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## **Leadership Styles of Principals and Job Performance of Staff in Secondary Schools in Delta State of Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the leadership styles of principals and the effect on job performance of teachers and supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria. The population comprised all 358 senior secondary schools in the State from which a sample 120 was selected through the simple random sampling technique. Three instruments were used for data collection – principals' leadership style questionnaire (PLSQ), teachers' (TJPQ) and supportive staff (SSJPQ) job performance questionnaires. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, ANOVA, and regression statistics. Results showed that autocratic leadership style was the most*

*commonly used among principals of senior secondary schools in Delta State, followed by laissez-faire, and lastly democratic. Job performance was found to be low for both categories of staff in the three leadership variables. Interestingly, supportive staff indicated highest level of job performance under laissez-faire principals and lowest under autocratic principals. For teachers job performance was highest under democratic and lowest under autocratic principals. Also, job performance of staff was found to be more significantly related to democratic leadership style than either autocratic or laissez-faire leadership style. It was therefore recommended that principals should adopt the democratic leadership style to boost better job performance among staff and in essence enhance administrative effectiveness and students' academic performance.*

**Key Words:** Leadership Style Principals Staff Job Performance

### **Introduction**

In secondary schools in Nigeria, school administrators are called principals. Principals are seen to be responsible for three 'Ps' in the school – the people, the programme, and the plant. They function as managers and instructional leaders. They have the primary responsibility of accomplishing the nation's aims and objectives of secondary school 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 staff and in essence promoting students academic achievements in schools.

Moorthy (1992) separates managerial functions into planning, organizing, controlling and motivating while instructional leadership functions involve all the beliefs, decisions, strategies, and tactics that principals use to generate instructional effectiveness in the classroom. These roles are not isolated entities; they go together, because principals cannot be effective instructional leaders if they are not good managers. Successful school leaders influence student achievement in several important ways, through their influence on other people in their organizations which strongly affects student learning (Townsend, 1994; Haughey and MacEiwain, 1992; Mendez-Morse, 1991).

Staff in this study comprises the teaching staff called teachers and the non-teaching staff called supportive staff. These categories of staff are expected to work with the principals to deliver the goals and objectives of education at this level effectively and efficiently. The supportive staff includes the

bursars, librarians, laboratory and workshop attendants, clerical staff (personal secretaries, typists, and computer operators), security staff, cleaning staff, maintenance staff, and medical staff. How effective the principal is in performing the administrative tasks of organizing and coordinating human and material resources towards the attainment of predetermined school objectives has been a matter of concern to many educational engineers in Nigeria. Poor academic performance especially in Mathematics and English Language among secondary school students has become a worrisome nightmare to education stakeholders (Duze, 2008; Nwangwu, 2007; Okigbo, 2007; Adeyemi, 2006; Omoregie, 2006; Obioma, 2005; Ogbodo, 2002; Aghenta, 2001; Nwadiani, 1998).

There remains a persistent poor performance of secondary school students in public examinations in Nigeria. For example, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Report (2007) indicates that the percentage failure rate for English Language in the past consecutive five years surpasses that of the percentage of credit level in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by it between 2001 and 2005, with an equally poor but fluctuating trend recorded in Mathematics by the candidates. The continued mass failure in SSCE for a long time led to public outcries and demands for more educational accountability in public schools in Nigeria and has also led to the high demand for private schools by parents and guardians for their children and wards despite high costs in private schools (Ajayi et al., 2009; Okoro, 2009; Duze, 1988). Evidences from studies and observations (Ajayi et al., 2009; Okoro, 2009; Omoregie, 2006; NUC, 2004; WAEC, 2002) have shown that some of the products of today's secondary schools in Nigeria can neither move into higher institutions nor enjoy useful lives in the society because of poor academic performance. Some of them are not articulate and have become a nuisance to the society with involvement in secret cults, armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, drug abuse, assaults, burglaries, and pocket-picking. Some others have become motor-pack touts, political thugs, and reckless motorbike riders. Some of the products of secondary schools do not have respect for the dignity for labour but have become engulfed with the get-rich-quick syndrome at all costs. Omoregie (2006) submitted that the secondary schools are no longer effective in Nigeria arguing that the secondary schools are haven of criminals where future thugs are bred.

