



THE EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP EFFICIENCY ON DISCIPLINE IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS' PRINCIPALS IN DELTA STATE

OSAKWE, Regina Nonye (PhD)

Department of Educational Administration & Policy
Studies, Faculty of Education,
Delta State University,
Abraka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of secondary school principals' leadership styles on discipline in the administration of secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria. Four research questions adopted alongside four hypotheses that were formulated and tested. The empirical analyses used the descriptive survey model. The data comprised of 12,883 male and female teachers in public secondary schools across the State. A sample of 688 teachers was selected using the systematic random sampling technique. The instrument used was a well-structured questionnaire. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using ranking order, means and standard deviation for research questions, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test for hypotheses. The study found amongst others that the principals' leadership panaches, to a large extent determines the level of discipline in the administration of schools. The ways forward have been outlined to foster efficiency and school growths.

Keywords: Administration, leadership, discipline, Schools, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

As Nigeria entered the 21st century considerable attention is being paid to education as a key to sustainable growth and development, peace and stability. Such recognition makes education an indispensable means for effective participation not only in the socio-economic development of Nigeria, but also in the on-going rapid globalization (Agba, Ogaboh, Ikoh and Noah (2010). Nigeria policy on education (FGN, 2004) refer to education as an instrument per-excellence for effective national development in all ramifications. It follows therefore that the realization of national development lies on the effective implementation of the country's educational policies/ and the leadership performance of the principal in inculcating discipline on students at all level of the secondary school system. The role of education therefore, is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable the beneficiaries to function as economic and social change agents in the society, but also to impart discipline, values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations which are important for national development.

The principal as a chief executive of secondary school administration is responsible for the management of teachers, supporting staff, students, physical structures and routine of the school. His position of authority and influence over the teachers and other subordinate staff could contribute either positively or negatively towards the realization of the goals and objectives of

secondary schools. Thus, the principal as the formal leader of the school can influence the attitudes and functions of the school teachers in performing their duties which in a way can also influence the level of discipline among students and achieving a conducive school atmosphere or environment.

The principal is the head of the school and is referred to as the custodian of discipline with regards to teachers and students. He establishes rules and regulations, determine the type of punishment in most cases to be meted to flaunt onstituted authority. He works hand in hand with teachers and parents and other school Board or Ministry of Education. To effect discipline in secondary schools the principal can use any of the following; warning or reprimand, restitution, suspension, detention, corporal punishment, expulsion, counseling and removal. It is imperative to state here that punishment as a means of effecting students' discipline should not be too rigid or taken to the extreme. In the same vein, Osokoya in Utobivwi (2014) commenting on punishment as a means of effecting discipline said that discipline both in school and at home should neither be too strict nor too relaxed, if it is too strict, there will be fear and nothing positive would be achieved, and if it is too relaxed, children would develop a kind of liberty and license. As a result nothing would be achieved at the end of it. It is therefore important that rules made by principals should be directed towards achieving a proper conduct that will make students function effectively.

It has been observed that successful schools have a principal who set goals, maintain discipline, and observes classroom frequently to dictate deviant behaviours. The supervising role of a principal determines the extent to which the teachers and students will manifest negative and positive behaviour. Non supervision among teachers and students will possibly culminate in mushroom disciplinary disorder among problems, thus effective supervision is one of the strategies used by principals in maintaining discipline in school. The effectiveness of the principal in maintaining discipline in the school also depends on the leadership style adopted. In the same vein, Nwankwo, (2010) supported that, even the best programmes, the most adequate resources and the most motivated staff and students will be rendered ineffective in the absence of a good leader. Adeyemi (2010) in his study of the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and teachers job performance in secondary schools found out that principals mostly use democratic leadership style in schools as compared to the autocratic style for effective performance and productivity.

A discipline workforce can meet the challenges of the organization and contribute to the objectives in a better way. It is the atmosphere in which students are taught to respect the school authorities, to observe school laws and regulations and to maintain an established standard of behaviour. Mussazi in Utobivwi (2014) opined that discipline in schools is the precision of opportunity to exercise self-control, to solve a school problem to learn and to promote the welfare of the school. Discipline in secondary school is an action by students that shows respect to the established norms, rules and regulation of the society. It is derived from the venture of loyalty, self-control, obedience, modesty, sincerity, respect for others and a sense of responsibility.

