

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The research explored how transformational, transactional, democratic and autocratic leadership styles relate with school administrative effectiveness. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study and grounded on Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory (1985) which focused on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve high performance through vision, support and innovation. The correlational research design was adopted, with a sample consisting of 268 public secondary school principals, selected using the census method. Data were collected using Principals' Leadership Styles Questionnaire (PLSQ) and School Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (SAEQ). The overall reliability coefficients for the PLSQ and SAEQ were 0.82 and 0.82, respectively, demonstrating strong reliability for the instruments. The collected data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and simple linear regression analysis to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among others that transformational leadership had a very strong positive relationship with school administrative effectiveness, as principals who inspired a shared vision, encouraged collaboration, and supported professional development significantly improved administrative outcomes. The study concluded that principals' leadership styles significantly relate with school administrative effectiveness, emphasizing the need for a flexible, context-driven approach that combines transformational, transactional and democratic elements to optimize outcomes in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that principals should adopt a combination of leadership styles, emphasizing transformational and democratic approaches, to foster a collaborative, efficient and effective school environment. The implementation of these leadership strategies is expected to lead to improved administrative effectiveness, better staff performance and enhanced student outcomes in schools.

Keywords: Administrative Effectiveness, Leadership Styles, Principals, Public Secondary School

Introduction

School administrative effectiveness refers to the ability of school leaders, particularly principals, to efficiently coordinate and manage all aspects of school operations to achieve desired educational goals. Ikegbusi (2016) posited that it involves the strategic allocation and utilization of resources, supervision of teaching and non-teaching staff, maintenance of discipline, fostering of a positive school climate, and the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring optimal performance of the school as an organization. Effective school administration plays a pivotal role in determining the success of educational institutions and in creating an environment that supports teaching, learning, and holistic student development (Nwankwo & Obi, 2021). Okoro and Umeh (2023) explained that school administrative effectiveness is the extent to which school administrators succeed in achieving predefined educational goals through systematic planning, organization, and leadership. This definition highlighted the importance of structured decision-making processes, collaboration with stakeholders and the continuous evaluation of school activities to ensure alignment with educational objectives. Principals who demonstrate administrative effectiveness are often characterized by their ability to balance managerial tasks with instructional leadership, thereby fostering an environment conducive to high student and teacher performance.

School administrative effectiveness encompasses the capacity of school leaders to harmonize managerial responsibilities with instructional leadership in a manner that enhances overall school performance and promotes improved student learning outcomes. This requires principals to implement strategic and innovative leadership practices, ensure prudent and transparent management of school resources, and establish systems that promote accountability, teamwork, and professional collaboration among staff. As Adebayo and Onyekwere (2022) observed, schools that demonstrate administrative efficiency tend to record stronger academic achievement, reduced cases of student indiscipline, and greater satisfaction among stakeholders. In support of this view, Ikegbusi and Iheanacho (2016) identified that administrative effectiveness in secondary schools is often hindered by various contextual and systemic challenges, emphasizing the need for school leaders to adopt proactive and context-sensitive approaches to overcome barriers and ensure functional school operations.

Additionally, effective school administration is deeply connected to principals' ability to address the diverse needs of students, staff, and the wider community while upholding accountability and governance standards. It encompasses not only the management of tasks but also the creation of an inclusive and trusting school culture that promotes innovation and collaboration (Ikegbusi & Iheanacho, 2016). Such multifaceted administration ensures that schools thrive both academically and socially, meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

In the context of secondary schools in Anambra State, administrative effectiveness is critical, given the increasing demand for quality education and the challenges associated with managing diverse student populations and limited resources. As noted by Eze and Chukwuemeka (2020), effective school administration in the region requires principals to be adaptive, resourceful and collaborative in addressing these challenges while ensuring that the schools achieve their academic and developmental goals.

The effectiveness of school administration is largely influenced by the leadership styles adopted by principals, as these styles play a vital role in shaping the daily operations and strategic direction of the school. A principal's leadership approach affects how collaboration is nurtured among staff, how resources are managed, and how institutional objectives are pursued. Akinwale and Obasanjo (2023) asserted that effective leadership is central to driving strategic planning, facilitating decision-making, and cultivating a positive school climate that supports administrative excellence. Furthermore, the style of leadership embraced by a school principal determines the level of teacher motivation, the efficiency of resource allocation, and the consistency of policy implementation. In the context of public secondary schools, Ikegbusi and Manafa (2023) emphasized that these leadership practices directly impact the behavioural and academic outcomes of students by influencing the school's disciplinary structure and the nature of teacher-student relationships, both of which are essential elements of effective school administration.

