

Leadership Roles Influence on Academic Achievements of Secondary School Students in Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study, investigated the influence of leadership roles on secondary school students' academic performance in Minna metropolis in Niger State. It explored the commonly used leadership role, and benchmark practices on leadership roles that can lead to students' academic performance and to establish the relationship between school heads' leadership roles and student's academic performance. This study employed cross sectional survey research design whereby data were collected through questionnaires. The data collected were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Chi-square test T-test was employed in testing association between leadership roles and student's academic performance. The findings established that democratic leadership roles mostly influence students' academic achievement/performance (R-value was 0.932), implying that there is a strong and positive influence and significant at $p=0.004$ level of democratic leadership roles on students' academic achievement. For Laissez-faire leadership role, the relationship revealed negative influence on students' academic performance and was very weak (R-value of 0.1) and not significant ($p=0.072$). Autocratic leadership roles, although the relationship was very strong ($R=0.546$, the relationship was insignificant with p value = 0.08. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that educational administrators should ensure that principals are given appropriate orientations before they are appointed as school heads. And, principals are asked to use more democratic leadership role if they want students to achieve or excel good academic performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Leaders in any organisation have the power to control resources both human and material, and utilise these resources in achieving the organisational goals and objectives. This means that they should have the capability of directing internal stakeholders to act in accordance with organizational goals. The extent a leader is successful may depend on their ability to build trust between the parties and create opportunities for each party to fulfill both their individual and collective goals. This requires that such leaders are resourceful and tactful, relying on their personal qualities to assure effective performance in their leadership roles. Florence (2012) viewed leadership as a process that involves defining, establishing, identifying, translating and guiding the affairs and activities of the organisational members towards achieving the goals of the organisation. Organisational purpose and direction can be defined in terms of mission, vision, strategy, goals, plans, and tasks. Leadership is tied to the continual development and attainment of organizational goal. Lack of vision in the management of schools

often leads to imbalance in the allocation and use of resources.

According to Florence (2012), educational leaders play an important role in making teaching and learning more effective and in making sure that quality education is provided to students. Leadership roles in school really depends on the leader's assumptions about human being, human nature and human learning. These assumptions consciously and unconsciously are the main foundation for decision making and choosing a leadership roles (Suraya & Yunus, 2012). Different experts have identified different leadership roles and their distinctive characteristics. For example, Florence (2012) presented full range leadership styles according to which three leadership roles known as democratic, autocratic and laissez-fair were identified. A democratic leadership role is characterized by co-ordination, co-operation and by collaboration. In the democratic roles, the management regards people as the main decision makers. The subordinates have a greater say in decision-making, the determination of academic policy, the implementation of systems and

procedures of handling teaching, which leads to school discipline and hence academic excellence and overall school performance in the fields of sport and cultural affairs. Autocratic leadership roles allows no participation in decision making Yulk (2005) and Nsubuga (2008), describes the autocratic leadership roles as a role where the manager retains most authority for him/herself and makes decisions with a view to ensuring that the staff implements it. This kind of leadership does not bother about attitudes of the staff towards a decision. It rather concerned about getting the task done. The leader tells the staff what to do and how to do it, asserts him/herself and serves as an example for the staff. Autocratic leaders are generally disliked, as there is no scope for initiative, consideration, and self-development on the part of followers. Teachers and students, for example, whose school heads employ the autocratic leadership roles, remain insecure and afraid of the authority. This eventually reduces their ability to explore their potential. This role is typical of a leader who tells his employees what he wants done and how he wants it done, without requesting the input/advice of his subordinates. Some people tend to perceive these roles as a vehicle for yelling, using demeaning language, and leading by threats and abusing their power. However, under certain conditions the autocratic leadership roles is appropriate, especially when one has all the information to solve the problem, when one has little time, and when employees are well motivated.

Laissez-fair which is also known as free-rein leadership roles, it is a kind of leadership whereby the leader is less concerned about the goals of the organisation. He allows every member of the organisation do whatever they like, he has little concern on the welfare of the staff and does not monitor the staff activities in the organisation. This kind of leadership style is not always good in the organisation, it encourages laziness and affect the actualisation of the educational goals and objectives.

For the past five years, the status of secondary education in Minna metropolis has been in sympathetic stage, this situation led to unsatisfactory examination results in summative evaluation. In some schools, especially the public secondary schools, majority of students failed in making the University requirement. However, experiences and records have shown that leadership roles have direct bearing on the overall effectiveness of school because both teachers and students are to perform under the leadership of school teacher (Florence, 2012). It has been discovered that effective leadership style develops

school climates that help motivate both the students and teachers leading to the creation of better teaching and learning environments which are more conducive to higher levels of students' academic achievements.