In a similar view Sam and Norman in Utobivwi (2014) said that no society can survive without placing some limit on the behaviour of its members. They emphasized that such society should be clear about their limit. Let the children understand what is appropriate and what it's not. They went further to give some strategies for discipline. Set the limit; be clear and concise in what is unacceptable conduct and provide at least one acceptable alternative. Provide a choice that represents a natural consequence of the unacceptable behaviour. Act, do not delay and impose the consequence you have specified.

Leadership Style and Discipline

Leadership plays a very critical role in galvanizing all the other factors in the school together. However, in spite of the importance of leadership, its contribution to the improved school discipline will not be maximized, unless leadership is distributed and shared with the significant others. Leadership style is an underlying needs structure of the individual that determined in various leadership situations to motivate and influence the members towards the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives. Ukeje (1992) states that the

emergence of each style depends on a number of factors which are; the nature of the leader; the nature of the group to be led and the nature of the organization. There are various leadership styles such as democratic, autocratic, laissez-fair transactional and transformational leadership. Each style chosen and utilized by the principal will dictate the tone of discipline and productivity among teachers and students in the school.

Discipline among students strongly depends on the leader/principal of the school. For example, when a child exhibit any kind of misconduct the reaction of the leader determines if the student will behave worse or better in the future. It is the duty of the leader to ensure that the child is well disciplined, as leadership is critical to the students' discipline. This is in agreement with the common sense view, that leaders are essential and have an impact on the discipline of the organization (James & Connolly, in Utobivwi (2014).

A number of scholars, for example, Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee (2002) hold that there is a connection between leadership style and discipline. In other words, the manner the leader leads determines the discipline of the school. For instance, when the principal is flexible, able to articulate inspiring goals in the whole staff and give them audience, the discipline in school becomes positive, but when he/she is rigid, using command and control style, the staff become demoralized, therefore an unpleasant indiscipline prevails.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Secondary schools have been witnessing changes physically, morally, academically, and in teachers' competence and productivity, especially when principals are posted or transferred to schools. On assumption of duty to such schools, students tend to shun disciplinary/behavioural problems in some cases and show signs of good behaviour both in character and attitude to school and school work, the teachers are more diligent and studious endeavouring earnestly to satisfy principal's authority, criteria and expectations. Thus, the principal's leadership style encroaches on student's discipline. Therefore, this study sets forth to investigate on the impact of secondary school principal's leadership styles and the level of discipline attained in the administration of schools in Delta State.

1.2 Research Questions

- a) What are the leadership styles utilized by principals of secondary schools in Delta State?
- b) What is the difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those who utilize autocratic leadership style in the administration of their schools?
- c) Is there any difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize autocratic leadership style and those who utilize laissez-faire leadership style in the administration of their schools?
- d) Is there any difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those who utilize transactional leadership style in the administration of their schools?

1.3 Hypotheses

- a) There is no significant difference in the leadership styles utilized by principals of secondary schools in Delta State.
- b) There is no significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those who utilize autocratic leadership style in the administration of their school activities.

- c) There is no significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize autocratic leadership style and those who utilize laissez-faire leadership style in the administration of their school activities.
- d) There is no significant difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those who utilize transactional leadership style in the administration of their school activities.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The purpose of this study is to set forth to examine secondary school principals' leadership styles and the level of discipline exhibited in the administration of their school activities. The study is a descriptive survey, which employed the ex-post-facto design to investigate the principal's leadership styles and the level of discipline attained in Delta State secondary schools. The design chosen involves the collection of data to answer research questions and test hypotheses about the present situations of problems without manipulation of the variables. The population of the study consisted of 12,883 teachers in secondary schools in Delta State. A sample of 688 teachers was selected using the systematic random sampling technique. The instrument used was a questionnaire which comprised of the bio-data and 30 items on principals leadership styles and the level of discipline in schools. Copies of the questionnaire were given to three experts in Educational Administration to ascertain the face and content validity of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was established using the cronbach alpha reliability technique. A correlation value of 0.85 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable. The data collected were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation and ranking order with a benchmark of 3.00 and above for the agreed responses, and for high level of discipline, while below 3.00 as disagreed, and for low level of discipline. The one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

3. RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the different leadership styles used by principals of Delta State Secondary Schools with regards to teachers' response?