Principals' leadership styles can be defined as the distinctive behaviours and approaches employed by school leaders to inspire, guide and manage their staff and resources toward achieving organizational goals. Adetayo and Olalekan (2022) viewed leadership style as the characteristic manner in which leaders interact with their subordinates to influence their behaviour and achieve desired outcomes. They argued that a principal's leadership styles determine the level of commitment, productivity and satisfaction among teachers, which are critical components of administrative effectiveness. Similarly, Ekpenyong and Udo (2023) defined principals' leadership style as the pattern of behaviours and strategies employed by school principals to direct and coordinate the activities of their schools. Their study emphasized that different

leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, autocratic and democratic, yield varying effects on the performance and morale of staff within schools.

One key index of principals' leadership styles is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating staff to exceed their own expectations and work collectively toward a shared vision. Principals, who exhibit transformational leadership characteristics foster creativity, encourage professional development and promote collaboration among teachers. Sulaimon and Durojaiye (2022) asserted that transformational leaders build trust and establish a sense of purpose among their staff, which enhances administrative effectiveness by promoting innovation and improving staff morale.

Another index is transactional leadership, which focused on structured tasks, reward systems and adherence to rules to achieve specific goals. Principals who adopt this style emphasize performance standards, monitor progress and provide incentives for achieving targets. While this approach ensures order and accountability, it may lack the motivational aspects necessary for fostering long-term staff commitment. Oluwaseun and Adedayo (2023) highlighted that transactional leadership is effective in schools where clear expectations and compliance with established procedures are paramount for administrative success.

Democratic leadership, another significant style, emphasized shared decision-making and inclusivity. Principals who engage in democratic leadership actively involve teachers and other stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes. This approach fosters a sense of ownership, accountability, and trust among staff, creating a collaborative environment conducive to achieving administrative goals. Okeke and Eze (2022) explained that democratic leadership enhances staff morale and commitment, leading to improved organizational outcomes and effective school management.

Lastly, autocratic leadership is characterized by a top-down approach where the principal makes decisions independently and enforces them without consulting staff. While this style can ensure quick decision-making, it may lead to dissatisfaction and reduced morale among teachers. However, in situations that require urgent action or strict compliance, autocratic leadership may be necessary. As noted by Nwankwo and Obi (2021), autocratic leadership can be effective in addressing emergencies or implementing non-negotiable policies but may hinder long-term administrative effectiveness due to limited staff engagement.

The researcher was motivated to undertake this study due to the observed variations in school administrative effectiveness across public secondary schools in Anambra State. Reports of declining academic performance, inefficient resource management and staff dissatisfaction raised concerns about the potential relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness. While some schools appeared to excel in administrative effectiveness under specific leadership approaches, others struggled to achieve similar results, highlighting the need to explore the relationship between leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness.

This study addressed a critical gap in the existing literature by focusing on how different leadership styles directly correlate with school administrative effectiveness within the unique cultural and educational context of Anambra State. Although prior studies had broadly examined leadership styles, few have investigated their correlation with administrative outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in regions facing challenges such as resource constraints and socio-economic disparities. By examining this relationship, the study sought to provide evidence-based insights that would guide school principals and policymakers in adopting leadership strategies that promote administrative effectiveness and improve overall school performance.

Statement of the Problem

School administrative effectiveness is essential for achieving educational goals, fostering a positive school environment and ensuring optimal performance of students and staff. However, public secondary schools in Anambra State seem to continue to face challenges such as declining academic performance, inefficient resource utilization and low staff morale. These issues have raised concerns about the leadership styles employed by school principals and their relationship with administrative effectiveness. Observations indicated that while some schools excel in administrative effectiveness under specific leadership styles, others struggle, suggesting that leadership approaches play a pivotal role in shaping administrative success. Despite the importance of this relationship, limited research had been conducted to examine how principals' leadership styles correlate with school administrative effectiveness within the unique socio-cultural and educational context of Anambra State. This study sought to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness, providing intuitions to guide improvements in school management and performance.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between transformational leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. examine the relationship between transactional leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. find out the relationship between democratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
4. investigate the relationship between autocratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of this study encompassed all the public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The content scope focused on examining the relationship between principals' leadership styles- transformational, transactional, democratic and autocratic and school administrative effectiveness. Specifically, the study investigated how these leadership styles correlate with school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between transformational leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between transactional leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between democratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
4. What is the relationship between autocratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following Null Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between transactional leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
4. There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Literature Review

