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Influence of Principal's Experience and Leadership Style on Senior Secondary School Student's Academic Performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how Katsina State Zonal Education Quality Assurance principals' leadership styles affect student achievement. The study found that principals must involve all stakeholders in decision-making and school administration and that their leadership style positively affects SSCE student achievement. Teachers, students, and subordinates must make decisions to increase performance. Democratic leadership styles got a high response, suggesting they may outperform authoritarian leadership approaches if applied effectively. SSCE test success is not due to one leadership style. Principals must use these two leadership styles into their school management to achieve great results. Based on these findings, the recommend that the state education ministries should organise programmes to educate principals on effective leadership styles for better results. More so, to improve teacher working conditions and student academic performance, principals should adopt democratic leadership styles that involve all members of the school community in decision-making. Furthermore, school principals should use transformational leadership, which involves individuals investing in decisions they have a say in. finally, regular discussions between principals, teachers, and students should address students' academic weaknesses.

Keywords: Academic performance, Leadership style, Principals' experience, Quality assurance, Senior secondary students

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian secondary schools face many management challenges. Stakeholders continue to criticise secondary school administrators' administration. The way school administrators operate their schools causes friction. Weak leadership, money, and infrastructure keep many schools failing[1]. After the SSCE results are released, separate publications praise administrators whose schools scored well and criticise those whose schools scored poorly based on leadership aspect types. Given the above, this study will examine the persistent uncertainty of the valid response to the general question, namely, the strength and direction of the possible relationship between SSS principals' leadership styles and their students' academic achievement in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance. School principals often select democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire leadership. Whichever technique the school head picks affects kids' external test scores. The study wants to know how different leadership styles affect Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance's external tests' pupils' academic advancement. The study examines how Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance principals' leadership styles affect student achievement.

The concept of Leadership Styles

The pattern of behaviour that a leader employs to plan, organise, motivate, and control is referred to as leadership style. It refers to how much he or she listens, develops objectives and standards, creates action plans, leads others, and delivers feedback[2]. The degree to which a principal succeeds in combining both human and physical components into the school's objective is impacted by his administrative behavior[3]. Principals must also be conscious of their leadership styles[4]. Several academic study have revealed that leadership styles may be connected and, when used correctly, may deliver higher advantages. They go on to explain that there is no one-size-fits-all leadership style that is acceptable in all contexts. They recognised three leadership categories as being

particularly crucial. These include autocratic, transformational, and laissez-faire; regardless of how academics describe the styles, the best is the one that helps to accomplish the goals by successfully managing people and tasks while using both human and material resources. Exam performance has drawn the interest of scholars who have strived to examine the aspects that affect student accomplishment. Parents have also blamed low KCSE outcomes on the management leadership styles of the heads and principals[5]. How successfully administrative concerns impacting examination outcomes are managed hinges on the leadership style used by principals in their administration. The bulk of studies on the effect of leadership styles on SSCE performance have diverse viewpoints on the various leadership styles deployed by various managers, with some in agreement and others opposing. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the impact of the stated leadership styles on students' performance in SSCE examinations in public secondary schools in Katsina's Education Quality Assurance Zone.

Autocratic leadership style and students' performance

According to Jacob and Ayoko[6], autocratic leadership, also known as authoritative leadership, is a leadership style in which the leader either gives no explanation when issuing an order or implements it without justification. According to Ahmed and Hassan[7], a principal who applies this kind of leadership allows for no involvement in decision-making as all. With this leadership style, the supervisor takes choices on his or her own, is task-oriented, tough on workers, obsessive about timetables, and expects people to do what they are told without question or argument. The scientific management method has impacted the principals who belong to this style, and they have succumbed to McGregor's hypothesis x, which claims that humans are inherently sluggish and need regular monitoring. Workers, pupils, and subordinates at schools where this method is utilised lack motivation and display less excitement in their employment. One advantage of authoritarian leadership is that people are encouraged to work rapidly in order to obtain high productivity[8]. Pizzolitto and Venditti[9] emphasise a downside of this leadership style, which is that the work was always planned and done according to a set of processes. As a consequence, it's realistic to presume that head teachers who apply an authoritarian leadership style obtain excellent levels of performance in their schools since instructors and youngsters are strictly controlled. Deadlines may also be reached if they are established at the suitable moment. Teachers may not have sufficient time to make decisions in schools with authoritarian managers. At Katsina zonal Education Quality Assurance, it was thought suitable to acquire insight into the leadership styles shown by secondary school principals and how they effect students' achievement in SSCEE assessments.

