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Influence of principals' leadership styles on job performance of teachers in Technical Colleges in Delta State

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the influence of principals' leadership style on the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 603 teachers in technical colleges. The sample size of 121 teachers was selected using a simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire titled Principals' Leadership Style Assessment Questionnaire (PLSAQ) was used to collect data. Three experts validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded a coefficient of 0.86. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. One null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the principal's leadership style influences teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State to a high extent. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended among others, that principals should not strictly adhere to a particular leadership style in the course of carrying out their duties but apply them as situations and the need arises, school principals should ensure early and constant reminder of an adequate supply of instructional facilities for practical from the ministry of technical education, teachers in technical colleges should be treated with respect, and should be involved in decision-making in order to reduce their anti-behaviour at work.

Keywords: Leadership, Principals' leadership, Principals' leadership styles, Teachers' job performance, Technical colleges

1. Introduction

Technical and vocational institutions are institutions set up to develop the skills inherent in secondary school students. The institution offers both practical and theoretical subjects like mathematics, English language, basic electricity, building, auto, fabrication, carpentry/woodwork, catering, and business trade with well-equipped laboratories for effective teaching and learning. The aim of this vibrant education is to equip students with vocational and technical skills (FRN, 2004). Technical college was established to reduce the rate of unemployment among Nigerian youths and to produce skilled manpower that will work in various sectors of the economy. Technical colleges are managed by the Ministry of Technical Education in most states in Nigeria. This ministry is responsible to the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). The National Board for Technical Education was set up by the federal government of Nigeria in 1977, with the sole responsibility to supervise, accredit, and regulate the affairs of technical institutions in Nigeria. The approved programmes for technical colleges in Delta State include; mechanic works, electrical installation and maintenance work, auto and fabrication, catering craft practice, business trade, block laying, bricklaying and concreting/building, furniture design and construction, and mechanical engineering craft practice.

In Delta State, technical colleges are co-managed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Technical Education, and the post-primary education board. It is the duty of post primary education board to recruit, appoint, and post teachers to technical colleges, while it is the duty of the Ministry of Technical Education to monitor teaching and learning activities, procure the needed equipment, supervise school projects and examinations (internal and external) and discipline teachers in technical colleges (PPEB, 2019). The occasional supervision of the Ministry of Technical Education in order to determine the extent of coverage of the scheme of work and the objectives for which the school was set up is done on a routine basis and what happens on a daily basis between the hours of 7.30 am – 2.00 pm is under the control of the school principal and the teachers. The teachers in technical colleges were employed on the basis of merit, which indicates that they are well grounded to discharge their duties efficiently without any challenge. Therefore, the success of the school to a large extent depends on the leadership style of the school principal.

Leadership styles represent an approach a leader uses to influence subordinates. The style can be grouped under three major headings autocratic, democratic, and laissez-fair leadership styles.

- **Autocratic leadership style** – This is a leadership style that is characterized by decision-making by the leader (principal), where subordinates are excluded from the process. It is dictatorial and authoritarian in nature. Here, the principal determines the procedures, rewards, and punishment. The principle that exercisers' decision-making rights remain too meritocratic in the institution's activities. Dawson (2002), opines that excessive use of authority will distort productivity in the long term. Principal who uses the autocratic style inappropriately denies themselves valuable contributions from teachers (Nwaiwu, 2009). Teachers who are denied the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process may not be willing to handle additional responsibilities whenever the need arises.
- **Democratic leadership style** – This is one of the leadership styles that could influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State because it involves the teachers in decision-making. Cherry (2017) stated that democratic leadership is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process to encourage people to perform their duties. This style helps in guiding the principal in decision-making and allows for consultation before taking action. Egbri and Ojeagha (2021) opined that this leadership style boosts employees' morale because they make contributions to the decision-making process. This participative leadership style is known to be one of the most effective leadership styles.
- **Laissez-fair leadership** – This style of leadership allows the principal to depend on teachers for the achievement of their goals. Here, the principal permits the teachers to function independently by allowing them to use considerable judgment in actualizing given tasks. However, it is the duty of the principal to set job performance standards and leave the teachers (both male and female) to themselves, to do their jobs as professional teachers. The duty of the principal here is advisor, motivator, and cheerleader. This leadership style is good for institutions, where teachers are competent, knowledgeable, and skillful. Murnighan and Leung (2006) asserted that employees who are led by detached leaders were less productive in the quality and quantity of the problems they solved and lower in satisfaction in comparison to employees who are led by involved leaders. Also, the laissez-faire leadership style is characterized by the complete freedom of the group and its members to do what they wish. The leader who adopts this style is carefree and merely supplies materials to subordinates to work with and does not supervise his subordinates (Owenbuighe & Ibadin, 2017). However, the principal must be involved to some extent, just to ensure the teachers are doing the right thing, but allow the teachers to determine their own direction. People tend to follow a leader who offers a means of satisfying their needs, and it is the duty of the principal to know what motivates teachers and use the motivators to carry out his/her leadership duties.