Furthermore, the National Universities Commission's (NUC) study (2004), found that Nigerian university graduates are failing to meet the needs of the labour market largely because of the poor intakes from the secondary school

level. In the same vein, Omoregie (2006) lamented that secondary education which is the pivot of the entire educational system anywhere in the world, is fast losing relevance in Nigeria as it has apparently failed in accomplishing most of its objectives as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Nwangwu (2007) noted also that Nigeria has fallen short of school expectations, with general concerns leading to the on-going reform initiatives of the education industry in Nigeria.

The senior secondary education in Nigeria runs for a period of three years both in the erstwhile 6-3-3-4 structure and the present 9-3-4 Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. It is for those students who have successfully completed the junior secondary education programme and aspiring to proceed to the universities. It is therefore not surprising that there is pressure mounted on effective leadership among school administrators in all States of the Federation. From the hues and cries all over the country on poor academic performance of students, non-commitment of teachers to their duties, truancy of supportive staff, difficulty of some principals in effectively administering their schools (Okigbo, 2007; Obioma, 2005; Adeyemi, 2004; Oyedeji, 1998), people are beginning to query the leadership capabilities of principals. It could be that the leadership styles of principals are responsible for the job performance of their staff.

### **Review of related literature**

Principals in secondary schools are regarded as administrators and by extension are also seen as leaders. The administrator of a school in addition to his administrative functions of planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and coordinating, must as a leader possess certain qualities to be able to perform effectively. Such qualities include maturity, intelligence, and initiative, sense of judgment, emotional stability, decisiveness, dependability, and high degree of personal integrity (Oyedeji and Fasasi). His ability to lead effectively therefore affects the tone of the school.

Leadership is a broad concept that has been described and defined variously by philosophers, scholars, researchers, and even by laymen. It is as old as man and his interactions in the universe with both simple and complex ramifications. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of a group of people by a leader in efforts towards goal achievement (Nworgu, 1991). It involves a force that initiates actions in people and the leader (Nwadiani, 1998). It could be described as the ability to get things done with

the assistance and cooperation of other people within the school system (Aghenta, 2001).

Certain theories of leadership have been identified by scholars. These include the Trait Theory, Situational Theory, Contingency Theory, Behavioural Theory and path Goal Theory. As expounded by Adeyemi (2006, 2004), the Trait Theory tends to emphasize the personality traits of the leader such as appearance, height, self confidence, aggressiveness, initiative, enthusiasm, drive, persistence, interpersonal skills and administrative ability; the Situational Theory states that leaders are the product of given situations implying that leadership is strongly influenced by the situation from which the leader emerges and in which he operates; the Contingency Theory which is a combination of the Trait Theory and Situational Theory indicates that leadership is a process in which the ability of a leader to exercise influence on subordinates or followers depends upon the group task situation and the degree to which the leader's personality fits the group (Sybil, 2000); the Behavioural Theory could either be job-centered or employee-centered where job-centered leaders practice close supervision while employee-centered leaders practice general supervision; the Path Goal Theory is based on the theory of motivation where the behaviour of the leader is acceptable to subordinates only if the subordinates continue to see the leader as a source of satisfaction (Ajayi and Ayodele, 2001; Adeyemi, 2006, 2004).

Deriving from these, a leader could indeed have a peculiar way of leading which is termed leadership style. This has been described in various ways by different scholars. Siskin (1994) describes it as the underlying needs of a leader that motivate his behavior while Olaniyan (1999) says it is the manifestation of the dominant pattern of behaviour of a leader. Adeyemi (2006) in his own perspective views it as a process through which persons or group influence others in the attainment of group goals. In leading therefore, Ibukun (1997) emphasized that the main task of the principal is to create a conducive atmosphere for the staff so as to achieve desired changes in students' learning. In doing this, he must make decisions on the various activities to be involved. Researchers have agreed that the extent to which he involves the staff in making these decisions determines his leadership behavior and style (Nias, 1994; Goldring and Sharon, 1993; Nworgu, 1991) Thus, the way the principal relates with his staff could contribute immensely to their effectiveness in contributing to goal attainment.

Researchers have identified certain leadership behaviours used in organizations which include nomothetic, idiographic and transactional leadership behaviours. The Nomothetic leadership behaviour is the characteristic of a leader who follows the rules and regulations of an organization to the letter. Everything he does follows official protocol and strict adherence to rules and regulations of the organization (Bureaucracy). Hence, subordinates are expected to conform completely to bureaucratic processes. The leader perceives his office as a centre of authority and applies the same bureaucratic rules and procedures to all subordinates. This leadership behaviour is commonly used by autocratic leaders (Adeyemi, 2004; Nwogu, 1991; Goldring and Sharon, 1993).