Democratic leadership style and students' accomplishment

Cooperation and collaboration are characteristics of democratic leadership, generally called as interactive or participatory leadership. It may also be interactive and consultative. In this leadership style, the leader solicits feedback from subordinates on a suggested course of action before making a decision, or the leader may solicit group opinion before making a decision[10]. Power and authority are distributed under this system. The behavioural science hypothesis, which advocates for both personnel and task, is used by principals who utilise this technique[11]. These are what Kemp and Nathan referred to as "Omega Manager". These are managers that excel in both people and task management. At institutions where this leadership style is applied, there is a feeling of ownership among the subordinates, as well as a sense of accountability and responsibility at each level. This strategy is predicated on the premise that when individuals are devoted to decision-making in which they participated, they will exercise self-direction and motivation[12]. The institutional climate and internal environment, for the most part, promote interactions that generate high team spirits, cohesion, and commitment to the institutional ethos. Suggestion boxes, notice boards, journals, and councils are popular in such schools[13]. Additional jobs involving instructors that are relevant to the school's well-being include the administration of internal examinations, co-curricular activities during the academic day, and dormitory inspections. These motivate students and instructors to strive towards achieving the defined objective by allowing them to openly express their feelings about the institution. As they work towards similar objectives, the workforce becomes more collaborative and socially committed to one another.

Laissez-faire leadership style and pupils accomplishment

Another popular leadership style in schools is this one. According to Iqbal et al.[14] a laissez-faire leadership style is one in which the leader abdicates responsibility and permits subordinates to function as they see fit with little monitoring. This leader transferred responsibility to the subordinate, enabling them to choose what would be done with or without their input. In general, either the group or the leader may make choices on what to do with the group, or the leader may present the topic to the group and then leave it up to them to decide. Humans are intrinsically driven, naturally like work, and are interested in completing their work, according to McGregor's idea Y. Laissez-faire managers fall under the sociological theory of management and McGregor's theory Y, which claims that humans are innately motivated, naturally love labour, and are interested in finishing their task[15]. This sort of leader feels that there should be no rules or regulations as everyone has an intrinsic feeling of obligation. Communication between group members is horizontal in this scenario. This leadership style is stated by Sawar, Tariq and Yong[4] as "a sort of leadership that supports no rule or code of regulation in an institution."

Because there is no hierarchy of power, the leader is only a symbol, and his or her sole function is to furnish the group with the resources it requires. Clement et al.[16] underline the advantages of laissez-faire leadership, suggesting that alternatives that are just accepted and obedient create their own drive. On the negative side, he argues that there is no control and that there is chaos and arguments as a result of unguided freedom and unhealthy competitiveness among the members. Students' performance at an institution where a laissez-faire leadership style is implemented has some negative effects as it impacts the school's working environment. For example, if instructors are required to organise assessments within a given time limit, there may be a lack of evaluation and feedback, and no action is made. As a result of the existing conditions, students may also relax since they may do all they desire. Students' performance in SSCE examinations may worsen as a result of this. The purpose of this research is to assess whether this is one of the leadership styles adopted by principals in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance public secondary schools.

Transformational leadership style and students' achievement

Transformational leadership is founded on the premise that individuals would exhibit self-control, self-direction, and motivation if they are committed to choices in which they have a say[17]. Through a number of mechanisms, such leaders may most likely improve employee motivation, morale, and performance. One of the most recent leadership theories is transformational theory. It entails leaders tailoring their strategies to the requirements of others in their area of influence. Transformational leaders are thought of as change agents who have a clear vision and lead from inside the organization's expertise. Most crucially, transformational leadership relies on one's capacity to inspire others via motivation. Sengendo and Musinguzi[18] performed research on principal leadership styles and their impact on secondary school academic success. In his research, he found that transformational leadership has a good impact on students and overall school performance, as well as motivating teachers to collaborate with administrators to accomplish school goals. Both the head and teachers refer to the school as "our school" at schools led by transformational principals, guaranteeing a feeling of ownership, responsibility, and accountability at every step of decision-making. In Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, it was deemed appropriate to gain insight into the leadership styles shown by secondary school principals and how they impact students' success in SSCE tests.