In most school systems, a school Principal is required by the systemic authorities to improve student learning and is held accountable for it by building commitments in developing a shared vision for motivating and energizing teachers and students (Ross & Gray, 2006). This study therefore, aimed at finding out the influence of leadership roles on students' academic achievements and establishing the benchmark of which effects of leadership roles may remain or progress academic achievements of secondary schools in Niger State.

Objectives of the Study

- i) To examine the commonly used leadership roles in secondary schools of Minna metropolis.
- ii) To suggest and establish benchmark practices on leadership roles that can lead to students' academic achievements in secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership has evolved over time and has taken different forms. Views on leadership theory have been changing over the years. Oyetunyi (2006) asserts that the leadership paradigm has changed over the last decades; and that it has transited from the traditional leadership approaches to the new perspectives. He added that, leadership theory recognizes that investigation on leadership depends on the interaction of three factors namely: the traits and behaviours of the followers, the characteristics of the followers and the nature of the situation in which leadership occurs. As such, the following leadership theory provide scholars with a vision and introduce leadership behaviors that may assist in better understanding of leadership traits.

Behaviour Theory

Behaviour theory examine whether the leader is task oriented (initiating structure), people oriented (consideration), or both. It centred into two major forms of leader behaviour namely: employee-centered/consideration and production-centered/initiating structure. An employee-centered leader is sensitive to subordinates' feelings and endeavours to fulfill their concerns (Ross & Gray, 2006). On the other hand, a production-centered leader has, as the major concern, accomplishment of the task. While it is desirable that a leader be high on both considerate and initiating structure, but assert that it may be

difficult to match a leader's behavior with effectiveness if appropriate behaviour cannot be linked to different situations, as situational factors affect the effectiveness of the leader's behaviour. It is the bid to consider situational factors that led to the birth of situational/contingency theories. Oyetunyi (2006), Nsubuga (2008) and Omar (2005) models suggests five roles of academic administration: 1) care-taker, 2) authority-obedience, 3) comfortable-pleasant, 4) constituency-centered and 5) team oriented. The optimum roles are identified as team administration, which is characteristic of leaders who must score high on both concern for institutional performance and concern for people.

Normative Decision Theory

Normative Decision Theory is a theory of leadership that focuses on the correct norms or standards of behaviour for leaders to follow. Although it focuses on correct norms in decision-making, it is concerned with the extent to which leaders allow their subordinates to participate in decision-making. It proposes five roles of leader behaviour ranging from the autocratic roles in which decisions are made solely by the leader to complete participation by subordinates and during which decisions are reached through consensus. Under this theory, the most effective roles of leadership depend on the importance of the decision, the degree to which subordinates accept it, and the time required making the decision. Leaders must be flexible in selecting the decision-making approach that yields maximum benefits in terms of quality, acceptance and time constraints.

Cognitive Resource Theory

Cognitive resource theory is an approach to leadership that focuses on the interaction between leaders' cognitive resources like intelligence, technical competence, job-related knowledge and job performance and stress. The level of the leaders' cognitive ability is related to the nature of the plans, decisions and strategies that will guide the actions of the subordinates (Bolarinwa, 2013). This means that the better the leaders' abilities to lead; the more effective the plans, decisions and strategies in education. Therefore, if the subordinates support the leaders' goals and if the leader is not under inordinate stress, then the leaders' programs are likely to be implemented (Ross & Gray, 2006).

Cognitive theories have important implications for perceptions of the leaders' effectiveness. In many situations, leaders may not have measurable outcomes other than social attribution, or the tendency of their constituents to

assign to them the credit or blame for unusual institutional outcomes (Nsubuga, 2008). From this perspective, leaders are individuals believed by followers to be responsible for particular events. Leaders themselves, in the absence of clear indicators, are subject to cognitive bias that can lead them to make predictable errors of judgment and to over-estimate their effectiveness (Oyetunyi, 2006). This theory depicts an approach to leadership in which leadership effectiveness is determined by the interaction between the leaders' personal characteristics and aspects of the situation.

