

Leadership Styles of Principals for Enhancing Teachers Productivity in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria: Teachers Perception

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Abstract

This paper investigated leadership styles of principals for enhancing teachers' productivity for effective school administration. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The research questions were formulated in line with the objectives of the study which is to examine and assess the opinion of the respondents (the teachers) on the extent the various leadership styles enhance effective secondary school administration. The population consists of all secondary school teachers in Rivers state. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select three local government areas out of the 23 local government areas. From each of the sampled local government area, a sample of 50 participants were selected through simple random sampling technique resulting in a total of 150 respondents. The instrument used for the study was self-structured questionnaire titled "Leadership Styles of Principals for Enhanced Effective School Administration Questionnaire" (LESPEESAQ) which was based on a four-point Likert type scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent. Research questions were answered using mean statistics. The study revealed that the democratic leadership style enhances effective school administration to a high extent while autocratic and laissez-faire styles enhance but to a low extent. The study, therefore, concluded that the best leadership style of the principals for enhancing effective administration is democratic leadership style. It was therefore recommended that a

democratic leadership style should be adopted often in administration while others can be employed sparingly based on specific areas.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Principals, Enhancing Teachers Productivity, Secondary Schools, Rivers State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in any organisation or institution is as important as the organisation itself. There is no organisation that can achieve in any area of its endeavour without leadership effectiveness. Stogdill (1990) defines leadership as the process of influencing group activities toward goal setting and goal achievement. The leader is the individual in the group who is responsible for the task of directing and coordinating the task-related activities of the group. As Okorie (2001) rightly posits, without leadership the connection between the individual and the group goals may become tenuous. Davis in Okorie, Ukejie and Nwankwo (1992) assert that without leadership, an organisation is but a 'muddle of men and machines'.

Leadership involves the maintenance of the organisation in terms of keeping the organisation together, satisfying individual needs, encouraging self-direction, promoting interdependence and preserving harmony. Whether these are achieved or not depends on the leadership styles of the principal amidst other variables.

In the secondary school setting the leader otherwise known as the manager or administrator is the principal. The principal as the leader of a school is the one that initiates and oversees the functioning of the day to day activities of the school as the chief administrator of the school. Effective administration of the school significantly correlates with the leadership styles adopted by the leader (administrator) being the principal.

Okorie, Ukeje and Nwagbara (1992) noted that organisational effectiveness is the accomplishment of the common purpose of an organisation. It is clear that the survival of an organisation depends on its effectiveness which refers to the ability to carry out its purpose. Leadership effectiveness is a pre-requisite for organisation effectiveness. Effective leaders produce an effective organisation.

Reddin (1970) stated that effectiveness is the extent to which the organisation achieves the output required of it. This means that everyone must work for the goals of the organisation to be achieved. This also can be done when there is an effective leader to make it work. Thus, the principals' leadership style that will help in achieving effective administration where members of staff show a high level of performance and productivity cannot be overemphasised.

As Igwe (2000) rightly argues, what constitutes the key duties of a school principal are those factors involved in leading the school to achieve the set goals and objectives and those that deal with the maintaining of a cordial relationship of staff. The principal is the coordinator of school activities, overseeing that policies of the school are implemented. He influences other members of the school with whom he interacts. He serves as an external representative, spokesman and symbol of the negotiations and settlement between the school and external agents in matters of representations of official functions (Ejio, 1989).

In fact, to achieve effective school administration leadership behavioural styles of the principal is paramount. Principal as a school leader needs to be prepared to deal with the complex nature of principals' responsibilities and unavoidable social, economic, technological, and political challenges that can serve as a barrier to implement efforts. Bernard and Goodyear (2010) viewed a principal as a standard-setter who leads in the development of aspiration and expectation on the part of both teachers and students to do good work. As an administrative leader, the principal sets the academic tone and work collaboratively with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, formulate mission statement and establish performance goals and objectives. The principal as the leader of the school performs a whole lot of functions. Some of these functions according to Dave (2009) are as follows;

1. Cause things to happen and know what he wants to happen
2. Exercise responsible stewardship over resources and form them into purposeful account
3. Promote effectiveness and search for continual improvement
4. Be accountable for the performance of the school
5. Set a climate conducive to enable teachers to give their best

When the principal can perform these functions the endpoint is achieving effective administration leading to goal achievement.