Theoretical framework

Leadership theories explain how leadership styles and behaviours change. This research will focus on how principal leadership styles affect student achievement, but it must show whether leadership styles are theory-based. Theoretical perspectives can also help aspiring administrators learn and develop school management skills. Researchers in early leadership theory focused on universal leader traits and behaviours. Leadership styles varied by school system and were rarely discussed. Additional leadership study examined leaders as people with personality traits that defined their leadership capacity[19]. These studies examined IQ, birth order, socioeconomic background, and childrearing approaches. Modern writers knew that leadership styles vary by environment, hence contingency theories were developed, but they overlooked cultural factors. The research is based on Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership[20], which states that a leader's ability to lead depends on a range of situational conditions, including the leader's style, followers' abilities and behaviours, and others. According to Shala et al.[21], Fiedler developed contingency theory by studying many leaders in many settings, particularly military organisations. Fiedler was able to make statistically supported generalisations about which leadership styles were best and worst for a given organisation. Fiedler suggests task- and relationship-motivated leadership. Relationship-driven leaders focus on building relationships, while task-motivated leaders focus on attaining goals. Fiedler's Contingency Model determined a leader's work structure, position authority, and leader-member relationships. Mark and Erude[22] say school administrators can use contingency theory. Chances say understanding contingency theory will help school leaders in many ways. First, this framework helps identify school-affecting externalities.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Ex-post facto research was utilized in this study. Ex-post facto design, as defined by Akinlua[23], is a descriptive study in which variables that already exist have happened without the researcher's influence. The design was adopted in this research since the principals already had leadership styles and had applied them. Students' performance had previously been evaluated via a rigorous procedure of continuous evaluation, terminal, and final exams. As it is interested in a particular aspect of interest, it is causal comparative (past occurrences; leadership styles and performance). Ex-post factor is a sort of descriptive study that is focused with finding or quantifying the degree of association between two or more variables in order to make predictions regarding relationships. A correlational analysis may be performed to determine if there is a link between variables, but it does not prove causality. Correlational investigations, according to according to Devi, Lepcha and Basnet[24], are any research initiatives in which a co related statistical approach is used to identify or clarify a connection between variables.

This survey allows a researcher to determine the degree to which changes in one variable are linked to changes in another. As a result, the correlational design was chosen for this research since it allows for the simultaneous measurement of a large number of variables and their interrelationships. In other words, this strategy enables the researcher to investigate how a number of factors, either alone or in combination, may influence a certain pattern of behavior.

Population of the study

A total of 23 principals and 906 teachers from 23 secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance were included in this research.

Table 1: The population of the study

SN	School	Principals	Teachers	Total
1	Family Support Programme Katsina	1	25	26
2.	Government College Katsina	1	36	37
3	Government Day Sec. Sch. Jibia	1	35	36
4.	Government Day Sec. Sch. K/Kaura	1	59	60
5	Government Day Sec. Sch. K/Sauri	1	54	55
6	Government Day Sec. Sch. Natsinta	1	41	42
7	Government Day Sec.Sch. K/Yandaka	1	67	68
8	Government Girls College	1	78	79
9	Government Girls Unity Jibia	1	41	42
10	Government School for the Blind	1	21	22
11	Government Sec. Sch. Daddara	1	23	24
12	Government Sec. Sch. Dankaba	1	22	23
13	Government Sec. Sch. Dutsinsafe	1	29	30
14	Government Sec. Sch. Gangara	1	37	38
15	Government Sec. Sch. Girka	1	22	23
16	Government Sec. Sch. Kaita	1	25	26
17	Government Sec. Sch. Kamarawa	1	35	36
18	Government Sec. Sch. MagamaJibia	1	23	24
19	Government Sec. Sch. Shimfida	1	28	29
20	Government Sec. Sch. Yandaki	1	31	32
21	Government Senior Sec. Sch. Jifatu	1	32	33
22	Katsina College Katsina	1	67	68
23	Sir Usman Nagogo COAIS Katsina	1	75	76
TOTAL		23	906	929

Source: (Katsina State Ministry of Education, 2019).

