

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS IN ENUGU STATE

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### **Abstract**

The research focused on examining how leadership styles of principal's impact job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State. The study was guided by two research questions and tested two null hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The total population consisted of 835 participants, including 15 principals and 820 teachers from government-owned secondary schools in Enugu South L.G.A. The sample size was 425 participants, comprising 15 principals and 410 teachers. The entire population of principals was included in the study due to its manageable size, while the sample of teachers was selected using proportionate simple random sampling. Data collection was conducted using a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Principals' Leadership Style on Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (IPLSTJP)," which was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu. The collected data were analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate, with a reliability coefficient of 0.80 and 0.82 for research questions one and two, respectively. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.81, indicating high reliability and suitability for data collection. The questionnaire was administered directly to the entire sample population of 425 participants with the assistance of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to address the four research questions. The study's findings revealed that both democratic and autocratic leadership styles significantly influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Based on these findings, the study recommended that principals and teachers explore new approaches to create a harmonious working environment that upholds teaching standards. This harmonious working environment can be achieved by adopting an open leadership style that allows for teacher participation in decision-making processes.

**Keywords:** Leadership Styles, Principals, Teachers, Job Performance

**Introduction**

Education in Nigeria serves as a means to promote national development. It entails the facilitation of learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Globally, education is recognized as a tool for fostering national development and transformation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2013). Aguba in Agugu and Bua (2019) consider education to be a virtue, with its purpose being moral and beneficial to society. Whether it is traditional or Western education, the objective remains the same: to empower individuals to positively manage their own affairs and contribute to societal progress (Agugu and Bua, 2019). Secondary education refers to the educational stage that follows primary school. According to the FRN (2013), it is the form of education children receive after completing primary education but before entering tertiary education. The broad goal of secondary education, as outlined in the national objectives, is to prepare children for practical living within society and to lay the foundation for higher education. Secondary education plays a vital role in the formation of human capital. Rivai (2017) suggests that the quality, competence, character, and effectiveness of teachers significantly influence the quality of future citizens in a country. A teacher is a dynamic leader who embraces change and possesses the ability to prepare future leaders by developing the necessary skills for their success. Teachers are responsible for fulfilling the educational needs of children in regular classrooms and providing instruction in schools (Okeke in Oluka, 2014). According to Oyetunde (2012), a teacher is an individual who has received approved professional training in education at an appropriate level, enabling them to impart knowledge, attitudes, and skills to learners. In addition, the job performance of teachers is the result of their actions in the workplace. Consequently, effective management is increasingly emphasized among principals of secondary schools. A principal is the highest-ranking official in a secondary school, responsible for planning, coordinating, and supervising the school's operations to ensure smooth functioning. According to Egwu (2016), the principal is described as a leader who oversees the school's affairs. Obi, as cited in Ogbu (2014), views the principal as a coordinator who organizes activities to ensure efficient and effective functioning. Oyewale and Alonge (2013) highlight the principal's role as a professional leader and supervisor, encompassing administrative, instructional, and subject supervision. Ultimately, the principal holds a leadership position within the school. Leadership, in general, refers to the process of influencing and guiding an organized group towards achieving goals. It involves social influence, where the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates to accomplish organizational objectives (Queens, 2013). Similarly, Leithwood (2014) characterizes leadership as an interpersonal influence that relies on effective communication to achieve specific goals. Furthermore, leadership style pertains to the approach and manner in which direction is provided, plans are implemented, and people are motivated. Rivai (2017) defines leadership style as a set of characteristics used by leaders to influence subordinates and achieve organizational goals. In

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Idowu's work cited by Mullins (2019), leadership style is defined as the manner in which a manager chooses to interact with employees. Leadership style significantly impacts employees' attitudes, behaviours, and organizational performance. Leadership plays a major role in the overall well-being of both organizations and nations (Odumeru and Ifeanyi, 2013). Hurdzue (2015) asserts that an effective leadership style can foster excellence in the development of organizational members. The leadership style employed varies for each employee, taking into account their needs and the amount of direction, empowerment, and involvement in decision-making (Nurani et al., 2021). Moreover, principals' leadership styles are associated with efficiency, which entails the prudent management of limited resources to maximize output or productivity (Besong, 2011). However, efficiency can also encompass productivity when the personal needs of staff members are met. Principals' leadership styles in secondary schools are expected to prioritize the consideration and satisfaction of staff needs. This implies that the alignment of individual staff members' needs with organizational needs is crucial. Leadership is typically attributed to the person at the top of the hierarchy. Various leadership styles have been advocated, including democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, eclectic, transactional, and transformational approaches. In this study, the researcher examined the influence of democratic and autocratic leadership styles on teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Democratic leadership involves the active participation of workers in all aspects of management. This leadership style, also known as a people-oriented approach, emphasizes openness and respect for every individual within the group (Udeh, 2010). It is characterized by providing adequate attention to the welfare of employees, sharing responsibilities, and involving group members in the decision-making process. These practices encourage individual and group initiatives as well as creativity. According to Blake and Moutons' managerial grid, the democratic leadership style reflects a high concern for people and a low concern for tasks (Donnelly, 2009). Nwankwo, Loyce, and Obiorah (2011) noted that the principal's adoption of a democratic leadership style aims to achieve school goals by applying democratic principles, thus enhancing their performance effectiveness. In contrast, the autocratic leadership style is characterized by less creativity, ineffective communication, low morale, lack of trust, unilateral decision-making, and other negative traits. Onyiri (2017) argued that the autocratic leader dominates all organizational activities through their dogmatic nature, relying on rewards and punishments to exert control. A school principal who adopts this style may be feared but not respected (Dididjon, 2012). Such principals maintain strict control over teachers by closely regulating policies and procedures (Salin and Helge, 2010). Autocratic leaders believe that individuals generally dislike work and must be coerced, controlled, and threatened with punishment to perform their duties. They exert authority, give commands, and often resort to punishment. They reject suggestions and resist opposition that may challenge their organizational control. The researcher's primary concern in this study revolves