Administration is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organised human and material resources within an integrated system designed specifically to achieve predetermined objectives. Abraham (2013) sees administration as a term used in describing what the man at the head of an organisation does to achieve the goals of such an organisation. It is all that the administrator (head or leader) does through co-operative human effort and the manipulation of materials resources to achieve schools goals. However, it is not all that the principal does that will lead to the achievement of goals which is a prerequisite of effective administration. The ability to achieve this therefore depends on the leadership styles adopted by the principal.

According to Okorie (2001), various leadership styles can be adopted by a leader in an organisation. And whether the administration is effective depends on the styles adopted by the principal even though other variables are there. These leadership styles are; autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, laissez-faire, transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style.

An autocratic leader has a behavioural leadership style that is characterised of a leader being a dictator. He dictates to the subordinates what should be done. On the other hand, in democratic otherwise known as participatory leadership style, the leader involves the group members in decision making. Whereas in laissez-faire, or free rein, the leader allows subordinates to decide what to do with minimum direction. Transformational leadership style is a style where the leader is creative and have sundry of initiatives to pilot the affairs of the organisation while transactional leadership style deals with maintaining the current situation and motivating people through contractual agreement (Osiobe, 2020). Whether these leadership styles enhance effective administration or not is the focus of this work. For this purpose of this research, the focus is on the first three which are democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire.

Statement of the Problem

A school leader is an administrator who oversees the activities of a group of workers and works towards motivating them to achieve organisational goals. In the school setting, the principal is the one that should play this leadership role so that the teachers are motivated to perform for the objectives of teaching and learning to be achieved. Most often, teachers complain about the way some principals go about the administration of the school. Observing critically, it seems teachers themselves do not perform their works as expected due to the poor relationship they may have with principals. This has often led to students not performing well academically, hence school goals not adequately achieved. These researchers are of the assumption that while they might be other variables that can disrupt effective school administration, leadership styles adopted by principals could also lead to crises in schools and could enhance effective administration. This work is therefore aimed at investigating the extent by which leadership styles, namely autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, adopted by principals enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the extent by which leadership styles adopted by principals enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study intended to;

1. Examine the extent by which autocratic style of leadership adopted by principal could enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria
2. Examine the extent by which the democratic style of leadership adopted by principal could enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria
3. Examine the extent by which laissez-Faire style of leadership adopted by principal could enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria

Research questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent could autocratic style of leadership adopted by principal enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria
2. To what extent could the democratic style of leadership adopted by principal enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria
3. To what extent could laissez-Faire style of leadership adopted by principal enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study to examine and assess the opinion of the respondents (the teachers) on the extent the various leadership styles enhance effective secondary school administration. The population consists of all secondary school teachers in Rivers state. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select three local government areas out of the 23 local government areas. From each of the sampled local government, a sample of 50 participants was selected through simple random sampling technique, thereby resulting in a total of 150 respondents. The sample selected for the study cut across 70 male and 80 female teachers who were involved in the study. The instrument used was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Leadership Styles of Principal for Enhanced Effective School Administration Questionnaire" (LESPEESAQ) which was constructed on a four-point scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does the autocratic style of leadership adopted by principal enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean analysis on the extent the autocratic style of leadership adopted by principal enhances effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	Male Mean	Female Mean	Mean Set	Rks
1	Determining all policies alone by the principal will enhance full implementation	1.07	1.36	1.22	VLE
2	Not involving staff in decision making will motivate teachers to perform	1.97	1.73	1.85	VLE
3	Using threat and intimidation on staff will enhance their performance	1.16	1.78	1.47	VLE
4	Giving no regards to the opinion of member staff will help to achieve goals of schools	2.02	1.98	2.00	VLE
5	Lack of faith and confidence in staff will lead to co-operation between them	1.01	1.25	1.13	VLE
6	Always criticising the works of staff will motivate them for better work	2.15	2.13	2.14	LE
7	Giving maximum concern to the task and minimum concern to staff welfare spur workers to work	2.14	2.17	2.16	LE
8	Not allowing for the free flow of institutional communication will enhance goal achievement	1.25	1.34	1.30	VLE
9	Taking decision quickly without involving staff especially in an emergency will help in goal achievement	2.56	2.53	2.55	HE
10	Dictating all techniques, procedure and activities to be carried out will enhance goal achievement of the school	2.43	2.29	2.36	LE
Weighted Means		1.78	1.86	1.82	VLE