The idiographic leadership behaviour on the other hand focuses more on individual needs than organizational needs. The leader expects subordinates to work things out for themselves with organizational demands minimized. Here authority is delegated while the relationship to others is in line with individual's personal needs (Adeyemi, 2004; Evan, 1998).

The transactional leadership behaviour is a hybrid between the nomothetic and idiographic leadership behaviours and it is situation-oriented. But unlike the idiographic leadership behaviour which emphasizes individual's needs, the transactional leadership behavior recognizes the importance of institutional roles and expectations. The leader assumes that pursuing institutional goals could result in the fulfillment of individual personality drives. Transactional leadership behavior thus allows for the practices of good human relationships (Akinyemi, 2004; Bidwell, 2001).

These different leadership behaviours standing alone or in combinations have resulted in three main styles of leadership as identified by researchers (Lieberman et al., 1994; Wiles, 1990; Heysey and Blanchard, 1988). They are the autocratic (or authoritarian), democratic, and Laissez-faire leadership styles. In the autocratic leadership style, power and decision-making reside in the leader. He directs and controls group members on how things must be done. He does not maintain clear channel of communication between him and the subordinates, and does not delegate authority nor permit subordinates to participate in policy or decision making (Smylie and Jack, 1990; Hoy and Miskel, 1992; Olaniyan, 1997; Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

The democratic style of leadership emphasizes group and leader participation in the making of policies while decisions about organizational matters are taken with consultation, communication, and suggestions from the various

members of the organization. The leader promotes a sense of belongingness thereby making every individual feel an important member of the organization. In this style of leadership, a high degree of staff morale, motivation, and job satisfaction is always enhanced (Heenan and Bennis, 1999; Weindling, 1990; Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

Laissez-faire leadership style allows complete freedom to group-decision without the leader's participation whose involvement here is just to supply the needed materials. Thus, subordinates are free to do whatever appeals to them (Talbert and Milbrey, 1994).

Performance has been defined or described in various ways by scholars. It is seen as an act of accomplishing or executing a given task (Okunola, 1990) and the ability to combine skillfully the desired or expected behaviours towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Olaniyan, 1999). Job performance therefore, is the way and manner in which a staff in an organization performs the duties assigned to him or expected of him in order to realize the organization's goals and objectives. In the school system, a teacher's job performance could be described as the duties performed by a teacher at any given time in the school geared towards achieving both the daily school and classroom objectives and the entire set goals and objectives of education. It could be determined by the employee's behavior under different situations and/or by his level of participation in the day-to-day running of the organization for goal accomplishment. Therefore job performance of a worker could be described as low, moderate, high, etc, depending on the extent of his commitment to work in order to achieve set objectives and goals (Adeyemi, 2004; Blase and Blase, 2000; Olaniyan, 1999; Baskett and Mikios, 1992; Bernd, 1992; Okunola, 1990). This means that the variables of job performance such as effective teaching, effective use of scheme of work, lesson note preparation, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work and disciplinary ability are virtues which teachers should uphold effectively in the school system. Principals can therefore encourage effective performance of their teachers by identifying their needs and ensuring their satisfaction. In this regard, the teachers' performance could be measured through annual report of their activities in terms of performance in teaching, lesson preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject matter, competence, teachers' commitment to job and extra-curricular activities. Other areas of assessment include effective leadership, effective supervision, effective monitoring of students' work, motivating students' interest, class control and disciplinary ability of the teachers (Adeyemi, 2004).

However, the relationship between principals' leadership style and job performance of staff has been debated by scholars and researchers on whether or not the style of leadership of principals influences job performance in schools (Blase and Blase, 2000; Baskett and Mikios, 1992; Bernd, 1992). It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the relationship between principals' leadership styles and the job performance of staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study was to determine the best leadership style that would enhance better job performance among senior secondary school staff in Delta State.

