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The Influence Of Principals’ Leadership Styles On Teachers And Students In Nigerian Secondary Schools

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Introduction

In every organization there are basic characteristics such as: the systems are peopled. These people are inconstant interaction for a purpose, and the above interactions are interdependent. The interdependent nation of the interactions is built into institutions and organizations as it is in the ecclesia. These institutions and organizations are usually sited in a particular geographical location under a sustainable leadership in the ecclesia are the laity subjected to effective leadership (Parks, 2005).

Any leadership which establishes a good foundation level for the support of the organization within a sound democratic polity will have the way and spurred to action development not only in the ecclesiastically matters but also in other sectors of the economy. The reverse is the case if the foundation of the school which is shallow within a bereaved polity clamped down with manipulative democracy which is characterized by all forms of corruptive practices. To ensure effective support of the school, the effective leadership styles have to be projected (Schein, 2004).

Leadership is and has been described as the “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” (Brungardt, 1996). It is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinarily happened. Leadership is one of the most relevant aspects of the organizational context. However, defining leadership has been challenging. Also according to Masserman, leaders must fulfill three functions: the leaders must provide for the well-being of the led, provide a social organization in which people feel relatively secure, and provide a set of beliefs; and that a successful leader will tend to have a high need for power, a low need for affiliation, and a high level of activity inhibition-self-control. (Heifitz, 1998).

Admittedly, the term leadership may be easy to conceptualize since it is not difficult to obtain textbooks or other literature materials that have dealt extensively on it. Yet it is obvious in the academic circle that “in terms of specific definition for leadership, there is wide disagreement and confusion as to what it actually means” (Scharmer, 2009). But this does not imply that the various definitions and perspectives of leadership do not have a common denominator. For instance, (Rost & Baker 2000) observe that the following definitions have been recorded:

i. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and goal achievement.

ii. The Leader is the individual in the group given the task of directing and co-coordinating task relevant group activities.

In fact, the educational system in Nigeria is quite decentralized and to a large extent democratic in nature. The Federal Constitution delegates responsibility and authority to the different State Ministries
of Education throughout the country and the Federal State Ministries of Education throughout the
country and the Federal Ministry of Education only co-ordinates their activities and efforts. The
appointments, especially those of the teachers, are made either by the State School Boards or the
Teaching Service Commission and the decisions or reports are communicated to the State Ministries
of Education for approval.

In some secondary schools in Nigeria, these democratic principles and ideas are already in existence.
Teachers and principals regard themselves as colleagues whose main objective is to work towards the
achievement of the schools’ goals. In such secondary schools, some teachers criticize their principals
and argue with them (Nakpodia, 2006). They participate actively in the schools’ decision – making
processes as well as in drawing up schools’ programmes.

It is therefore interesting to find out how principals in a highly centralized system of education use their
authority and the way they relate to their staff and students. The maintenance of an effective principal,
staff and students relationship in secondary school administration has been held by many educationists
to be the foundation of progress. This relationship which may be influenced by different principals’
leadership styles involves other aspects of human relations such as those which exist between the staff
and students on the one hand and between the staff and the community on the other. Educational
administration must concern itself with the satisfaction which the principal, staff and students derive
from their work. This satisfaction, it appears, can only be found in an administrative climate where there
is an effective relationship between the principal, the staff and the students (Northouse, 2006).

Sometimes, highly critical comments are made about the administrative programmes of some
secondary schools by both the students, teachers and the members of the community. Many of the
comments are concerned with staff quarrels with the principal, the maltreatment of young members of
staff by the principal and even non involvement of staff and students in the formulation of school
policies. All these comments may reflect the type of leadership style projected by the principal. As a
result, for example, in many secondary schools “the end of the academic year often results in the mass
transfer of teachers and even students to other schools.

In view of the foregoing observations, it would seem important to investigate the influence of principals’
leadership styles on their relationship with their staff and students in secondary schools. In other words,
is there a correlation between principals’ leadership styles and their relationship with their staff and
students in secondary schools in Nigeria?

What are the prevailing leadership styles among principals in the secondary schools of Anglophone
provinces of Cameroon? How do these leadership styles determine the relationships that exist
between principals and their staff and students? To this end, issues such as the use of authority, the
sharing of responsibility and attitudes towards individual members of staff and students will be closely
investigated. It was hypothesized in the study if there is no significant difference between a leadership
style of experienced and less experienced principals.