2. Literature review

Leadership is one's ability of a person to rationalize and influence the attitude and actions of others towards goal achievement. Ciulla (1998) stated that leadership is the inspiration to mobilize others to undertake collective action in pursuit of common goals. It is a social influencing process directed towards goal attainment. In a school environment, the principal must be an individual who can influence others to put in their best work. Drucker (1974) pointed out that leaders are the basic and scarcest resources of any institution. The shortage of effective leaders is evident due to the lack of capable administrators in schools. This is the reason that when we decry of capable administrators in our school system we are not talking about people that will fill vacant administrative positions but capable people with the required capacity to drive the school's objectives. Ironically, what is obtainable in our schools today is the use of years of service to fill administrative positions and not the capacity to function as an administrator. However, a clear definition of leadership was given by Wehrich and Koontz (2005) when they referred to leadership as an art or a process of influencing people so they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the accomplishment of organizational goals. Ideally, principals should have what it takes to encourage teachers to develop not only a willingness to work with them but also to work with zeal and confidence. Furthermore, Wehrich and Koontz gave the following as components of leadership;

- Power
- A fundamental understanding of people
- Ability to inspire
- A leading style and development of a conducive organizational climate.

The principal is the head of the school and should create an organizational climate that is conducive for teachers. The teachers are pace-setters for effective teaching and learning. Leadership style is very crucial in the management of a school. However, there is no best leadership style for managing a school. It depends on the capacity of the principal to employ a leadership style that best suits the situation at hand and to manage the teachers effectively. The principal as the school head should be vast in administration and as well involve the staff in the school administration process for a cordial relationship. Both the male and female teachers must be encouraged to work in harmony. Eboka (2016) revealed that leadership styles of principals and gender significantly influence teachers' job performance. Egbri and Ojeaga (2021) noted that the actions taken by a school principal may make or mar the school system. It must be noted that the actions of the principal may trigger job satisfaction or dissatisfaction which in turn will determine the job performance of the teachers in the school.

2.1. Job performance

Job performance is seen as how well or badly a teacher or a worker carries out his/her duties. Oleksandr, Chernyshenko and Stark (2005) defined job performance as the aggregate of employees' behavior that has some expected value to

organizations like negative and positive. The behavior of a teacher can be classified into three broad categories such as task performance, contextual performance, and counter-productivity. The job performance of a teacher is simply how a teacher performs his/her professional duties in the school. The observed behavior of the teacher could be verbal and non-verbal which has an effect on students' achievement. However, students' achievement is an indicator of teachers' job performance.

3. Statement of the problem

Technical colleges are institutions established to provide students with practical skills development and a viable education. Providing a viable education is the combined efforts of the Ministry of Technical Education, the Ministry of Education, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), principals, teachers, NGOs, and parents (Egbri & Ojeagha, 2021). However, the principal is at the center stage to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures of the government and to ensure that the aim of establishing the institution is achieved.

A visit to some technical colleges in Delta State revealed poor principal and teacher relationships which started a long time ago as a result of internally generated revenue, subventions, and government education tax fund (ETF) among others which seem to be negatively affecting the job performance of teachers. As a result of this, some teachers do not attend staff meetings, some have lackadaisical attitudes towards work, reluctant to write lesson notes, quarrel with colleagues who are benefiting from the principal, are unhappy with the school principals, ingenuity in teacher-student relationship, while some do avoid responsibilities (Owenybuighe & Ibadin, 2017). These issues presently on the ground, which the Ministry of Technical Education is fully aware of and managing by intervening sometimes in such issues in other to ensure sanity in the system, formed the researcher's urge to find out if the leadership styles adopted by principals in technical colleges could be responsible for teachers' negative attitudes to work; which if not checked would apparently mar the objectives of technical colleges in Delta State, considering the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

4. Purpose of the study

This study examines the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State. The specific objectives determined were:

1. The extent principal's autocratic leadership style influences the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State;
2. The extent principal's democratic leadership style influences the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State; and
3. The extent principal's laissez-fair leadership style influences the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State.

This study covers the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State, Nigeria. It is limited to teachers in technical colleges in Delta State. It investigates the extent to which autocratic, democratic, and laissez-fair leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State.

5. Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does the principal's autocratic leadership style influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State?
2. To what extent does the principal's democratic leadership style influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State?
3. To what extent does the principal's laissez-fair leadership style influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State?

6. Hypothesis

The hypothesis below was tested in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant mean difference between the response of male and female teachers on the influence of principal's leadership styles on their job performance in technical colleges in Delta State.

7. Research method

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in nine technical colleges in Delta State. The population consisted of 603 teachers. The sample size consisted of 121 teachers randomly and systematically selected from every 5 members of the population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher with a four-point response option and containing 18-item statements. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts, one in technical education and two in measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded a reliability coefficient (r) value of 0.86. This shows that the items on the instrument are internally consistent and stable. Therefore, the instrument was considered to have a high enough reliability measure. The data collected were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) and inferential statistics of t-test. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was based on a mean value of 2.50 such that any calculated mean (\bar{x}) equal to or greater than 2.50 was

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regarded as a high extent while any mean (\bar{x}) less than 2.50 was regarded as a low extent. On the basis of the hypothesis the decision rule was based on the probability value (P) used if the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis would be retained, but if the p-value is greater than 0.5, the null hypothesis wouldn't be retained.

8. Findings and discussions

Research Question 1: To what extent does a principal's autocratic leadership style influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State?

Data collected to address this research question are summarized in Table 1

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Principal's Autocratic Leadership Style on Teachers Job Performance

NO	Item statements	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Making personal decisions during times of urgency	121	1.68	0.44	LE
2	Setting deadlines for achieving school goals.	121	1.22	0.48	LE
3	Imposing personal decision on teachers.	121	1.24	0.32	LE
4	Reporting teachers who disagree with his ideas to the ministry.	121	2.40	0.73	LE
5	Sanctioning of teachers without any cogent reason(s).	121	3.21	0.88	HE
	Grand Mean		1.95	0.57	LE

Source: Field study 2023

The data shown in Table 1 reveal the mean responses and standard deviation of the principal's autocratic leadership style. The value of the mean responses ranged from 1.22 to 3.21 revealing that the respondents agreed that principals' autocratic leadership style helped teachers in their job performance to a low extent. The values of the standard deviation range from 0.32 to 0.88 further revealing that the responses were relatively in consensus with the mean values. The grand mean of 1.95 conclusively shows that the respondents agreed that principals' autocratic leadership style influenced teachers' job performance in technical colleges to a low extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does a principal's democratic leadership style influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Principal's Democratic Leadership Style on Teachers Job Performance

NO	Item statements	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Encouragement of harmonious working relationships among teachers to inspire them for effective job performance.	121	2.49	0.68	LE
2	Always involving teachers in decision making.	121	3.69	0.52	HE
3	Receptive to teachers' ideas and contributions.	121	3.56	0.49	HE
4	Comfortable working with groups to seek their opinions.	121	3.60	0.40	HE
5	Relate with staff regularly.	121	3.82	1.02	HE
6	Consult with teachers in decision making.	121	3.84	1.06	HE
7	Always communicate with teachers.	121	3.93	0.94	HE
	Grand Mean		3.56	0.73	HE

Source: Field study 2023

The data shown in Table 2 above, with regards to research question 2 revealed the mean responses and standard deviation as determined by the Principal's Democratic Leadership style on technical college teachers' job performance. The value of the mean responses ranged from 2.49 to 3.93 revealing that the respondents agreed that the Principal's democratic leadership style determines teachers' job performance in technical colleges to a high extent. The value of the standard deviation which ranges from 0.40 to 1.06 revealed further that the responses were relatively in agreement with the mean values. The grand mean of 3.56 convincingly showed that the respondents agreed that a principal's democratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State to a high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does the principal's laissez-fair leadership style influence the job performance of teachers in technical colleges in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Principal's Laissez-fair Leadership Style on Teachers Job Performance

NO	Item statements	N	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	No direct supervision and support for teachers.	121	1.18	1.62	LE

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2	Principal is always reluctant to make decisions.	121	1.88	0.20	LE
3	Principal is very unpopular among teachers.	121	1.67	0.22	LE
4	Principal is always absent from school.	121	1.26	0.35	LE
5	Principal gives task to perform without clear directives.	121	2.29	0.98	LE
6	Principal consciously delegate decision making to teachers.	121	2.35	1.14	LE
Grand Mean			1.77	0.75	LE

Source: Field study 2023

The data shown in Table 3 reveal the mean responses and standard deviation of principals' laissez-faire leadership style. The value of the mean responses ranged from 1.18 to 2.35 revealing that the respondents agreed that principals' laissez-faire leadership style assisted teachers in their job performance to a low extent. The values of the standard deviation ranging from 0.20 to 1.62 further reveal that the responses were quite in agreement with the mean values. The grand mean of 1.77 convincingly shows that the respondents agreed that principals' laissez-faire leadership style in technical colleges in Delta State aided teachers' job performance to a low extent.