Path-Goal Theory

Path-Goal theory is the leadership theory that focuses on the kinds of behaviours leaders should exercise to allow their subordinates to achieve personal and organizational goals (Oyetunyi, 2006). Leaders can increase their subordinates' motivation, satisfaction and job performance by administering rewards that depend on the achievement of particular goals. Investigation on leaders will help employees reach personal and organizational goals by pointing out the paths they should follow and providing them with the means to do so. However, under this theory, the leadership roles that was most effective depends on characteristics of the situation and of the subordinates; although in most instances leaders must be flexible and adopt whichever roles is called for (Bolarinwa, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out among Secondary Schools of Minna metropolis in Niger State. 10 Principals in 10 selected Secondary Schools and 50 Teachers were selected for the study, therefore, the study has a total of 60 respondents. To make sure that relevant and clear information are collected, structured questionnaire with both open and closed-ended questions were used. The secondary data was collected using the available documents on students' performance in the selected secondary schools.

Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data was analyzed using descriptive, regression analyses. Descriptive statistics measure information such as percentages and means, while Chi-square test and T-test was employed in testing association between variables, i.e. leadership roles and student's performance. The documentary review focused particularly on government policy documents relating to secondary education, government statutes,

strategic plans and reports. Other documents relevant, to the study that was used include; schemes of work, lesson books, registers, records of work covered and attendance records as well as minutes of School Management Committee, staff and other stakeholders' meetings. The data that

was collected through documentary review was examined to determine the level of involvement and motivation of various stakeholders by using content analyses by breaking them into small meaningful parts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Commonly used Principals Leadership style in Secondary Schools.

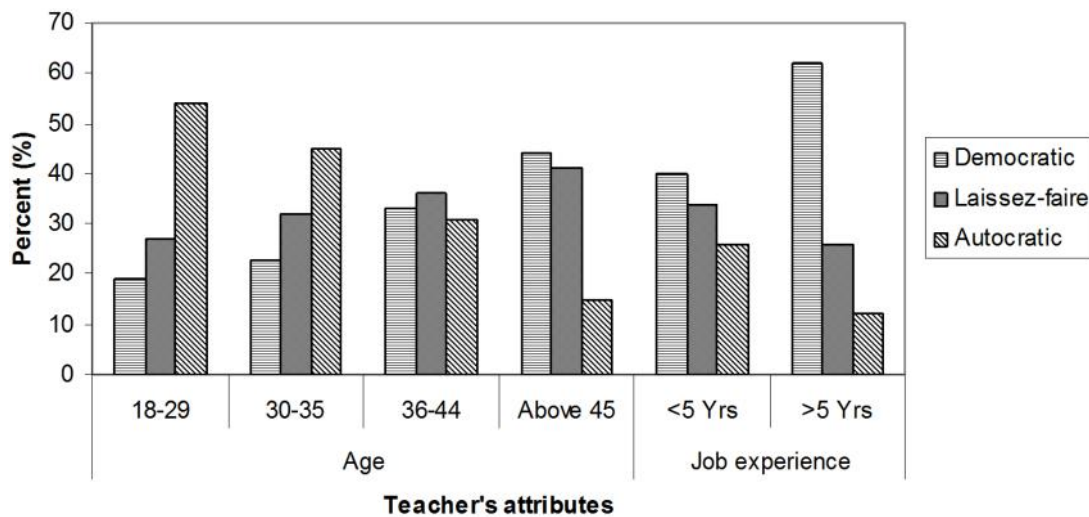
ATTRIBUTES		LEADERSHIP ROLES (%)		
		Democratic	laissez-faire	Autocratic
Overall Teachers' responses		70	20	10
Sex	M	31	16	53
	F	68	26	6
Job experience	<5 Yrs	32	25	43
	>5 Yrs	35	32	33

Source: Field Work, 2019

From the table above, the overall responses from Teachers indicated that 70% of them highlighted that their Principals are democratic, 20% indicated laissez-faire and 10% says autocratic. Going by the Sex of the Teachers, 68% female Teachers agreed that their Principals are democratic, while only 6% of them attributes

their Principals to be autocratic. On the job experience of the teachers, those with 5 years and above of teaching experience has described their Principals as democratic, with 35%, while those with below 5 years of job experience indicated that their principals are autocratic as shown on the above table with 43% of their response.

Figure 1: Graphical representation of Teachers' reactions on commonly Principals used Leadership role on Secondary Schools in the study area.