Principals' Leadership Styles

Principals' leadership styles are the distinct approaches, behaviours and strategies that school leaders use to influence, guide and manage their teams to achieve organizational goals. These leadership styles encompass how principals interact with teachers, make decisions, allocate resources and shape the overall direction of the school. Effective leadership is crucial in educational institutions as it directly influences the school's performance, climate and overall success. Adetayo and Olalekan (2022) emphasized that leadership styles are essential in shaping how goals are achieved and resources are utilized. They argued that the leadership approach a principal adopts is instrumental in determining the effectiveness of school administration. Ekpenyong and Udo (2023) further supported this, highlighting that leadership styles create different dynamics in the school environment, fostering various levels of motivation, commitment and collaboration among staff. These factors are vital in promoting school success, as they directly affect the quality of teaching, learning and overall school management.

The role of principals as both managerial and instructional leaders amplifies the importance of their leadership style. Nwankwo and Obi (2024) asserted that the style a principal adopts impacts the quality of

decision-making, resource allocation and the overall school climate, which in turn affects educational outcomes. Principals who adopt transformational, transactional, democratic or autocratic leadership styles would shape the school environment differently. These leadership styles are integral to managing the school effectively, fostering staff motivation and creating an atmosphere conducive to achieving educational goals (Ikegbusi et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership is widely recognized as an effective leadership style in educational settings. It is characterized by the ability to inspire and motivate followers to exceed their expectations and work collaboratively toward a shared vision. Principals who employ transformational leadership focused on building trust, encouraging professional development and creating a climate that supports innovation. Adetayo and Olalekan (2022) affirmed that transformational leaders empower their staff by providing individualized support and fostering intellectual stimulation, which in turn improves school performance. This approach has been shown to significantly enhance teacher satisfaction, commitment and morale, which are key factors in achieving administrative effectiveness (Ikegbusi, 2016). By fostering a sense of shared responsibility and purpose, transformational leaders create a school culture that promotes high academic achievement and organizational success.

On the other hand, transactional leadership focused on maintaining order and achieving short-term objectives. Principals who adopt this leadership style emphasize structured tasks, performance standards, and reward systems. Okeke and Eze (2022) posited that transactional leadership is particularly effective in ensuring accountability, monitoring progress, and maintaining compliance with established procedures. This leadership style is useful for maintaining order and efficiency, particularly in environments that require routine tasks to be completed within set standards. However, Adebayo and Onyekwere (2022) caution that while transactional leadership is effective for achieving short-term goals, it may lack the motivational elements needed for fostering long-term staff commitment and innovation. Therefore, while transactional leadership may be beneficial in highly structured environments, it is often more effective when complemented by other leadership approaches.

Democratic leadership is another prominent leadership style in schools. It emphasized shared decision-making, inclusivity and collaboration. Principals who adopt democratic leadership involve teachers, students and other stakeholders in the decision-making process, which fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. Nwankwo and Obi (2021) found that schools led by democratic school principals often experience higher levels of teacher satisfaction, better student outcomes, and a more cohesive school climate. This style is based on the belief that collaboration and open communication lead to more innovative solutions and a stronger sense of community within the school. Democratic leadership promotes an environment where staff feels valued and included, leading to enhanced morale, commitment and overall administrative success.

In contrast, autocratic leadership is characterized by a top-down approach in which decisions are made by the principal with little to no input from subordinates. While this style can be effective in situations requiring quick decision-making or strict adherence to rules, it can also lead to dissatisfaction and reduced morale among staff. Nwankwo and Obi (2021) explain that while autocratic leadership may be effective in emergencies or crises, it often hinders long-term effectiveness by limiting staff involvement in decision-making. Maduka (2024) argued that prolonged use of autocratic leadership may result in a lack of motivation and ownership among staff, which ultimately affects organizational success. Therefore, while autocratic leadership may be necessary in specific contexts, it should be used sparingly and carefully to avoid negative impacts on school morale and performance.