around the poor academic performance of students in public secondary schools. Paul (2012) observed that the factors contributing to this poor performance include the students themselves, their parents, and the teachers. However, Farlex (2012) and Foster (2012) highlighted that the main cause of students' inadequate academic performance is the teachers. Academic performance of students in Nigeria continues to decline each year (Farlex, 2012), with teachers playing a crucial role in this decline. The researcher raises the question of why students in a particular school may excel in one subject but fail in another, despite having an adequate number of teachers for that subject. Based on this inquiry, the researcher aims to determine how principals' leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is an ongoing debate regarding whether the leadership styles of principals affect the job performance of teachers. One viewpoint suggests that teachers' performance is influenced by the leadership style of their principals. According to this perspective, an autocratic principal who displays authoritarian tendencies may intimidate teachers, leading to reduced morale and decreased productivity. Conversely, a democratic principal can motivate and support teachers using various methods, thereby enhancing their job performance. Another perspective argues that teachers' job performance is influenced by multiple factors, including training and their individual attitudes towards their work. This viewpoint asserts that even if a principal is benevolent, a poorly trained teacher or one with a negative attitude towards teaching will not experience enhanced job performance. The primary challenge in this study lies in identifying how different leadership styles demonstrated by principals can either positively or negatively impact teachers' job performance. Consequently, the research problem can be formulated as a question: "To what extent do principals' leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools?"

**Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of leadership styles of principals on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the influence of principals' democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools;
2. Determine the influence of principals' autocratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools? 2. To what extent does principals' autocratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools? **Hypothesis**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which principals' democratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which principals' autocratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

### **Research Method**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, which focuses on systematically collecting and describing data in order to understand the characteristics of a specific population (Nworgu, 2015). The target population consisted of 835 respondents, including 15 principals and 820 teachers from 15 government-owned secondary schools in Enugu South L.G.A. The sample size comprised 425 respondents, including 15 principals and 410 teachers. All principals were included in the study due to their manageable number, while the teachers were selected using a proportionate simple random sampling technique. In each school, 50% of the teachers were randomly chosen as participants. To collect data, a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Principals' Leadership Style on Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (IPLSTJP)" was used as the instrument. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu. Two experts were from the Department of Educational Management, and one expert was from the Measurement and Evaluation unit of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, all belonging to the Faculty of Education at ESUT. The data collected were analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate, considering that the questionnaire items were polychotomously scored. The obtained Cronbach Alpha values were 0.80 and 0.82 for research questions one and two, respectively. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.81, indicating high reliability and suitability for data collection. The researcher directly administered 425 copies of the questionnaire to the entire sampled population with the assistance of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to address the four research questions. **Data Analysis and Results**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does principals' democratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools?

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which Principals' Democratic**

| ITEMS             |                                                                                             | Principals  |             |           | Teachers    |             |           |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| S/N               | Influence of Principals' democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance           | $\bar{x}$   | SD          | Dec       | $\bar{x}$   | SD          | Dec       |
| 1                 | The principal discusses teacher's welfare with them.                                        | 2.76        | 0.87        | GE        | 3.10        | 0.97        | GE        |
| 2                 | Teachers are given the opportunity to express their views about what happens in the school. | 2.60        | 0.91        | GE        | 2.55        | 0.87        | GE        |
| 3                 | The principal delegates responsibility to the teachers.                                     | 2.58        | 0.82        | GE        | 2.60        | 0.93        | GE        |
| 4                 | The principal carries everybody along in his administration.                                | 2.51        | 0.79        | GE        | 3.12        | 0.89        | GE        |
| 5                 | The principal empowers teachers by providing them with professional skills.                 | 2.83        | 0.91        | GE        | 2.51        | 0.81        | GE        |
| 6                 | The principal creates conducive teaching and learning environment in the school.            | 2.61        | 0.71        | GE        | 2.55        | 0.82        | GE        |
| <b>GRAND MEAN</b> |                                                                                             | <b>2.65</b> | <b>0.84</b> | <b>GE</b> | <b>2.74</b> | <b>0.88</b> | <b>GE</b> |

**Leadership Style Influences Teachers' Job Performance in Secondary Schools**

The information provided in Table 1 indicates that the average scores for principals range from 2.51 to 2.83, while the scores for teachers range from 2.51 to 3.12. The overall average scores, also known as grand means, are 2.65 for principals and 2.74 for teachers. The standard deviations, which measure the variation in the scores, are 0.84 for principals and 0.88 for teachers. These findings suggest that the democratic leadership style of principals has a significant impact on the job performance of teachers in secondary schools.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does principals' autocratic leadership style influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools?

