinates.                               | 5   | 38  | 40 | 225 | 30 | 2.298     | .838  |
| 3   | The principal gives order and demands total obedience without explanations or questions. | 4   | 92  | 2  | 220 | 20 | 2.508     | .969  |
| 4   | The principal allows little or no input from his/her subordinates.                       | 32  | 2   | 62 | 212 | 30 | 2.384     | .992  |
| 5   | The principal feels financial reward is the only motivation for workers.                 | 32  | 52  | 0  | 158 | 96 | 2.307     | 1.289 |
| 6   | Teaching and non-teaching staff only commit themselves to work when the leader is        | 104 | 67  | 0  | 100 | 67 | 3.121     | 1.584 |

|                               |  |    |     |    |     |    |              |
|-------------------------------|--|----|-----|----|-----|----|--------------|
|                               | present.   |    |     |    |     |    |              |
| 7                             | The principal makes decisions based on his/her own ideas and judgment.                         | 34 | 28  | 7  | 240 | 29 | 2.381 1.086  |
| 8                             | The principal does not care about the needs of subordinates.                                   | 34 | 57  | 58 | 160 | 29 | 2.724 1.147  |
| 9                             | The principal lacks creativity and problem solving skills in decision making process.          | 33 | 114 | 1  | 103 | 87 | 2.718 1.414  |
| 10                            | The principal hides vital information from subordinates from ministry of education/proprietor. | 33 | 114 | 1  | 103 | 87 | 2.718 1.414  |
| <b>Aggregate mean</b>         |  |    |     |    |     |    | <b>2.619</b> |
| <b>Decision mean = 3.0000</b> |  |    |     |    |     |    |              |

According to the table above Coercive leadership styles do not prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone. This is because the overall aggregate mean responses on the ten items of coercive leadership styles was 2.619 which is lower than the 3.0000 decision mean. However, on specific terms, it is believed that teaching and non-teaching staff only commit themselves to work when the leader is present, as this item attracted the highest mean response of 3.121, with details showing that 104 were in strong agreement, while 67 were in agreement as against 100 that disagreed and the rest 67 strongly disagreed with this item. In the same vein they believed that the school principal is only concerned about the goals of the school, as this item attracted the second highest mean of 3.015 with details showing that 3 strongly agreed, 184 agreed,

while 10 were undecided as against 104 that disagreed with this item and the rest 37 strongly disagreed with this item. In summary it can be said that coercive leadership styles do not prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.

**HYPOTHESES TESTING**

All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics.

H0: There is no significant difference in the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone

**Table 3:** Summary of Analysis of variance statistics on the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone

| Variations     | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F ratio | F critical | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------------|------|
| Between Groups | 380.772        | 3   | 126.924     | 8.847   |            |      |
| Within Groups  | 4791.677       | 334 | 14.346      | 8.847   | 2.60       | .000 |
| Total          | 5172.450       | 337 |             |         |            |      |

The opinions of stakeholders on the prevalence of participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone were taken and ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The Summary of data collected and analyzed in respect to null hypothesis one is presented in Table 3. According to the outcome of the one way Analysis of Variance statistics, significant difference exists in the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of principals' participative leadership style in

secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone. Reason for this is because the calculate significant ( p ) value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance while the calculated f ratio value of 8.847 is higher than the F critical value of 2.60. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of principals' participative leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone, is hereby rejected.

**Table 4:** Summary of Analysis of Variance statistics on the opinions of stakeholders on the prevalence of principals' coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone

| Variations     | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F ratio | F critical | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------------|------|
| Between Groups | 243.264        | 3   | 81.088      | 1.726   |            |      |
| Within Groups  | 15691.272      | 334 | 46.980      | 1.726   | 2.60       | .161 |
| Total          | 15934.536      | 337 |             |         |            |      |

**Calculated  $p > 0.05$ , calculated F ratio  $< 2.60$  at df 3, 334**

The opinions of stakeholders on the prevalence of principals' coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone were taken and ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The Summary of data collected and analyzed in respect to null hypothesis two is presented in Table 4.

Results of the one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics revealed that there was no significant difference in the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of principals' coercive leadership style in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone. Reason for this is because the calculate significant ( p ) value of 0.0161 is higher than 0.05 alpha level of significance while the calculated f ratio value of 1.726 is lower than the F critical value of 2.60. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinion of stakeholders on the prevalence of principals' coercive leadership styles in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone, is hereby accepted.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Findings revealed that principals in Kafanchan education zone did not impose their decisions on the subordinates and that Participative leadership styles prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone.
2. Findings show that coercive leadership style did not prevail in Kafanchan education zone.

## DISCUSSION

The findings on table three revealed that significant difference exists in the opinion of respondents on the prevalence of participative leadership styles in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. Participatory leadership styles prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone. But in summary all the respondents believed that participatory leadership style prevails in secondary schools. This is because the overall aggregate mean responses on the



ten items of participatory leadership styles was 4.160 which is higher than the 3.00 decision mean. This finding is similar to the findings of Akerele in Katuka (2013) who found that teachers perform better in schools having principals using democratic style of leadership than in schools having principals using coercive style of leadership. Specifically, most of the respondents are of the opinion that criticism and praise are objectively given in a participative leadership style and that when the principal imposed a decision on the staff the reason is explained to the group.

The result on table four, using the Analysis of variance showed no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the prevalence of principals' coercive leadership styles in secondary schools in Kafanchan Education Zone. This explains why the hypothesis was accepted. They are all of the opinion that this type of Coercive leadership styles did not prevail in secondary schools in Kafanchan education zone. This is because the overall aggregate mean responses on the ten items of coercive leadership styles was 2.619 which is lower than the 3.0000 decision mean. This finding was contrary to the findings of Gronn (2000). However, on specific terms, it is believed that teaching and non-teaching staff only commit themselves to work when the leader is present, and they also believe that the school principal is only concerned about the goals of the school.

## CONCLUSION

In participative leadership style, most of the respondents believed that criticism and praise are objectively given and when the principal imposed a decision on the staff the reason is explained to the group.

The subordinates will only engage in eye service but dumb the work when the leader is gone. As such, coercive leadership style does not prevails in the education zone.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In participatory leadership style criticism and praise should be objectively given in order to carry every one along in decision makings.

1. The teachers and non-teaching staff should be given adequate freedom to work to the goals of education even when the principal is not present.
2. The appointment of principals should not be strictly based on seniority or years of experience in job, but the criteria should include the capacity as a change agent to influence others through divergent use of leadership styles that guarantee collaborative problem solving with students, teachers, ministry officials, and other stakeholders.
3. Leaders should avoid getting used to a particular leadership style that it becomes too difficult to switch to another when situation demand for such.

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