The findings are likely to help prospective administrators in the administration of their schools and to be
discovering how to create an ideal principal staff and principal student’s relationship which can
positively influence the performance of their administrative tasks.

Methodology
The population is all the secondary schools in the Delta State as well as the secondary school principals, teachers and students. There are 130 secondary schools. The schools selected for attention in this study are those which have offered instruction through all the six years of thirty secondary school institutions out of the matured or were randomly selected. The teaching staff of the 30 selected secondary schools in the were chosen as subjects of the study. The investigator however, selected only those teachers who have had not less than three year experience in their present schools. It was presumed that they were now conversant with both the students and the principals as well as with the expectations and aspirations of the schools. It was therefore, presumed that they have formed fairly definite opinions about the administrative styles of the principals and their relationships with them. In order to make the sample representative, five students were randomly picked from each class. In all, ten students in each school but from were chosen as subjects for the study. The principals of the 30 secondary schools institutions were involved in the study.

Instrumentation

Data were collected with the use of questionnaire for the principals, staff and the students. In the construction of the instrument items were adapted from Ajayi’s leadership opinionnaire. Instrument based on four point scale of the Likert’s type were constructed for the purpose of this study of the instruments were for administration on the staff respondents, two for administration on student respondents and one for administration on principal respondents.

Two questionnaire forms for teachers were designated Leadership Styles questionnaires for Teachers (LSQT) and Relationship: Questionnaire Forms for Teachers (RQFT). Two questionnaire forms for students were designated Leadership Styles Questionnaires for Students (LSQS) and Relationship Questionnaire Forms for Students (RQFS). One questionnaire form for the principals was designated Relationship Questionnaire Forms for Principals (RQFP). The Leadership Style Questionnaire for Teachers and Students contained thirty and twelve statements respectively. Teachers and Students were requested to rate the Leadership Styles of the Principals in terms of the statements contained in the questionnaires about the Leadership Styles of Principals.

The relationship questionnaire for teachers, students and the principals contained twenty – four, thirty and twenty statements respectively. Principals, teachers and students were requested to rate the relationships of their schools in terms of the statements contained in the questionnaires about the relationship between the principal, the staff and the students.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument designed for this study was refined by a group of lecturers in the Faculty of Education who were used to examine the face and the content of the instrument. They were expected to give their comments and suggestions on the construction and content of the instrument, bearing in mind their relevance to the problems being investigated in the study. The data collected were analyzed using a t – test for two independent variables.

Administration of the Instrument

The investigator visited all the thirty institutions and personally administered the instruments on the teachers, the principals and the students.
Leadership Styles Questionnaire for Students (LSQS) contained 12 items, hence the total minimum points a principal could get for each questionnaire filled by a student was $12 \times 1 = 12$ points while the total maximum points was $12 \times 5 = 60$ points. Leadership Styles Questionnaire for Teachers (LSQT) contained 30 items and the total maximum points a principal could get for each questionnaire filled by a teacher was $30 \times 1 = 30$ points while the total maximum points was $30 \times 5 = 150$ points.

There were 5 leadership styles identified; using the rating scale the following were arrived at:

- Autocratic – self 1 points
- Autocratic – nomothetic 2 points
- Democratic – nomothetic 3 points
- Democratic – Idiographic 4 points
- Democratic – transactional 5 points

There were also 5 types of relationships identified. Using the rating scale, the following were arrived at:

- Strained Relations 1 points
- Restrained Relations 2 points
- Formal Relations 3 points
- Paternal Relations 4 points
- Cordial Relations 5 points

**Analysis of Data**

Given that the hypothesis was testing for differences relationship and that the data could be assumed to be measurement in the interval scale, the degree of different was tested through a $t$ – test statistic for significance.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP STYLES</th>
<th>PRINCIPAL – STAFF RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>$0.333^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.279*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.239*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.178*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.219*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.192*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P< .001

N = 295

* = The * values are the significant values based on the data.

AS = Autocratic – self SR = Strained Relationship

AN = Autocratic – nomothetic RR = Restrained Relations

DN = Democratic – nomothetic FR = Formal Relations

DI = Democratic – Idiographic PR = Paternal Relations

DT = Democratic – transactional CR = Cordial Relations

1) The autocratic – self leadership styles in the opinion of the teachers has a strong relationship with strained, restrained, formal, paternal and cordial principal – staff relationships. The principal who exhibits the autocratic – self characteristics will tend to have either a strained, restrained, formal, paternal or cordial relationship with his staff. On the other hand the autocratic – self leadership style is most unlikely to produce a negative or low relationship with any of the five possible types of principal – staff relationships.