8.1. Analysis of data related to the hypothesis

There is no significant mean difference between the response of male and female teachers on the influence of principal's leadership styles on their job performance in technical colleges in Delta State.

Table 4: The t-test analysis of male and female teachers on the influence of principal's leadership styles on their job performance

Sex	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	p-value	decision
Male	57	2.6000	0.4363	121	-.242	.764	S
Female	64	2.6250	0.4491				

Key: S – Significant

Source: Field Study 2023

Table 4 shows the t-test comparison of male and female teachers on the influence of principal's leadership styles on their job performance in technical colleges in Delta State. Considering the fact that the t-value of $-.242$ is less than $.764$, it means that there is a significant difference between the response of male and female teachers on the influence of principals' leadership styles on their job performance in technical colleges in Delta State.

9. Discussion of findings

The finding of research question one shows that respondents agreed that autocratic principals' leadership style influenced teachers' job performance to a low extent by not involving technical college teachers in the decision-making process. This finding correlates with the assertion of Dawson (2002) who maintained that excessive use of authority will distort productivity in the long term. Teachers may get bored and displeased with the principal's actions and resort to their shells in other not to be embarrassed publicly by the principal. This will affect job performance. Also, Nwaiwu (2009), corroborates this view by positing that principal that use the autocratic leadership style inappropriately denies themselves valuable contributions from teachers.

The finding of research question two shows that respondents agreed that democratic principals' leadership style influenced teachers' job performance to a high extent by involving technical college teachers in the decision-making process to promote teamwork and cordial relationships. This finding agrees with that of Egbri and Ojeagha (2021) who opined that the democratic leadership style boosts employee's morale because they make contributions to the decision-making process. Cherry (2017) affirmed that democratic leadership is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process to encourage people to perform their duties.

From the findings in Table 3, the teachers agreed that laissez-faire principals' leadership style influenced their job performance to a low extent. When teachers are left unmotivated, unaided and without the required instructional materials to carry out their job, low job performance will certainly creep in. Ciulla (1998) stated that leadership is the inspiration to mobilize others to undertake collective action in pursuit of common goals. While Owenbuijge and Ibadin (2017), supported that the laissez-faire leadership style is characterized by complete freedom of the group and its members to do what they wish. They believed that a leader who adopts this style is carefree and merely supplies materials to subordinates to work with and does not supervise them.

The finding in Table 4 showed that there was a significant difference between the mean response of male and female teachers on the influence of principal's leadership styles on their job performance in technical colleges in Delta State. This is not in disagreement with Eboka's (2016) findings of a study that revealed that leadership styles of principals and gender jointly influenced teacher morale and job performance.

10. Contributions to knowledge

The study contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

1. The study established empirically that principals' leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State. However, among the three leadership styles, the democratic leadership style influences most to a high extent.
2. The study established empirically that principals' leadership styles have the capacity to boost teachers' job performance in technical colleges in Delta State.

11. Implication of the findings

Academic activities and the school environment, in general, may be uninteresting and bumpy if the principals' leadership styles are not associated with the laid down rules and regulations of the school system. If teaching and non-teaching staff are not governed fairly enough to ensure democratic norms, this will go a long way in making teachers seek transfer to other technical colleges or conventional schools, post-primary education board (PPEB). This situation may affect students' academic performance in no distant time.

12. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

1. Principals should not strictly adhere to a particular leadership style in the course of carrying out their duties but to apply them as situations and the need arises. This is because each leadership style has its own positive or negative effects on a teacher's job performance.
2. School principals should ensure early and constant reminders of an adequate supply of instructional facilities for practicals from the Ministry of Technical Education.
3. Teachers in technical colleges should be treated with respect and should be involved in decision-making in order to reduce their anti-behaviour at work.
4. The government should organize training sessions for principals on leadership styles regularly.

13. Conclusion

The study found that each leadership style adopted by the principals in technical colleges influenced teachers' job performance in diverse ways. Therefore, it was concluded that principals with autocratic leadership styles influenced their teachers' job performance to a low extent. Principals with a democratic leadership style influenced teachers' job performance to a high extent, while principals who adopted a laissez-faire leadership style influenced teachers' job performance to a low extent.

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