Table 1: Mean rating analysis of principals utilization of different leadership styles

Principal	Teachers' Responses				
Leadership Style	N	\bar{X}	SD	Ranking Order	Remark
Democratic	688	3.91	1	1 st	Agreed
Autocratic	688	3.36	1	2 nd	Agreed
Transactional	688	2.35	0	4 th	Disagreed
Laissez-faire	688	2.34	0	5 th	Disagreed
Transformational	688	3.20	1	3 rd	Agreed

The result presented in table one shows that principals in Delta State secondary schools utilize democratic, autocratic and transformational leadership styles with their mean values of 3.91, 3.36 and 3.20 respectively which is above the benchmark of 3.00. Similarly, the result also shows that democratic leadership style comes 1st in ranking order, autocratic leadership style comes 2nd and transformational leadership style comes 3rd, while transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles comes 4th and 5th respectively. Teachers agreed on principals usage of democratic, autocratic and transformational leadership styles while they disagreed with transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Research Question Two: What is the difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those principals who utilize autocratic leadership style in the administration of their schools?

Table 2: Mean rating and ranking order analysis of principals' usage of democratic and autocratic leadership styles

Principals	Teachers' Responses				
Leadership Style	\bar{X}	SD	Level of Discipline	Ranking Order	Remark
Democratic	3.85	1.00	HLD	1 st	Agreed
Autocratic	2.56	0.85	LLD	2 nd	Agreed

HLD = High Level Discipline; LLD = Low Level Discipline

Table 2 shows democratic leadership style with the mean value 3.85 and autocratic with mean value 2.56. This revealed that schools whose principals utilize democratic leadership style shows a high level of discipline than schools whose principals utilize autocratic leadership style in the administration of secondary school activities in Delta State.

Research Question Three: Is there any difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize autocratic leadership style and those who utilize laissez-faire leadership style in the administration of their schools?

Table 3: Mean rating and ranking order analysis of autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles

Principals	Teachers' Responses				
Leadership Style	\bar{X}	SD	Level of Discipline	Ranking Order	Remark
Autocratic	3.50	0.92	HLD	1 st	Agreed
Laissez-faire	2.01	1.07	LLD	2 nd	Disagreed

HLD = High Level Discipline; LLD = Low Level Discipline

The findings in table 3 reveal that the mean values of autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles are 3.50 and 2.01 respectively. Teachers agreed on autocratic leadership style and disagreed on laissez-faire leadership style. This showed that schools whose principals utilize autocratic leadership style shows high level of discipline than schools whose principals utilize laissez-faire leadership styles in Delta State secondary schools administration.

Research Question Four: Is there any difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those who utilize transactional leadership in the administration of their school activities?

Table 4: Mean rating and ranking order analysis of the level of discipline for democratic and transactional leadership styles of principals

Principals	Teachers' Responses				
Leadership Style	\bar{X}	SD	Level of Discipline	Ranking Order	Remark
Democratic	3.60	0.95	HLD	1 st	Agreed
Transactional	2.65	0.88	LLD	2 nd	Disagreed

HLD = High Level Discipline; LLD = Low Level Discipline

In table 4, the result revealed that the mean value for democratic leadership is 3.60, while that of transactional leadership is 2.65. Teachers agreed on democratic leadership ranking first, while they disagreed on transactional leadership ranking second. Therefore, it implies that schools whose principals utilize democratic leadership style shows a high level of discipline than those who utilize transactional leadership style in the administration of school activities.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in leadership styles utilized by principals in Delta State secondary schools.