Sample and sampling techniques

According to Mugenda and Mugenda[25], sampling is the process of carefully picking a subset of the available population to be representative of the population with relevant features. A generalization about the whole population may be derived by picking some of the population's constituents. To pick schools, the researcher used a basic random sampling procedure. For the main research, 23 schools were available. According to Krejcie and Morgan's[26] method for selecting sample size from a given population, a research sample of 19 schools was selected from a population of 23 schools. According to the Krejcie and Morgan table, six instructors were chosen from each school, for a total of 114 teachers in the study.

Table 2: The sample of the study

SN	School	Principals	Teachers	Total
1	Family Support Programme Katsina	1	6	7
2.	Government Day Sec. Sch. Jibia	1	6	7
3	Government Day Sec. Sch. K/Kaura	1	6	7
4.	Government Day Sec. Sch. K/Sauri	1	6	7
5	Government Day Sec. Sch. Natsinta	1	6	7
6	Government Day Sec.Sch. K/Yandaka	1	6	7
7	Government Sec. Sch. Daddara	1	6	7
8	Government Sec. Sch. Dankaba	1	6	7
9	Government Sec. Sch. Dutsinsafe	1	6	7
10	Government Sec. Sch. Gangara	1	6	7
11	Government Sec. Sch. Girka	1	6	7
12	Government Sec. Sch. Kaita	1	6	7
13	Government Sec. Sch. Kambarawa	1	6	7
14	Government Sec. Sch. MagamaJibia	1	6	7
15	Government Sec. Sch. Natsinta	1	6	7
16	Government Sec. Sch. Shimfida	1	6	7
17	Government Sec. Sch. Yandaki	1	6	7
18	Government Senior Sec. Sch. Jifatu	1	6	7
19	Katsina College Katsina	1	6	7
TOTAL		19	114	133

Instrumentation

The researcher employed two sets of instruments: the principals' leadership style questionnaire (PLSQ) and past examination data of the students. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Parts A and B were included in the questionnaire. Part A collected data on demographic characteristics, whereas Part B described a leadership style profile. The chapter sought information on public perceptions of the principals' leadership styles, which included authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire, and transformative. Following each item was a five-point Likert Scale.

RESULTS

Table 3: Mean and standard deviations of influence of principals' autocratic leadership styles on students' academic performance

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Transformational	13.3056	108	3.43554
Performance	20.2037	108	5.58161

Table 3 presented the mean and standard deviations of principals' transformational leadership styles' effect on students' academic achievement. Transformational leadership received a mean of 13.30 and 3.4 standard deviations, while student academic achievement received a mean of 20.20 and 5.58 standard deviations. In Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, there is a discrepancy in the mean score of students' performance and transformational leadership style. Because the teachers' replies tended to trend towards always (SA), most administrators embraced a laissez-faire leadership style, as seen in Table 4.7. (A). For example, evidence shows that principals have always allowed members to take it easy at work (60.0 percent). Except for a handful, the most of the following consecutive comments indicated towards; (D). When a laissez-faire leadership style is used in a school, pupils' performance might have negative consequences since it impacts the school's working environment.

Table 4: ANOVA of significance influence of teachers experience in academic performance

Source of Variation	Sum of Mean SQ Square	Df	F	P	Remark	
Highly experience	278.6	139.30	2	12.8	0.01	Significant
Moderate experience	385.55	96.38	4			
Less experience	59712	24.63	8			
Total						

Table 4 shows that sum of square obtained on highly experience teachers is 278.6, moderate is 385.5 while less experience is 597.1. F-value recorded is 12.8 and P. value observe is 0.01. The difference is significant and hypothesis one is rejected. Therefore there is significant influence of principals years of experience on academic performance of students.

Table 5: Paired sample t-test of influence of principals' autocratic leadership styles on students' academic performance

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Autocratic performance	14.9259	108	7.45918				
performance	20.2037	108	5.58161	-5.462	107	.000	Significant

The impact of principals' autocratic leadership styles on pupils' academic achievement was examined using a Paired Sample t-test (Table 5). The t-value obtained is 5.46, and the p-value reported at 107 degrees of freedom is 0.00. Because the observed P-value is smaller than alpha, the hypothesis that principals' authoritarian leadership styles have no meaningful impact on students' academic achievement in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance is rejected.