2) The autocratic – nomothetic leadership style has a strong relationship with strained, restrained, formal, paternal and cordial principal – staff relationships, that is, a principal whose leadership style is autocratic – nomothetic will tend to have either a strained, restrained, formal, paternal or cordial relationship with the members of staff in his school. On the other hand, the autocratic – nomothetic leadership style is unlikely to produce a negative relationship with strained, restrained, formal, paternal and cordial principal – staff relationships.

3) The democratic – nomothetic leadership style has a strong relationship with strained, restrained, formal, paternal and cordial principal – staff relationships. Thus, a principal who is a democratic leader will tend to have either a strained, restrained, formal, paternal or cordial relationship with the teachers in his school. On the other hand, the democratic – nomothetic leadership style when adopted by a school principal is most unlikely to produce a negative or low relationship with either strained, restrained, formal, paternal or cordial principal – staff relationship.

4) The democratic – Idiographic leadership style is strongly related with strained, restrained, formal,
paternal and cordial principal – staff relationships. This means that a democratic idiographic leadership style tends to produce a positive relationship with any of the five possible types of principal staff relationship but certainly not a negative relationship with any one of them.

5) The democratic – transactional leadership style has a strong relationship with strained, restrained, formal, paternal and cordial principal – staff relationships. The principal whose leadership style is democratic – transactional will tend to have either strained, restrained, formal, paternal or cordial relationship with his staff. On the other hand, such a leadership style when adopted by a principal is most unlikely to produce a negative relationship with either strained, restrained, formal, paternal or cordial principal – staff relationship.

As noted earlier, table 2 provides the correlation between the different types of leadership styles and each of the five possible types of relationships in respect of the students.

**Table 2**

**Correlation between Leadership Styles and Principal Students Relationships according to Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP STYLES</th>
<th>PRINCIPAL – STAFF RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>0.129*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>0.049*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN</td>
<td>0.132*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>0.129*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT</td>
<td>0.279*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P< .05

N = 280

It can be observed from table 2 that the following significance and relationships were found. These significant and significant relationships are presented in Table 3 below.

1) According to the students, autocratic – self leadership style has a positive relationship with strained and cordial principal – student relationships, that is a tend to have either a strained or cordial relationship with his students. On the other hand, a principal whose leadership style is autocratic – self
is unlikely to have either a restrained, formal or paternal relationship with his students.

2) The autocratic – nomothetic leadership style has a negative or low relationship with strained, restrained, formal, paternal and cordial principal students relationships; that is the autocratic – nomothetic leadership style when adopted by a principal is most unlikely to produce a positive relationship with any of the five possible types of principal students relationships.

Table 3

A Comparison of the Perception of Teachers and Students Regarding their Relationship with Principals and Principals Leadership Styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP STYLE</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>TEACHING</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto – self</td>
<td>Strained</td>
<td>0.383*</td>
<td>0.129*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto – self</td>
<td>Cordial</td>
<td>0.252*</td>
<td>0.151*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – nomo</td>
<td>Strained</td>
<td>0.379*</td>
<td>0.132*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – nomo</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>0.276*</td>
<td>0.158*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – nomo</td>
<td>Cordial</td>
<td>0.296*</td>
<td>0.243*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – idio</td>
<td>Strained</td>
<td>0.383*</td>
<td>0.129*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – idio</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>0.379*</td>
<td>0.180*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – idio</td>
<td>Paternal</td>
<td>0.377*</td>
<td>0.275*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – idio</td>
<td>Cordial</td>
<td>0.340*</td>
<td>0.149*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – trans</td>
<td>Strained</td>
<td>0.519*</td>
<td>0.279*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – trans</td>
<td>Paternal</td>
<td>0.494*</td>
<td>0.294*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo – trans</td>
<td>Cordial</td>
<td>0.440*</td>
<td>0.349*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section B: Analysis according to Hypothesis
In this section of the chapter the analysis is based on the working hypothesis that guided the study. The hypotheses are either upheld or rejected on the basis of both the hypotheses of the teachers and students.