Effective school administration is fundamentally connected to the extent to which school leaders can balance organizational tasks with the provision of instructional leadership. This balance is crucial for improving both the overall performance of the school and student learning outcomes. Principals are tasked with adopting innovative and strategic leadership approaches that not only foster transparency in resource management but also create systems that ensure accountability and promote collaboration among staff members. As noted by Ikegbusi et al., (2022), administrative deficiencies, particularly in resource management, leadership practices, and staff engagement, can significantly hinder teachers' job achievement and limit the overall effectiveness of the school environment. Schools with strong administrative systems, on the other hand, tend to experience better academic results, improved teacher morale, and enhanced stakeholder satisfaction, all of which are critical to fostering a productive educational setting.

School Administrative Effectiveness

School administrative effectiveness is integral to the success of educational institutions, directly influencing the quality of education, student outcomes and the school environment. It refers to the capacity

of school leadership, particularly principals, to effectively manage resources, implement policies and create an environment conducive to learning. Effective school administration involves the strategic management of human, financial and material resources to meet educational goals, increase teachers' job achievement, optimize academic performance and foster a positive school climate (Ikegbusi et al., 2022). Principals play a pivotal role in shaping school effectiveness through their leadership styles, decision-making processes and interactions with staff, students and the broader community.

School administrative effectiveness is multifaceted, encompassing resource management, goal setting and fostering staff motivation and professional development. Effective principals inspire a shared vision, promote collaboration and make timely decisions to overcome challenges (Ikegbusi & Iheanacho, 2016). They also build strong relationships with teachers, students and parents, creating an environment where all stakeholders are motivated to contribute to the school's success (Leithwood et al., 2024). Principals must balance day-to-day operations with strategic leadership to ensure that educational objectives are met and that the school adapts to changes in the educational landscape (Hallinger, 2023).

Research indicated that the leadership style of a principal significantly impacts school administrative effectiveness. Transformational leadership, which emphasized inspiring and motivating staff, is particularly effective in promoting a collaborative, trust-based environment. Transformational leaders foster staff commitment, enhance teacher satisfaction and create a positive school culture, which in turn leads to improved academic performance and overall school success (Tschannen-Moran, 2023). In contrast, transactional leadership, focused on task completion and reward systems, tends to be more effective in ensuring short-term compliance but lacks the long-term motivational elements needed for sustained success (Bass & Avolio, 2024). Autocratic leadership, characterized by a top-down approach, may maintain order but can lead to dissatisfaction and hinder innovation, reducing overall school effectiveness (Dempster & Lyle, 2022).

Effective resource management is another critical aspect of school administrative success. Principals must strategically allocate financial and material resources, maintain teaching facilities and provide professional development opportunities for staff (Mabovula, 2023). The ability to balance competing demands, prioritize the needs of the school, and make decisions that support long-term goals is essential for fostering a productive learning environment (Leithwood et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the level of staff motivation and involvement in decision-making processes is closely linked to school administrative effectiveness. Principals, who adopt a democratic leadership style, involving staff in decision-making, tend to increase staff morale, foster a sense of ownership, and improve school performance (Okeke & Eze, 2022). Democratic leadership fosters collaboration, which enhances the collective efforts of teachers and administrators, leading to better outcomes for students (Akinbobola, 2023).

In conclusion, school administrative effectiveness is a dynamic and complex process that requires principals to balance resource management, decision-making, and staff motivation. Leadership styles, particularly transformational and democratic, play a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of school administration. By creating a supportive and inclusive environment, managing resources efficiently, and fostering staff engagement, principals can ensure improved academic outcomes and overall institutional success.

Theoretical Framework

Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory (1985)

The present study is anchored on Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory (1985), which emphasized the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their followers to exceed expectations, while fostering an environment conducive to innovation and organizational growth. According to Bass, transformational leaders engage in four key behaviours: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. These behaviours are intended to enhance followers' commitment, creativity and willingness to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. Transformational leaders lead by example, articulate a compelling vision and provide personalized support to followers, encouraging them to strive for excellence.

This theory is particularly relevant to the current study on the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Principals who adopt transformational leadership behaviours are likely to enhance staff motivation, satisfaction and commitment, which are key drivers of school performance and success. The theory's focus on creating a positive school culture, fostering collaboration and empowering staff aligns with the study's goal of examining how leadership styles correlate with administrative effectiveness in schools. By embracing

transformational leadership, principals can inspire teachers and staff to work towards common educational objectives, thereby improving overall school effectiveness and achieving desired educational outcomes.