### **Statement of the problem**

From the literature reviewed and observations in the school system that the principal's leadership style could perhaps have profound effect on teachers' job performance, and ultimately on students' academic performance, this study set out to critically examine the status quo in Delta State of Nigeria where school administrators are being largely held accountable for the poor and unimproved academic performance of students. The problem of this study therefore was to determine the most commonly used of the three leadership styles as well as their effect on job performance of teachers and supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria. To guide the investigation, three research questions were raised and answered and three hypotheses formulated and tested.

### **Research questions**

1. Which leadership style is most commonly used by school principals in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria?
2. What is the level of job performance of teachers in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria?
3. What is the level of job performance of supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and the job performance of staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between principals' leadership styles and the job performance of staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria.

## **Method**

The study design is descriptive survey. The study population comprised all 358 senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria from which a sample of 120 schools was selected through the simple random sampling technique. The principals, teachers, and supportive staff in these sampled schools constituted the subjects of the study made up of 120 principals, 1,254 teachers, and 403 supportive staff who responded to the study instruments. However, the total sample size after retrieval of the instruments was 1,748 comprising 120 principals, 1,246 teachers, and 382 supportive staff. Three instruments used for data collection were questionnaires developed by the researcher after a careful literature review to capture what should be measured as regards principals' leadership styles, teachers' job performance, and supportive staff job performance. These were validated in face and content by a team of pilot jurors in educational management and test measurement. The questionnaires were the Principals' Leadership Style Questionnaire (PLSQ), Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) and Supportive Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (SSJQP). Each was in two parts – A and B. Part A elicited demographic information such as the name of the school, location, year of establishment, number of teachers, and number of students, number of years spent in the school, rank of the staff/principal, years of experience, and qualification.

For PLSQ, Part B was made up of three sections. Section 1 requested information on which leadership style was being used by the principal in the school and how effective a school principal was in utilizing a particular leadership style in the school. Section 2 elicited information on teachers' competence in terms of mastery of the subject matter, information on the teachers' job performance in terms of lesson note preparation, effective teaching, class control, use of teaching materials, method of teaching, class participation and evaluation of teaching, information on the teachers' personality in terms of loyalty, integrity and human relationship, information on the teachers' extra-curricular activities such as participation in school sports, community relations, recreation. Section 3 elicited information on performance of supportive staff on issues such as regularity in school as well as at duty posts, effective use of school hours for only school activities, carrying out of duties without making grievous mistakes, being hardworking, reliable, dependable, honest, loyal, humble, obedient, and of high integrity at work, disciplined, ready and willing to accept responsibilities.

For TJPQ, Part B in addition to requesting information on what leadership style was being used by the principal in the school and how effective a school principal was in utilizing the adopted leadership style in the school also elicited information on teachers' competence in terms of mastery of the subject matter, information on the teachers' job performance in terms of lesson note preparation, effective teaching, class control, use of teaching materials, method of teaching, class participation and evaluation of teaching, information on the teachers' personality in terms of loyalty, integrity and human relationship, information on the teachers' extra-curricular activities such as participation in school sports, community relations, recreation.

For the SSJPQ, Part B, besides eliciting information on what leadership style was being used by the principal in the school and how effective a school principal was in utilizing the adopted leadership style in the school also elicited information on regularity in school as well as at duty posts, effective use of school hours for only school activities, carrying out of duties without making grievous mistakes, being hardworking, reliable, dependable, honest, loyal, humble, obedient, and of high integrity at work, disciplined, ready and willing to accept responsibilities. This arrangement therefore required each principal to assess himself and his staff, while each staff assessed himself and his principal by responding to the items in Part B of the relevant instrument based on a 4-point Likert-type scale. Response options were strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point).

The face and also the content validity of the instruments were determined by experts in educational administration and test and measurement who scrutinized and marched the items of the instruments with the research questions in order to determine whether or not the instruments measured what they were intended to measure. The reliability of each instrument was determined through the test-retest method. In doing this, each instrument was administered twice within a time limit of two weeks to 20 respondents in senior secondary schools not involved in the study. The data collected from the two tests were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Correlation coefficients of 0.87, 0.89 and 0.83 were obtained for PLSQ, TJPQ, and SSJPQ respectively, indicating that the instruments were reliable.

The instruments were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of research assistants. Usable returns were 1,748, being 98.37 percent. The data collected from these were analyzed using frequency

counts, percentages, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression statistics. The null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 alpha level.

## **Results**

Results of the data analyses were presented as they related to the research questions and hypotheses.