H0₃. There is no significant influence of principals' democratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Table 6: Paired sample t-test of influence of principals' democratic leadership styles on students' academic performance

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
democratic performance	19.4259	108	4.61652				
performance	20.2037	108	5.58161	-2.792	107	.00	Significant

Table 6 paired the impact of principals' democratic leadership styles on pupils' academic achievement was studied using a sample t-test. The t-value found is 2.79, and the p-value measured at 107 degrees of freedom is 0.00. Because the observed P-value is smaller than alpha, the hypothesis that principals' democratic leadership styles have no meaningful impact on students' academic achievement in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance is rejected.

Table 7: Paired sample t-test of influence of principals' laissez-faire leadership styles on students' academic performance

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Laissez-faire performance	20.3704	108	5.87024				
performance	20.2037	108	5.58161	1.347	107	.181	Significant

Paired sample t-test assessing the impact of principals' laissez-faire leadership styles on students' academic achievement was given in Table 7. The t-value obtained is 1.34, and the p-value recorded at 107 degrees of freedom is 0.18. Because the observed p-value is greater than alpha, the hypothesis that there is no significant influence of principals' autocratic leadership styles on students' academic performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance is maintained.

H0₅ There is no significant influence of principals' transformational leadership styles on students' academic performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Table 8: Paired sample t-test of influence of principals' transformational leadership styles on students' academic performance

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Transformational performance	13.3056	108	3.43554				
performance	20.2037	108	5.58161	-14.813	107	.000	Significant

The impact of principals' transformational leadership styles on pupils' academic achievement was examined using a paired sample t-test (Table 8). The t-value obtained is 14.81, and the p-value measured at 107 degrees of freedom is 0.00. Because the observed P-value is smaller than alpha, the hypothesis that principals' transformational leadership styles have no meaningful impact on pupils' academic achievement in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance study indicated that democratic leadership style affected SSCE test scores. Democratic leadership would improve outcomes by encouraging administrators, instructors, and students to interact. The statistics showed that most instructors gave unsatisfactory answers. They said principals sometimes led democratically in their schools. Principals must always adopt this leadership style to improve classroom results. Data demonstrates that 80.0% of instructors think the principle informs them. The audit found that most Katsina zonal Quality Assurance officials avoided duties and let teachers work as they pleased. For instance, administrators have long let teachers relax (60.0 percent). This may be one of the main reasons Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance pupils performed poorly in SSCE tests. Data equally shows that for the last four years, few children in the zone scored between grade A1 and B1. This may be owing to Principals' lax leadership. Transformational leadership is essential. It is a major factor in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance students' SSCE test scores. Transformational leadership is also recognised by Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance as a principle style that affects SSCE exam scores. Research examined whether administrators are committed to decision-making, self-control, self-direction, and inspiring instructors. Thus, data from principals and instructors was collected to understand how secondary school principals' leadership styles affect SSCE test scores. The findings showed that many administrators occasionally employed transformational leadership in the classroom. Some instructors strongly agreed (SA) that transformational leadership was applied in the classroom. Principals must prioritise this leadership. More so, 70.0 percent of instructors thought administrators prioritised deadlines and 75.0 percent sought teacher and superior assistance. In 2011 and 2012, more Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance students scored between A1 and B1 in SSCE exams than in 2009 and 2010. This may have been due to principals' transformational leadership in the classroom. The leadership styles of school administrators affect pupils' SSCE exam results. The district has a high student intake, but the analysis indicated a low percentage of pupils scoring A or B during the past four years. Principals may not use a variety of leadership styles to inspire teachers, which could impair students' SSCE exam results. These findings may affect SSCE exam performance because they show a relationship between the study's dependent variables.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that principals must involve all stakeholders in decision-making and school administration and that their leadership style positively affects SSCE student achievement. Teachers, students, and subordinates must make decisions to increase performance. Democratic leadership styles got a high response, suggesting they may outperform authoritarian leadership approaches if applied effectively. SSCE test success is not due to one leadership style. Principals must use these two leadership styles into their school management to achieve great results. Based on these findings, the recommends:

1. State education ministries should organise programmes to educate principals on effective leadership styles for better results.
2. To improve teacher working conditions and student academic performance, principals should adopt democratic leadership styles that involve all members of the school community in decision-making.
3. School principals should use transformational leadership, which involves individuals investing in decisions they have a say in.
4. Regular discussions between principals, teachers, and students should address students' academic weaknesses.

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