Methodology

This study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. As noted by Ikegbusi (2022), this design effectively explored the degree and direction of relationships between variables without manipulation.

The choice of Anambra State as the area for the study is informed by the state's educational significance and its unique challenges in terms of leadership practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools. The state is known for its diverse educational settings and various leadership styles practiced by principals across different schools. Exploring the relationship between leadership styles and school effectiveness in this context will provide valuable insights into improving the educational system in the state.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprised 268 principals from public secondary schools in Anambra State. Given the relatively manageable size of the population, a census sampling technique was employed, meaning that all 268 principals were included in the study. This sampling technique was chosen because according to Obi et al (2022: 92), it allowed for comprehensive data collection from all participants, ensuring that the findings reflect the perspectives and leadership styles of the entire population. Additionally, a census is ideal when the population size is not large, and it helps to capture a more accurate and complete picture of the research subject.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two main instruments were used for data collection in this study. The first instrument was the Principals' Leadership Styles Questionnaire (PLSQ), designed to assess the leadership styles of principals in public secondary schools. The PLSQ consisted of 40 items, categorized into four sub-variables: transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, democratic leadership style and autocratic leadership style. Each sub-variable was measured with 10 items and responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The transformational leadership sub-variable assessed behaviours such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The transactional leadership sub-variable focused on contingent reward, active management by exception and passive management by exception. The democratic leadership sub-variable evaluated shared decision-making, collaboration and inclusivity in leadership practices, while the autocratic leadership sub-variable measured directive, top-down decision-making and limited staff involvement in decision processes.

The second instrument was the School Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (SAEQ), developed to assess the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness. The SAEQ consisted of 30 items, divided into three key areas: resource management, decision-making efficiency and staff motivation. The resource management section measured the ability of principals to effectively allocate and utilize school resources, the decision-making efficiency section assessed the timeliness and inclusivity of decisions and the staff motivation section evaluated how well principals fostered teacher engagement and satisfaction. Responses to these items were also rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Both instruments were reviewed by experts from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, to ensure content validity, clarity and relevance. Feedback from these experts was incorporated to refine and finalize the instruments.

Reliability of the Instruments

To determine the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted in Enugu State, because the state shares characteristics similar to those of the study area. 20 principals from public secondary schools in Enugu State were purposively selected for the pilot test. Data from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the instruments. The reliability coefficients for the principals' leadership styles section were 0.86 for the Transformational Leadership Style, 0.83 for the Transactional Leadership Style, 0.80 for the Democratic Leadership Style and 0.79 for the Autocratic Leadership Style. The reliability coefficient for the School Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire

(SAEQ) was 0.82. The average coefficient for PLSQ is 0.82 and 0.82 for SAEQ, are considered reliable and suitable for the study.

The questionnaires were administered to all the 268 principals in all the public secondary schools in Anambra State by the researcher and four trained research assistants in their respective schools. After the completion of the questionnaires, a total of 268 were returned. However, 18 questionnaires were invalidated due to incomplete or inconsistent responses. As a result, 250 valid questionnaires were collected and used for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to answer the research questions and simple linear regression analysis to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The rationale for employing PPMCC was to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between principals' leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic) and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Simple linear regression analysis was utilized to test the null hypotheses, which postulated no significant relationship between the principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness. The regression analysis assessed the predictive capacity of the independent variable (principals' leadership styles) on the dependent variable (school administrative effectiveness).

The decision rule for hypothesis testing was based on the significance level (p-value). If the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the variables. Conversely, if the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted, implying no statistically significant relationship.

This dual approach of correlation and regression analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness, thereby enhancing the study's objectives and contributing valuable insights to the field of educational management in Anambra State.

Results

Table 1: Pearson r on Transformational Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Transformational Leadership Style	School Administrative Effectiveness	Remarks
Transformational Leadership Style	250	1.00	0.876	High
School Administrative Effectiveness	250	0.876	1.00	