### **Research question one**

*Which leadership style is most commonly used by school principals in senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria?*

In answering this question, the responses of principals, teachers, and supportive staff on type of leadership styles adopted by school principals in senior secondary schools in Delta State were collated using frequencies and percentages. The result of the analyses was presented in Table 1.

The result in Table 1 reveals that the autocratic leadership style was the most commonly used style (71.03 %) among principals of senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria as indicated by 1,242 out of the 1,748 respondents. This was followed by the Laissez-faire leadership style scoring 20.25 percent as indicated by 354 out of 1,748 respondents, and lastly the democratic leadership style, scored 8.72 percent by 152 out of 1,748 respondents.

### **Research Question Two**

What is the level of job performance among teachers in senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria?

In answering this question, responses of principals and teachers on teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in the State were collated from PLSQ and TJPQ and result presented in Table 2.

The result in Table 2 is self-explanatory showing generally low percentage scores for most of the items that measured a teacher's job performance. Table 2 showed that the level of teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Delta State was below 50 percent (High) for most of the items verified. On the average, no variable scored up to 50 percent as teachers' job performance, highest in democratic principals, was only 35.21 percent, while it was 25.15 percent in laissez-faire leadership style and lowest (24.03%) in autocratic style. Striking was the very poor scores in item 15 (use of

instructional materials) in all categories of school principals, 10.36 percent for autocratic, 12.35 percent for democratic, and, 12.92 percent for laissez-faire leadership styles in the schools. This has implications for the school system since the contributions of instructional materials to students' academic achievements in schools are enormous and have been underscored.

### **Research Question Three**

*What is the level of job performance among supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta state, Nigeria?*

In answering this question, responses of principals and those of supportive staff on job performance of supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State were collated from PLSQ and SSJPQ questionnaires. The result was presented in Table 3.

Result in Table 3 is self-explanatory. It showed that the level of job performance of supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State was generally low for all styles of leadership – 22.30 percent for autocratic, 31.84 percent for democratic, and 32.70 percent for laissez-faire. This reveals that job performance of supportive staff is highest in schools where the adopted leadership style of principals is the laissez-faire and lowest in schools where the principals' style of leadership is autocratic.

***Ho<sub>1</sub>***: *There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and the job performance of staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.*

To test the null hypothesis the responses of the principals, teachers, and supportive staff on principals' leadership styles and on job performance were collated and subjected to the regression statistic. The result was presented in Table 4 which indicated that job performance was positively related to autocratic leadership style ( $r = 0.5007$ ), democratic leadership style ( $r = 0.8114$ ), and laissez-faire leadership style ( $r = 0.5302$ ) at  $p < 0.05$ . Also the r-values of 0.3225, 0.2935, and 0.2707 at  $p < 0.05$  indicated that the three variables were positively related to one another. Hence, the hypothesis of no relationship was rejected which implied that there was a significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and the job performance of staff in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Since the larger the r-value the more significant the relationship between two variables, it therefore meant that the democratic leadership style was up ahead of laissez-faire, and laissez-faire ahead of autocratic as having a more significant positive

relationship with staff job performance in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

***Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between principals' leadership styles and the job performance of staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.*

To test the null hypothesis the responses of the principals, teachers, and supportive staff on principals' leadership styles and on job performance were collated and subjected to the One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistic. The result was presented in Table 5 which indicated that there was a significant difference between the three leadership variables and job performance in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. A significant level existed in autocratic leadership style and job performance where calculated F value of 3.07 was greater than the critical F value of 3.00; in democratic leadership style  $F_{cal} = 4.48$ ; and in Laissez-faire leadership style ( $F_{cal} = 3.21$ ) at the alpha level of 0.05. The hypothesis of no significant difference between the three independent variables and the dependent variable was therefore rejected. This finding implied that job performance was affected by the three leadership styles – autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire.

### **Discussion**

This study found that the autocratic leadership style was the most commonly used (70.03%) and democratic least commonly used (8.72%) by principals of senior secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria. The implication of this finding could be that secondary school principals may normally exhibit the laissez-faire leadership style (20.25%) but could be required to adopt either the democratic or autocratic leadership style depending on the prevailing circumstances in the school. This may well account for the poor academic performance of students in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

The finding of this study indicating significantly highest relationship between democratic leadership style and staff job performance implies that principals who adopt democratic leadership style could greatly improve job performance among workers. This finding agrees with the findings made by earlier researchers (Ijaiya, 2000; Olaniyan, 1997; Townsend, 1994; Akinyemi, 1993; Okunola, 1990; Smylie and Jack, 1990; Weindling, 1990).