Keys: VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent, LE=Low Extent VLE= Very Low Extent

Table 1 above shows the means scores of male and female teachers. From the table items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 have weighted means of 1.22, 1.85, 1.47, 2.00, 1.13, and 1.3 respectively showing very Low extent, while items 6, 7, and 10 have mean scores of 2.14, 2.16 and 2.36 respectively showing Low Extent (LE). On the other hand item 9 have a mean score of 2.55 showing high extent (HE). The average mean score of both female and male teachers was 1.82 which revealed Very Low Extent (VLE). This indicates that both male and female principals agreed that the use of autocratic leadership styles by principals enhances secondary school administration to a very low extent

Research question 2: To what extent could the democratic style of leadership adopted by principal enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean analysis on the extent democratic style of leadership adopted by principal enhances effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	Male Mean	Female Mean	Mean Set	Rmks
1	Involving members of staff in decision making will enhance the effective	3.69	3.32	3.51	VHE
2	implementation of the decision taken	2.56	2.90	2.73	HE
3	Communicating feelings with subordinate will enhance teachers' performance	2.58	2.48	2.53	HE
4	Criticizing and praising workers objectively will motivate them to work	2.87	3.01	2.94	HE
5	Praising excellent work by workers will spur to more performance	3.45	3.25	3.35	VHE
6	Assisting group to discuss and determine policies will enhance implementation	3.14	3.21	3.18	VHE
7	Recognising and treating teachers as professional will enhance their	3.23	3.10	3.17	VHE
8	motivation	2.94	2.77	2.86	HE
9	Encouraging teachers welfare will enhance good performance	3.02	3.54	3.28	VHE
10	Delegating authority to teachers will enhance productivity	3.22	3.05	3.14	VHE
	Maintaining a good relationship with the staff will enhance staff productivity				
	Working with teachers to achieve schools is a step to enhance their performance				
	Weighted Mean	3.07	3.39	3.23	VHE

Table 2 above shows the means scores of male and female teachers. From the table, items 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 have weighted means of 3.51, 3.35, 3.18, 3.17, 3.28 and 3.14 respectively showing Very high extent, while items 2, 3, 4, and 8 have mean scores of 2.73, 2.53, 2.94, and 2.86 respectively showing high Extent (HE). The average mean scores of both female and male principals were 3.23 which revealed Very High Extent (VHE). This indicates that the respondents agreed that the use of democratic leadership styles by principals enhances secondary school administration to a very high extent.

Research question 3: To what extent could Laissez-faire style of leadership adopted by principal enhance effective secondary school administration in Rivers state?

Table 3: Mean analysis on the extent Laisser-faire style of leadership adopted by principal enhances effective secondary school administration in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	Male Mean	Female Mean	Mean Set	Rks
1	Allowing complete freedom for teachers on what to do would enhance their performance	2.12	2.14	2.13	LE
2	Taking no part in work discussion by principals will enhance goal achievement	1.95	1.93	1.94	VLE
3	Leaving teachers on their own without assigning work to them will aid their performance	2.15	2.20	2.18	LE
4	Taking a passive stand towards problem-solving in school will spur teachers' good performance	1.09	1.36	1.23	VLE
5	Feeling uncomfortable to involve members of staff in decision making will enhance goal achievement	1.65	1.78	1.72	VLE
6	Showing less or no authority to staff will enhance their performance	2.36	2.23	2.30	LE
7	Not criticising staff work will help them work better	2.53	2.50	2.52	HE
8	Allowing staff to work without any directive will help them to perform better	2.34	2.16	2.25	LE
9	Allowing staff to have a high degree of autonomy will motivate them to work	1.47	2.01	1.74	VLE
10	Trying to satisfy every member of staff is a way to motivate them to work better	2.63	2.59	2.61	HE
Weighted Mean		2.03	2.09	2.06	LE