**Table 2: Mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent principals' autocratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools**

| ITEMS |                                                                               | Principals |    |      | Teachers  |    |      |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|------|-----------|----|------|
| S/N   | Influence of Principal's autocratic leadership style on teachers' performance | $\bar{x}$  | SD | Dec. | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Dec. |

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|                   |                                                                                 |             |             |           |             |             |           |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 7                 | Teachers are not allowed to make any input in decision making about the school. | 2.76        | 1.12        | GE        | 2.96        | 1.06        | GE        |
| 8                 | The principal takes and makes every decision by him or her.                     | 2.89        | 0.87        | GE        | 2.95        | 0.91        | GE        |
| 9                 | The principal dictates all the work methods and processes in my school.         | 2.67        | 0.90        | GE        | 3.01        | 0.93        | GE        |
| 10                | Teachers are rarely trusted with important tasks.                               | 3.15        | 0.85        | GE        | 2.92        | 0.95        | GE        |
| 11                | The principal is always right in any decision he or she takes.                  | 2.64        | 0.95        | GE        | 2.65        | 1.12        | GE        |
| <b>GRAND MEAN</b> |                                                                                 | <b>2.82</b> | <b>0.94</b> | <b>GE</b> | <b>2.90</b> | <b>0.99</b> | <b>GE</b> |

The information provided in Table 2 indicates that the average scores for principals range from 2.64 to 3.15, whereas the scores for teachers range from 2.65 to 3.01. The overall average scores, known as the grand means, are 2.82 for principals and 2.90 for teachers. The standard deviations, which measure the spread of scores, are 0.94 for principals and 0.99 for teachers. These findings suggest that the autocratic leadership style of principals has a significant impact on the job performance of teachers in secondary schools.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which principals' democratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

**Table 3: t-test of significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on how principals' democratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools**

| Group      | n   | Mean | SD   | df  | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|--------|----------|
| Principals | 15  | 2.65 | 0.84 | 423 | 4.29  | 1.96   | Rejected |
| Teachers   | 410 | 2.74 | 0.88 |     |       |        |          |

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that the obtained t-value (4.29) exceeded the critical value (1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting a noteworthy distinction between the average scores of principals and teachers concerning the impact of principals' democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which principals' autocratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

**Table 4:** t-test of significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent to which principals' autocratic leadership style influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools

| Group      | n   | Mean | SD   | df  | t-cal | t-crit | Decision     |
|------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|--------|--------------|
| Principals | 15  | 2.82 | 0.94 | 423 | 1.00  | 1.96   | Not Rejected |
| Teachers   | 410 | 2.90 | 0.99 |     |       |        |              |

Table 4, displayed earlier, provides the findings of an independent t-test examining the difference in means between principals and teachers regarding the impact of principals' autocratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools. According to the results in Table 5, the computed t-value (1.00) was lower than the critical value (1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Consequently, there is no substantial disparity between the average ratings of principals and teachers regarding the influence of principals' autocratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

### Discussion of Findings

The democratic leadership style of principals has a significant impact on the job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Enugu South L.G.A. This conclusion is supported by the study, which found that both principals and teachers strongly agreed on the influence of principals' democratic leadership style on teachers' performance. The results align with Uchendu's (2013) view that the democratic leadership style is crucial for the school's development. This finding is important because it promotes teacher involvement in decision-making processes within the school administration. Moreover, there was a notable similarity between the mean scores of principals and teachers regarding the influence of principals' democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Similarly, the autocratic leadership style of principals significantly affects the job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Enugu South L.G.A. The study revealed a strong consensus among principals and teachers on the impact of principals' autocratic leadership style on teachers' performance. This finding supports Salin's (2010) assertion that schools cannot be effective if teachers are not given a fair opportunity to contribute to the school's development. In this case, the autocratic leadership style of principals may lead to teachers' disinterest in the school's progress and restrict their involvement in various activities. Interestingly, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers concerning the influence of principals' autocratic leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

### Conclusion

The principal occupies the leadership position in a school. The leadership style adopted by the principal goes a long way in determining the job performance levels of the teachers. The findings of the study indicated that democratic and autocratic leadership styles influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools to a great extent.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

1. Principals and teachers should look into new ways of having a peaceful working environment where the standard of teaching will be upheld. This peaceful working is realizable only when the principal adopts an open leadership that gives room for teachers' participation in decision making.
2. Principals should really work hand in hand with the teachers of the secondary schools in Enugu state so as to have peaceful teaching and learning environment. Involving teachers in the activities of school, delegating responsibilities to them are all indices of good leadership.

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