The finding indicating better job performance among teachers in democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles than in autocratic is an indication that autocratic leadership style does not greatly enhance teachers' job

performance in secondary schools in Delta State. This finding does not agree with those of Oluwatoyin (2003), Olaniyan (1997) and Akinyemi (1993). However, for supportive staff, job performance in this study was found to be highest with laissez-faire principals followed by democratic and lowest in autocratic principals. This finding is interesting and revealing as it contradicts studies on teachers' job performance which was usually not significant with laissez-faire leadership style (Olaniyan, 1997; Okunola, 1990). It is pertinent to note that the researcher did not locate any study on principals' leadership styles and supportive staff job performance in secondary schools. This calls for research in this area because the supportive staff is equally useful in attaining set school objectives. This finding probably means that the nature of one's job could influence the way one behaves at work (situational influence). For instance, the laboratory attendant would make sure that perishable materials, dangerous chemicals, acids and bases, were well-stored whether the principal ever visited or inspected the laboratory. He knows the implications of doing otherwise and would not wait to be told or pushed or coerced to do his job well. Also, the bursar will not handle cash carelessly because he would be made to pay back if it got missing. In fact the deduction would be made from his salary with immediate effect! He stands the risk of losing his job too.

The finding that job performance of school staff was affected by the three leadership styles – autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, though to different extents, and with the democratic leadership style of principals best for teaching staff, agrees with the findings of Townsend (1994), Akinyemi, (1993), Smylie and Jack (1990) and Weindling (1990).

In this study, the democratic leadership style was up ahead of laissez-faire, and laissez-faire ahead of autocratic as having a more significant positive relationship with staff job performance in Delta State secondary schools. This implied that the leadership style that is least effective in bringing about high job performance was the one that was most commonly adopted by principals in secondary schools in Delta State. This obviously has serious implications for the attainment of educational goals and objectives in Delta State. This is perhaps the reason students' academic performance in secondary schools in Delta State has remained low and unimproved over the years. There is therefore need to re-strategize administration of schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the principals' leadership style is a critical variable as regards job performance of teachers and supportive staff in senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. This was evident in the findings of this study which identified the style of leadership used by a principal as a function of staff job performance in schools with the most commonly used, autocratic, being the least in enhancing staff job performance. It was also concluded that job performance of staff was affected by the three leadership styles – autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire to greater and lesser extents depending probably on the prevailing circumstances in the schools.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended that principals of secondary schools in Delta State and Nigeria should adopt the democratic leadership style in their school administration in order to enhance job performance among teachers and supportive staff. This will in turn boost the desired productivity of students and staff.

The use of the autocratic leadership style by secondary school principals in Delta State should be discouraged since it resulted in the lowest level of job performance for all staff in the study. Also, the laissez-faire style which also showed low level of job performance should be discouraged in the administration of schools. Regular school inspection by the Ministry of Education should ensure that the style of leadership adopted by principals is the one that most enhances job performance among all staff in the schools as this will enhance administrative effectiveness and academic performance of students.

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**Table 1:** Leadership styles commonly used by principals of senior secondary schools in Delta

State of Nigeria

Leadership Styles Used	N	F	Percentage	Remark
Autocratic	1,748	1,242	70.03	Most commonly used
Democratic	1,748	152	8.72	Least commonly used
Laissez-faire	1,748	354	20.25	Commonly used

**Table 2:** Leadership Styles of Principals and Level of Job Performance of Teachers in Senior Secondary Schools in Delta State of Nigeria