Middle aged teacher with age rank 36-44 view that their Principals are more or less democratic (33%), laissez-faire (36%) and autocratic (31%). It is glaring on the table above that, those Teachers with more than 5years teaching experience indicated that their Principals

are democratic, this could be attributed to the fact those Teachers are in teaching for quite number of years, they know the trend and manners in which to work with all sorts of Principals and they can better describe the attitude of each and every Principal in their various Schools.

Table 2: Benchmark Leadership Practices and Styles that can lead to Students' Academic Achievements in Minna Metropolis Secondary Schools.

SN	Principals Leadership role	AGE				JOB EXPERIENCE	
		18-29	30-35	36-44	Above 45	<5 Yrs	>5 Yrs
1	Democratic	19	23	33	44	40	62
2	Laissez-faire	27	32	36	41	34	26
3	Autocratic	54	45	31	15	26	12

Source: Field Work, 2019

As indicated in the table above, when teachers of different ages and job experience were asked to rate their Principals' Leadership role the results showed that, teachers belonging to age class 18-29 (54%) suggested that their Principals are autocratic while older teachers with age class > 45 years (62%) suggested that their Principals are democratic. Same was observed when job experience was computed i.e. less experience teachers viewed Principals as autocratic while experienced teachers viewed Principals as democratic.

Cotton (2003) stated that, sometimes there is a limit to which students' performance may

be influenced regardless the proper Leadership role played. He insisted that the ingredients of this drawback may be influenced by gender, age and school environment, as well as test scores, examination results and students' ability to apply what is learnt. Cotton's assumptions were tested by comparing the principal's Leadership role and extraneous variables and demographic characteristic of respondents. The study stipulated that, where these variables influenced positively or negatively students' performances, the study then draw a bottom line or threshold level for each Leadership role.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation r -value and chi Square Probability Analyses p Value at $p \leq 0.05$ are sig. $n = 43$

SN	Teacher's perspectives (bench marks) on student's performance	PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ROLES					
		Democratic		Laissez-faire		Autocratic	
		Pearson correlation r -value	P value are sig. at $p \leq 0.05$	Pearson correlation r -value	P value are sig. at $p \leq 0.05$	Pearson correlation r -value	P value are sig. at $p \leq 0.05$
1	Promotion	0.525*	0.037**	0.873*	0.001**	0.402	0.064
2	High pay	0.369	0.002**	0.627*	0.049	0.061	0.048*
3	Better work environment	0.544*	0.004**	0.489	0.054	0.355	0.621
4	Job security	0.653*	0.000**	0.548*	0.002**	0.762*	0.096
5	Involvement	0.497	0.029**	0.461	0.457	0.127	0.106
5	Communication	0.201	0.098	0.409	0.221	0.411	0.077
6	Respect	0.562*	0.902	0.199	0.024**	0.996*	0.028**
7	Team work	0.375	0.022**	0.474	0.755	0.476	0.559
8	Clear and timely command	0.191	0.101	0.883*	0.003**	0.754*	0.004

Note: * R-value is bigger than 0.5 (Pearson correlation) which implies good correlation between variables in question. And, ** means the probability value at $p \leq 0.05$ are significant (i.e. there is significant relationship between principal's Leadership roles and teachers desired achievement perspectives/bench mark in respect to students' academic performance).

It is glaring that the best leadership style that can improve students' academic achievement is the Democratic kind of leadership, because

Teachers are more encouraged and work freely with Principals that are Democratic and this can help in improving the academic achievements of the students in secondary schools as indicated on the table above that there is strong relationship between Principal leadership roles and academic performance of students in Secondary Schools in Minna metropolis.



CONCLUSION

Being democratic involves teamwork and teamwork can enhance quality management in schools as teams can utilize resources more efficiently and effectively, increase organizational effectiveness, improve the quality of educational programs and create better learning and working environments. Thus, successful teamwork is considered an indispensable ingredient in the process of building successful schools. Where leadership is shared, teamwork is valued and usually organizations in which teamwork flourishes are more effective than organizations dominated by a single individual. The traditional approach that only top managers had the competence to make decisions and staff had to carry out the decisions, is now outdated.

From the study's findings, the autocratic leadership role of school Principals was found to have a negative effect on students' performance in secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. Therefore, the findings of this study concluded that the best leadership style that can improve our Students' performance, move our Schools towards achieving the desired educational goals and objectives is the Democratic Leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that educational administrators should ensure that principals are given appropriate orientations before they are appointed as school heads. And, principals are asked to use more democratic leadership role if they want students to achieve or excel good academic performance.

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