Table 3 above shows the means scores of male and female teachers. From the table items 1, 3, 6 and 8, have weighted mean scores of 2.13, 2.18, 2.30 and 2.25 respectively showing Low extent, while items 2, 4, 5, and 9 have mean scores of 1.94, 1.23, 1.72 and 1.74 respectively showing Very Low Extent (VLE). On the other hand items 7 and 10 have mean scores of 2.52 and 2.61 showing high extent (HE). 2.06 was the average mean score of both female and male teachers which revealed low extent (LE). This indicates that the principals disagreed that the use of Laisser-faire leadership style by principals enhances secondary school administration to a low extent.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

From the findings on research question 1 as shown on Table 1, both male and female teacher reported a very low extent in the use of autocratic leadership style by principals in enhancing school administration in Rivers State. This implies that determining all policies alone by the principal, not involving staff in decision making, using threat and intimidation on staff, giving no regards to opinion of member staff, lacking faith and confidence in staff, always criticising

the works of staff, giving maximum concern to the task and minimum concern to staff, not allowing for the free flow of institutional communication and dictating all techniques, procedure and activities to be carried out do not enhance effective administration in secondary schools. If they do it is to a low extent. The implication is that the autocratic leadership style does not lead to effective administration to a high extent. This finding agrees with Imhangbe, Okecha & Obuzuwa (2018) who posit that autocratic leadership style had no significant positive relationship with teachers' job performance. However, on such issue like taking decision quickly without involving staff especially in an emergency, the respondents agreed that such behaviours will lead to enhance effective administration. This also implies that though autocratic leadership does not effectively enhance administration in some areas autocracy can be employed. This agrees with Osiobe (2020) who posits that adopting an authoritarian leadership style to take a quick and concise decision will affect the school positively. However, this finding disagrees with Adeyemi (2018) who found out that teachers job performance was better in schools having principals using autocratic leadership style than schools having democratic leadership styles.

The study also revealed from the findings on research question 2 as shown on Table 2 that teachers reported a very high extent in the use of democratic leadership style by principals in enhancing school administration in Rivers State. This implies that involving members of staff in decision making, communicating feelings with a subordinate, criticizing and praising workers objectively, praising excellent work by workers, assisting the group to discuss and determine policies, recognising and treating teachers as professional, encouraging teachers' welfare, delegating authority to teachers, maintaining a good relationship with staff and, working with teachers to achieve school goals will enhance teachers performance and effective administration specifically. The findings agree with Imhangbe, Okecha & Obuzuwa (2018) who found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between democratic leadership style and teachers' job performance. However, this finding disagrees with Osiobe (2020) who asserts that democratic leadership style cannot be adopted in some aspects of school administration especially when it comes to insignificant issues affecting the administration.

The study also revealed from the finding on research question 3 as shown on table 3 that to a low extent, allowing complete freedom for teachers on what to do, taking no part in work discussion, leaving teachers on their own without assigning work to them, taking a passive stand towards problem-solving in school, feeling uncomfortable to involve members of staff in decision making, showing less or no authority to staff, allowing staff to work without any directive and allowing staff to have a high degree of autonomy will motivate them to work and lead to effective administration. The finding disagrees with Imhangbe, Okecha & Obuzuwa (2018) who posits that there is a positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership styles and teachers' job performance. On such issues like not criticising staff work and trying to satisfy every member of staff, the respondents agreed with those issues that they are ways to motivate workers to work better. This implies that a laissez-faire leadership style can enhance effective administration in some areas. This agrees with Osiobe, (2020) who posits that the principal can use laissez-faire leadership style in issues of insignificant and less importance to the growth and development of the school.

CONCLUSION

Achievement of goals which is a prerequisite of effective administration is the focus of every leader. The Ability to achieve this therefore depends on the leadership styles adopted by the principal. This study worked on the perception of teachers on the three major leadership styles a principal can adopt in his relationship with his teachers which are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. The study revealed that democratic leadership enhances effective school administration to a high extent while autocratic and laissez-faire styles enhance in some specific areas. The study, therefore, concludes that the best leadership style of the principals for enhancing effective administration is democratic leadership style.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. The school leader being the administrator should learn to understand the school environment as to know what leadership styles to adopt in a particular environment.
2. The democratic leadership enhances effective administration more than others and should be adopted often in administration.
3. The school leader should employ the use of autocratic leadership style sparingly especially when it is concerned with taking an immediate decision that will affect the school positively.
4. The principal or school leadership should adopt the use of laissez-faire sparingly especially when it is concerned with issues that are of less importance to the development of the school.

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