Variables	Autocratic			Democratic			Laissez-faire		
	f	%	Remark	f	%	Remark	F	%	Remark
Effective teaching	275	20.12	Low	629	46.06	Moderate	372	27.24	Low
Effective use of scheme of work	209	15.31	Low	417	30.55	Low	220	16.08	Low
Lesson note preparation	257	18.83	Low	468	18.28	Low	178	13.03	Low
Effective supervision	205	17.00	Low	619	40.32	Moderate	369	27.03	Low
Monitoring of students' work	199	14.54	Low	564	41.29	Moderate	194	14.21	Low
Disciplinary ability	321	23.46	Low	370	27.11	Low	282	20.62	Low
Lesson presentation	335	22.55	Low	457	35.42	Low	351	25.67	Low
Mastery of subject matter	240	17.53	Low	381	27.91	Low	253	18.55	Low
Competence	233	20.02	Low	347	25.38	Low	233	17.02	Low
Commitment to job	167	19.22	Low	741	54.25	High	488	35.73	Low
Participation in extra-curricular activities	175	12.78	Low	240	27.57	Low	290	21.26	Low
Effective leadership	249	18.21	Low	587	43.00	Moderate	352	26.08	Low
Motivating students	288	21.07	Low	495	36.22	Low	412	30.15	Low
Class control	487	35.64	Low	603	44.13	Moderate	525	38.44	Low
Use of instructional materials	142	10.36	Low	169	12.36	Low	177	12.92	Low
Evaluation of teaching	413	18.22	Low	287	21.04	Low	220	16.09	Low
Class participation	656	19.05	Low	525	38.41	Low	431	31.54	Low
Teaching method	495	20.21	Low	315	23.05	Low	266	19.49	Low
Human relationship	619	33.28	Low	481	35.18	Low	579	42.37	Moderate
Loyalty	437	32.00	Low	697	51.02	High	553	40.45	Moderate
Integrity	494	36.16	Low	707	51.78	High	466	40.03	Moderate
Total		504.55			739.34			528.09	
Average		24.03	Low		35.21	Low		25.15	Low

**Table 3:** Leadership Styles of Principals and Level of Job Performance of Supportive Staff in Senior Secondary Schools in Delta State of Nigeria

Variables	Autocratic			Democratic			Laissez-faire		
	F	%	Remark	F	%	Remark	F	%	Remark
Regular attendance to school	185	36.88	Low	213	42.39	Moderate	152	30.17	Low
Always at duty post	92	18.25	Low	131	26.10	Low	157	31.22	Low
Effective use of school hours for school work	61	12.07	Low	125	24.96	Low	76	15.06	Low
Hardworking	94	18.75	Low	121	24.00	Low	167	33.25	Low
Reliable	115	22.98	Low	134	26.77	Low	156	30.98	Low
Dependable	115	22.87	Low	182	36.16	Low	179	35.55	Low
Honest	145	28.94	Low	151	30.05	Low	222	44.26	Moderate
Loyal	142	28.23	Low	262	52.14	High	250	49.81	Moderate
Humble	101	20.15	Low	152	30.22	Low	145	28.84	Low
Obedient	76	15.22	Low	113	22.51	Low	152	31.52	Low
Disciplined	95	18.93	Low	100	20.00	Low	126	25.00	Low
Competent	138	27.55	Low	137	27.26	Low	106	21.11	Low
Integrity	104	20.67	Low	105	20.84	Low	104	20.69	Low
Willing to accept responsibilities	61	12.06	Low	253	50.31	High	253	50.43	High
Carries out instructions with minimal mistakes	155	30.77	Low	221	43.92	Moderate	214	42.56	Moderate
Total		334.42			477.63			490.47	
Average		22.30	Low		31.84	Low		32.70	Low

**Table 4:** Correlation Matrix on Principals' Leadership Styles and Job Performance of Staff

Variables	Mean	SD	Job performance	Democratic	Laissez-faire	Autocratic
Job Performance	2.1705	0.5408	1.000			
Democratic	1.9891	0.1965	0.8114	1.000		
Laissez-faire	1.7996	0.2417	0.5302	0.3225	1.000	
Autocratic	1.6758	0.3263	0.5007	0.2704	0.2935	1.000

**Table 5:** One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire Leadership Styles on Job Performance of Staff (N = 1,748; df = 2, 1,745)

Variables	Source of Variation	SS	MS	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>critical</sub>	Decision p ≤ 0.05
Autocratic	Between Groups	18.08	9.04	3.07	3.00	Significant
	Within Groups	5265.2	2.96			
	Total	5183.28				
Democratic	Between Groups	28.46	14.23	4.49	3.00	Significant
	Within Groups	5531.65	3.17			
	Total	5560.11				
Laissez-faire	Between Groups	19.18	9.59	3.21	3.00	Significant
	Within Groups	5217.55	2.99			
	Total	5236.73				