**Hypothesis One**

It was hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the leadership styles of experienced and less experienced principals. This hypothesis was tested by using the t-test. The results of the analysis according to the responses of the teachers and students are shown in table 4 and 5 below.

**Table 4**

**Comparison of the Leadership Styles of Experienced and Less experienced Principals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers' Responses</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SUM</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>CRITICAL VALUES</th>
<th>T – VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Principal</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>18066.000</td>
<td>122.068</td>
<td>12.257</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.8003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Experienced</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>18126.000</td>
<td>123.306</td>
<td>14.130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**N=295**

For thorough examination of this hypothesis, the teachers who participated in this study as can be observed from table 4, were put into two groups. These two groups were constructed as follows: A cumulated frequency distribution of years of experience of principals was made. Those who fell in the bottom 50% of the distribution were considered less experienced while those who fell in the top 50% were considered experienced. This led to defining those with 13 or fewer years of school administration as less experienced and those with more than 13 years of school administration as experienced. They were 15 principals in each group. Those teachers from schools with experienced principals were 148 in number and 147 of them came from schools with less experienced principals.

The computed t – value of 0.8003 was not significant at a degree of freedom of 293 at 0.05 level of significance. This showed that the difference between the leadership styles of experienced and less experienced principals in the perceptions of the teachers was not significant. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

**Table 5**

**Comparison of Leadership Styles of Experienced and Less experienced Principals according to Students Responses**
The students’ responses to this hypothesis are presented in Table 5 above. A total of 280 students participated in the study. As indicated in the Table, 141 students came from schools with experienced principals and 139 of them came from schools with less experienced principals.

The computed t–value of 0.432 in the view of the students was also not significant at a degree of freedom of 278 at .05 level of significance. This means that in the opinion of the students there is no significant difference in the leadership styles of principals who have had long years of experience on the job and that of those who have little experienced on the job. The hypothesis in this case is also upheld.

The insignificant difference in the leadership styles of experienced and less experienced principals as revealed by the teachers and students’ responses respectively is in agreement with the findings of Paul who found no positive relationship between leadership styles and years of experience when he studied the leadership styles of principals in East Banton Rouge Parish Public Schools. However, it conflicts with the findings of Reams and Lasher who established a positive relationship between leadership Styles and some demographic data such as age and years of experience.

**Findings**

The summary of the findings of this study are:

1. The dominant leadership style identified by both the teachers and the students was the democratic – idiographic leadership style.

2. The prevailing principal – staff and principal – student relationship identified by both the teacher and the students was formal relationship.

3. The prevailing principal – staff and principal – student’s relationship identified by the principals was cordial relationship.

4. The study revealed that there was no significant difference between the leadership styles of experienced and less experienced principals (0.8003 according to teachers and 0.432 according to the students).
Conclusion

On the basis of the data collected and their analysis, the following conclusions were reached.

1. That there was no significant difference between the leadership styles of experienced and less experienced principals.

2. That there was a significant difference between the leadership styles of principals with degrees and professional educational qualifications and those without degrees and professional educational qualifications.

3. That an autocratic – self leadership style of the principal can also lead to cordial principal – staff and principal student relationships.

4. That principal who use the democratic – transactional leadership style have cordial relationships with their teachers and students.

5. That the most prevailing principal – staff and principal student relationship is formal relationship.

Recommendations

As a consequence, the researcher has found it pertinent to recommend. The following measures:

a. Secondary school principals in Cameroon should either be graduate teachers in Education or graduates in other fields (like History, Geography, Economic, e.t.c.) with a professional certificate in Education. It is believed that such graduate teachers during their study programmes in the universities and colleagues of Education respectively must have been exposed to lectures on:

1. The different leadership styles and their potential influence on human relations in schools.

2. The role of the principal, staff and students in fostering effective relationship in schools and

3. Administrative principles such as co-operation, co-ordination and decision making.

b. The Ministry of National Education, with the assistance of all provincial Delegates of Education in the country should organize induction courses at the beginning of every academic year for newly appointed principals and uncertificated teachers employed by the ministry.

c. Courses in Human Relations, Communication and Styles of Administration should be introduced in the schools (Northouse, 2006). Other teacher training colleges in the country so that teachers some of who will eventually become school principals could be exposed to different leadership styles and their potential influence on human relations in a secondary school setting.

REFERENCES


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