

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE

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Abstract

This study is design to find out the Principal leadership styles and secondary school students learning outcomes in Enugu Education Zone. The purpose of this research work is to identify effective Leadership styles for school management or improvement in Enugu Education Zone. The researcher adopts a descriptive survey research design approach in which two research questions were formulated. The population of the study consisted of 120 respondent (90 teachers and 30 secondary school principals in Enugu Education Zone). There was no sampling because the population was manageable. Questionnaire of four point rating scales was used as the method of data collection. The instrument was adequately validated by three experts in measurement and evaluation. Data collected were analysis using means score; the study revealed that principal's Leadership styles effects secondary schools administration in Enugu Education Zone Area. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: The individual principals should make effort to interrogate their transformation styles of leadership to ensure that they challenge the process, continuously strive to be creative, innovative and yearn to improve results, identify the underlying factor that hinder their school's continued academic improvement and gather the courage of experimenting and risk taking.

Keywords: Leadership, Styles, students learning outcomes

Introduction

The Principal is the chief executive in the secondary school leadership. He is on the top position in the leadership oregano-gram of the school leadership. Ikediegwu (2016) is of the view that the principal is a curriculum master minder, who works as a catalyst towards planned educational goals. Ikediegwu (2016) maintained that the principal is the leader whose onus is to plan, coordinate and supervise the affairs of teaching and learning exercise in schools so that the entire academic system will run smoothly. In this case, it is expected that such personnel must possess a proven quality as well as the experimental knowledge to enable him achieve tangible results particularly when the enormous and complex leadership task in the educational system is incumbent on him. According to Nwaokike (2016) the principal has the sole responsibility of initiating changes in the school in order to accomplish the goals of the academic institution. The degree of success of meeting the educational goals as stipulated in the National policy on education; Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), depends on the type of leadership style adopted by the principal, his competence as well as enabling skills. Principals function as managers and instructional leaders. They have the primary responsibility of accomplishing the nation's aims and objectives of secondary education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE). In doing this, they play a number of important roles among which is providing effective leadership in secondary schools aimed at enhancing better job performance of teachers and in essence promoting students' academic achievements in schools. In the secondary school situation, the principle is the leader. His role involves managing the students and staff personnel in a way that will maximize learning outcome.

Leadership has invariably emerged as key characteristics of outstanding schools. There is no doubt that those seeking quality in education must ensure its presence and the development of potential leaders must be given high priority. Ashibogwu (2018) opined that

leadership in any organization especially secondary schools implies the action and interaction with persons and things with a view to attaining a specific objective. This is the ability, to plan, control, direct and co-ordinate the activities of school involving both human and material resources for the achievement of school goals (Beare, Brian and Millikan, 2018). It is a process through which persons or groups intentionally influence others in the attainment of group goals. This concept can be enlarged to involve not only the willingness to work but also the willingness to work with zeal and confidence (Ashibogwu, 2018). Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2018) remarked that it is the functional behaviour of a leader in relation with subordinates to facilitate the accomplishment of group goals. These views are however contrary to the arguments made by Akerele (2019) who defines leadership as a projected feeling from one individual (the leader) towards goal setting and goal achievement. In his day to day leadership role, the principal constantly interacts with the teachers. He is supposed to guide, assist and direct the teachers to achieve the aim of the organization. He sets the environment in which the staff and the students work (Ashibogwu, 2018). Effective principal provides strong leadership, establish violent-free school climate conducive to learning, emphasize the important of basic skills to staff and students, install an expectation for high achievement in the school and monitor the teaching process as well as student's achievement (Ashibogwu, 2018).

Leadership styles refer to knowledge acquired by the teacher which enables him carry out activities that engender conducive head teachers environment. Such actions, Akubue (2021) included actions that precede teacher-pupil school interaction such as school grouping, designing curricula., preparing time-table, formulating school rule and regulations, among others; actions which are intended to create favourable conditions that will facilitate effective instructional delivery such as giving clear and understandable directions, among others; actions which aim at regulating the behaviour of learners like directing questions at an unattentive learner, using positive reinforcement, or applying punishment, among others and actions that should assert the authority of the head teachers such as taking decision in which learners should do. Leadership styles are classifications of how a person behaves while leading a group. Lewyn's Leadership styles are authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and delegative (laissez-faire). Authoritarian leaders, also known as autocratic leaders, provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. This style of leadership is strongly focused on both commands by the leader and control of the followers. There is also a clear division between the leader and the members. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently, with little or no input from the rest of the group (Ogunsaju, 2016). Researchers found that decision-making was less creative under authoritarian leadership. Lewin also concluded that it is harder to move from an authoritarian style to a democratic style than vice versa. Abuse of this method is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial. Authoritarian leadership is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group. The autocratic approach can be a good one when the situation calls for rapid decisions and decisive actions. However, it tends to create dysfunctional and even hostile environments, often pitting followers against the domineering leader (Ogunsaju, 2016).