Table 5: ANOVA table showing the difference in the leadership styles

Sources of Variance	Sum of Square	Df	Means of Square	F-Calculated	F-Table	Remark
Between	836.58	2	415.27			
Within	95948.49	685	51.92	3.86	3.02	Significant
Total	96,785.07	687				

Table 5 shows that the calculated f-ratio of 3.86 is greater than the f-table ratio of 3.02 at 0.05 level of significance at 2 and 685 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This revealed that there is a significant difference in leadership styles utilized by principals in Delta State secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those principals who utilize autocratic leadership style in the administration of their school activities.

Table 6: t-test table showing the difference between democratic and autocratic leadership on the level of discipline

Leadership Style	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- Calculated	t-Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Democratic	402	3.22	0.84					
Autocratic	286	2.98	0.95	686	6.08	1.96	0.05	Rejected

Table 6 above shows that the t-calculated value of 6.08 was greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, this implied that there was a significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those principals who utilize autocratic leadership style in the administration of their school activities.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize autocratic leadership style and those principals who utilize laissez-faire leadership style in the administration of their school activities.

Table 7: t-test table showing the difference between autocratic and laissez-faire leadership on the level of discipline

Leadership Style	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- Calculated	t-Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Autocratic	462	3.14	0.99					
Laissez-faire	225	1.53	0.64	686	7.96	1.96	0.05	Rejected

In table 3, the t-calculated value of 7.96 was greater than t- critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, this showed that there was a significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize autocratic leadership style and those principals who utilize laissez-faire leadership style in the administration of their school activities.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in the level of discipline between principals who utilize autocratic leadership style and those principals who utilize transactional leadership style in the administration of their school.

Table 8: t-test table showing the difference between democratic and transactional leadership on the level of discipline

Leadership Style	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Calculated	t-Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Democratic	440	2.89	0.99					
Transactional	248	1.27	0.46	686	3.42	1.96	0.05	Rejected

Table 8 shows a t-calculated value of 3.42 with t-critical value of 1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05, the t-calculated value was greater than the t-critical value. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This revealed that there is a significant difference in the level of discipline by principals who utilize democratic leadership style and those principals who utilize transactional leadership style in the administration of their school.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study reveals that principals adopt democratic, autocratic and transformational leadership styles in the administration of their schools as agreed by teachers in table 1, while they disagreed with transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. For the analyses on tables 2, 3 and 4, teachers agreed that leadership styles employed by the principal affects the level of discipline seen in school administration. This finding is in line with Goleman et al (2002) who observed in their study that there is a connection between leadership style and discipline, that the manner the leader leads determines the discipline of the school.

Hypothesis one was rejected showing that there is a significant difference in various leadership styles used by principals. This could be as a result of differences in their demographic variables. Similarly, the findings of hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 showed that a high level of discipline in the administration of schools is determined by the leadership styles utilized by principals because the null hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 were rejected showing a significant difference in the leadership styles used. These findings are in line with Utobivwi, (2014), and Adeyemi, (2010) who observed in their studies that principals leadership and administrative styles to a large extent affect the discipline, moral, effective performance and productivity in individual workers in the school.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings of this study, the following conclusion was drawn:

- That principals utilize democratic, autocratic and transformational leadership styles in the administration of secondary school activities in Delta State.
- That leadership styles of the principals to a large extent affect the level of discipline displayed in schools.
- That principals who utilize democratic leadership styles experience high level of discipline than principals who utilize autocratic leadership style.
- That principals who utilize autocratic leadership style have high level of discipline as compared to principals who utilize laissez-faire leadership style.

It is therefore recommended as follows:

- Principals should utilize more of the leadership styles that will enhance high level of discipline in schools such as democratic and transformational leadership styles.
- Principals should vary the leadership styles they employ in school administration in order to effect discipline, morals and productivity.

- c) The ministry of education should employ disciplined, qualified and serious minded principals that will effect discipline in schools in order to achieve educational objectives.
- d) Principals should organize periodic meetings with teachers and parents to discuss general behavioural problems and how these problems could be solved to improve discipline in schools.

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