Democratic leadership is typically the most effective leadership style. Democratic leaders offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the group and allow input from other group members. In Lewin (2018) revealed that children in this group were less productive than the members of the authoritarian group, but their contributions were of a higher quality (Ugboaja and Ibiam, 2022). Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say in the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative. Democratic leaders tend to make followers feel like they are an important part of the team, which helps foster commitment to the goals of the group (Omoregie, 2018). Thus, how the teachers perceive the principals could to a

large extent affect their attitude to their job and, by implicating the school environment. It is suggested that successful principals combine an effective influence mode with influence activities to provide the consents and constraints within their schools that affect the way teachers manage their classroom and the achievement of students.

Statement of the Problem

One of the greatest complaints against Enugu State school system especially Enugu Education Zone area is the high incidence of failure of her students in both internal and external examinations. In schools' settings, there is unrest arising from several petitions against the principals by some communities. The researcher investigated that these petitions are masterminded by some teacher in various affected schools. Teachers tend to be apathetic to work as they exhibit lateness and truancy in the school. Among the students, there is high incidence of malingering, truancy, examination malpractice and other mal-adjusted behaviors. That these problems tend to pervade our schools raise serious questions as to the type of Leadership styles being exhibited by the principal in our secondary schools. School principal are generally expected to establish a good measure of rapport with their teachers. A good degree of rapport between the principal and his teachers generally creates a facilitative climate which engenders confidence, trust, mutual respect, love and dedication to duty. The problems become all the more glaring when one reflects on the criteria adopted by the Enugu state Government especially in Enugu Education Zone. In Enugu state schools system, appointment of principals is based on seniority without regard to adequate training in administration or administrative experience. This made it possible to study the Leadership styles of secondary school principals in Enugu State as they really exist. It is such an objective assessment that would be used in making appropriate recommendations for improvement of techniques adopted in the appointment of principals. Since the principal is the pivot on which the activities of the school revolves for good or for bad, studying the Leadership styles of our secondary School principal as they interact with the teachers and the assessment of the impact of such interaction becomes necessary. Since the general complaints tend to indicate that the climate of the preponderance of our schools is alimentative, the problem then is whether there are any relationships between the Leadership styles of the principals and the organizational climate of the schools. This therefore attracts the attention of the researcher to look into how the Leadership styles of principals have helped or discourage teachers from putting in their best.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate Principal leadership styles and secondary school students learning outcomes in Enugu Education Zone

Specifically, the study intends to:

1. find out if democratic leadership strategy improves students learning outcome in Enugu Education Zone.
2. ascertain if autocratic leadership strategy improves students learning outcome in Enugu Education Zone.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions was addressed.

1. To what extent do democratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu State?
2. To what extent do autocratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu State?

Methods

A survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015). A survey research design is one which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group. The design was suitable because, the research involves gathering of opinions and information from entrepreneurial education teachers. The area of the study was in Enugu education zone. Enugu education zone is one of the six education zones, in Enugu State. The population for the study comprised of 120 (90 teachers and 30 principals) from thirty-one government owned secondary schools in Enugu education zone. There was no sampling since the population was manageable. A- 20 item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to collect data from the respondents. It consisted of two parts part I and part II , part I was designed to elicit information on the bio-data of the respondents; while part II is made of two sections which contained 10 items each for section A and B respectively. The instrument was face validated by three experts and their comments guided the modification of the final instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha; and reliability coefficient index of 0.79 was obtained. This showed that the instrument was reliable and hence used for data collection. This is line with Uzoagulu (2011), that instrument is considered reliable when coefficient index is up to 0.60 The instrument was administered and collected by the researcher with two trained research, assistant. The entire 120 questionnaire distributed were properly filled, collected and used for the study; showing 100% return rate. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer research questions for the study. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed; while item with mean rating below 2.50 were regarded as disagree.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do democratic leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings on extent do democratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome

S/N	Items	Teachers 90		Principals 30		Overall 120		Dec
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
	Democratic Leadership styles have effect on school management in the following areas:							
1	Democratic leaders involve teachers in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.	2.60	.98	2.55	.93	2.58	.96	HE
2	When teachers feel valued and included, their job satisfaction and morale tend to increase.	2.57	.89	2.51	.92	2.54	.91	HE
3	Democratic leadership encourages teamwork and collaboration among teachers, staff, and administrators..	2.56	.95	2.55	.89	2.56	.92	HE
4	Involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making can lead to more informed and well-rounded decisions.	2.59	.92	2.54	.91	2.57	.92	HE
5	Democratic leaders may also involve students in decision-making processes, promoting student autonomy and agency.	2.50	.93	2.54	.85	2.53	.89	HE

6	Democratic leaders tend to communicate openly and transparently with teachers, staff, and students.	2.53	.89	2.59	.93	2.56	.92	HE
7	Democratic leadership can help create a sense of community and shared responsibility within the school.	2.64	.91	2.55	.92	2.60	.92	HE
8	By empowering teachers and staff, democratic leaders can encourage innovation and creativity in teaching and learning.	2.59	.91	2.61	.91	2.60	.92	HE
9	Democratic leadership lead to more effective problem-solving, as diverse perspectives and ideas are brought to the table.	2.58	.95	2.62	.90	2.60	.93	HE
10	Democratic leadership can contribute to a positive school culture, characterized by mutual respect, trust, and cooperation.	2.52	.91	2.58	.93	2.56	.92	HE
Cluster Mean/SD		2.57	.92	2.56	.90	2.57	.92	HE

The data analysis on Table 1 above shows the mean ratings of autocratic leaders can make decisions quickly, which can be beneficial in emergency situations.. In the above Table, the University administrators' mean ranged from 2.50 to 2.64, while the academic staff mean ranged from 2.51 to 2.61. The values of their cluster means are 2.57 and 2.56 with standard deviations of .92 and .90 respectively. However, their overall mean ranged from 2.53 to 2.60 with cluster mean of 2.57 and standard deviation of .92. The finding of the study signifies that democratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu Education Zone to a high extent. The standard deviations of the respondents show that they are homogenous in their responses.

Research Question Two: To what extent do autocratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings on autocratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome.

S/N	Items	Teachers 90		Principals 30		Overall 120		Dec
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
14	Autocratic leaders make decisions without input from teachers, limiting their ability to exercise professional judgment.	3.12	.80	3.11	.82	3.11	.82	HE
15	Autocratic leadership can lead to decreased job satisfaction and morale among teachers.	2.34	.84	2.37	.82	2.36	.83	LE
16	Autocratic leaders stifle creativity and innovation among teachers and students	2.52	.81	2.51	.82	2.51	.82	HE
17	Autocratic leaders may not communicate effectively with teachers, staff, and students.	2.55	.80	2.53	.82	2.55	.81	LE
18	Autocratic leadership can create a stressful work environment for teachers	3.07	.84	3.04	.82	3.04	.83	HE

	and staff.							
19	Autocratic leadership can lead to a lack of student engagement and motivation	3.01	.82	2.98	.82	2.99	.82	HE
20	Autocratic leaders may not involve students in decision-making processes.	2.61	.82	2.58	.82	2.59	.82	HE
21	Autocratic leaders may be resistant to change and new ideas.	2.35	.84	2.35	.80	2.35	.81	LE
22	Autocratic leadership can lead to increased teacher turnover rates.	2.59	.82	2.57	.81	2.58	.82	HE
23	Autocratic leaders can make decisions quickly, which can be beneficial in emergency situations.	2.36	.80	2.38	.81	2.38	.81	LE
Cluster Mean/SD		2.62	.82	2.61	.82	2.62	.82	HE

The data analysis on Table 2 above shows the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which autocratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu Education Zone. Table 2, the teachers mean ranged from 2.25 to 3.12, while the principals mean ranged from 2.23 to 3.11. The values of their cluster means are 2.62 and 2.61 with standard deviations of .82 and .82 respectively. However, their overall mean ranged from 2.24 to 3.11 with cluster mean of 2.62 and standard deviation of .82. The finding of the study signifies that Data autocratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu State in Enugu Education Zone. The standard deviations of the respondents show that their responses were closely related.

Discussion

The result in table I revealed that Democratic leaders involve teachers in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability, Democratic leadership encourages teamwork and collaboration among teachers, staff, and administrators, democratic leaders may also involve students in decision-making processes, promoting student autonomy and agent and that democratic leadership can contribute to a positive school culture, characterized by mutual respect, trust, and cooperation. Ashibogwu (2018) opined that leadership in any organization especially secondary schools implies the action and interaction with persons and things with a view to attaining a specific objective.

Results in table 2 clearly show that autocratic Leadership styles have effect on students learning outcome in Enugu State. It was revealed that autocratic leaders make decisions without input from teachers, limiting their ability to exercise professional judgment, autocratic leadership can lead to decreased job satisfaction and morale among teachers, autocratic leaders may not communicate effectively with teachers, staff, and students, autocratic leaders may not communicate effectively with teachers, staff, and students and that autocratic leaders can make decisions quickly, which can be beneficial in emergency situations . The finding also concurs to the findings of Ogunsaju (2016) authoritarian leaders, also known as autocratic leaders; provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. This style of leadership is strongly focused on both commands by the leader and control of the followers. There is also a clear division between the leader and the members. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently, with little or no input from the rest of the group.

Conclusions

Between autocratic and democracy leadership styles , democratic strategy was the least used leadership strategy and equally served as the best strategy that can improve school management by principals. In this style, the study concluded that principals consulted before making decisions, respect the rights of the various groups in the school institution. Giving teachers autonomy in decision making about improving learning outcome was least used. On the part of

teachers, they felt that their principals consulted before making decisions and also accords them an opportunity to make contributions on performances of the counselors.

Recommendations

The following were the recommendations for the study

- (i) The individual principals should make effort to interrogate their transformation styles of leadership to ensure that they challenge the process, continuously strive to be creative, innovative and yearn to improve results, identify the underlying factor that hinder their school's continued academic improvement and gather the courage of experimenting and risk taking.
- (ii) The directorate of quality assurance standards and Federal Ministry of Education can use the findings to formulate training programmes for principals of the public secondary schools. These programmes should be focused to use of transformational, democratic and transactional leadership styles to improve standard of education through principal leadership. a bid to ensure that decision-making takes place at the lowest possible level to boost academic outcome.

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