Field Work, 2025

The results in Table 1 revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.876 between transformational leadership style and school administrative effectiveness. This indicated a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. The positive value suggested that as principals increasingly employ transformational leadership practices, there is a corresponding significant improvement in school administrative effectiveness. The value 1.00 along the diagonal represented the perfect correlation of each variable with itself, which is standard in a correlation matrix. The strong correlation ($r = 0.876$) emphasized the pivotal role of transformational leadership in enhancing administrative outcomes. Principals who inspire a shared vision, promote collaboration, stimulate intellectual growth and provide individualized support significantly improve key administrative domains such as staff performance, resource management, policy implementation and goal attainment. These findings underscored the necessity for principals to adopt transformational leadership styles to foster a culture of continuous improvement, efficiency and excellence in school administration in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: Pearson r on Transactional Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Transactional Leadership Style	School Administrative Effectiveness	Remarks
Transactional Leadership Style	250	1.00	0.789	High
School Administrative Effectiveness	250	0.789	1.00	

Field Work, 2025

The results in Table 2 revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.789 between transactional leadership style and school administrative effectiveness. This indicated a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The positive value suggested that as principals employ transactional leadership practices, such as setting clear expectations, rewarding performance and addressing deviations, there is a significant improvement in school administrative effectiveness. The value 1.00 along the diagonal represented the perfect correlation of each variable with itself, which is standard in a correlation matrix. The strong correlation ($r = 0.789$) highlighted the importance of transactional leadership in achieving administrative goals. Principals who focused on structured oversight, performance-based incentives and corrective actions ensure enhanced organizational efficiency, staff accountability and goal alignment. These findings emphasized the effectiveness of transactional leadership in maintaining order and achieving short-term objectives within the school system. By implementing clear structures and reward-based systems, principals foster administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. However, the study suggested that a balance with other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, could further enhance overall school performance.

Table 3: Pearson r on Democratic Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Democratic Leadership Style	School Administrative Effectiveness	Remarks
Democratic Leadership Style	250	1.00	0.812	High
School Administrative Effectiveness	250	0.812	1.00	

Field Work, 2025

The results in Table 3 revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.812 between democratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness. This indicated a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. The positive value suggested that as principals embrace democratic leadership practices, such as involving staff in decision-making, fostering collaboration and encouraging open communication, there is a significant improvement in the overall effectiveness of school administration. The value 1.00 along the diagonal represented the perfect correlation of each variable with itself, which is standard in a correlation matrix. The strong correlation ($r = 0.812$) highlighted the importance of democratic leadership in enhancing administrative outcomes. Principals who create an inclusive environment and engage staff in shared governance contribute to better organizational harmony, staff satisfaction and efficient resource management. These findings highlighted the pivotal role of democratic leadership in fostering a participatory and cohesive school culture that supports administrative effectiveness. By prioritizing inclusiveness and collective problem-solving, principals enhance school efficiency and create a collaborative environment conducive to achieving administrative goals in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Pearson r on Autocratic Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	Autocratic Leadership Style	School Administrative Effectiveness	Remarks
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Autocratic Leadership Style	250	1.00	0.563	
School Administrative Effectiveness	250	0.563	1.00	Moderate

Field Work, 2025

The results in Table 4 revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.563 between autocratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness. This indicated a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The positive value suggested that while autocratic leadership can contribute to administrative effectiveness, its impact is less pronounced compared to other leadership styles like transformational or democratic leadership. The value 1.00 along the diagonal represented the perfect correlation of each variable with itself, which is standard in a correlation matrix. The moderate correlation ($r = 0.563$) suggested that principals who adopt autocratic leadership practices, characterized by centralized decision-making, strict adherence to rules and minimal staff input, can achieve some level of administrative effectiveness, particularly in maintaining discipline and enforcing compliance. However, the rigid nature of this style may limit innovation, staff motivation and overall organizational harmony. These findings highlighted that while autocratic leadership may be suitable for situations requiring strict control and immediate decision-making, reliance on this style alone may hinder collaborative efforts and sustainable school administrative growth in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Balancing autocratic tendencies with inclusive practices is essential for optimal administrative outcomes.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 5: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Relationship between Principals' Transformational Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-value	P-value	Remarks
Transformational Leadership Style	0.876a	0.768	0.766	5.243	818.412	0.000b	Sig.

Field Work, 2025

As shown in Table 5, the results of the simple regression analysis for testing the hypothesis revealed that the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was not upheld. This indicated a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Furthermore, the R² value of 0.768 indicated that transformational leadership style accounted for 76.8% of the variation in school administrative effectiveness. This underscores the critical impact of transformational leadership on achieving administrative goals, fostering collaboration, and motivating staff. The findings highlighted that principals who practice transformational leadership enhance school administrative effectiveness by inspiring shared visions, fostering team cohesion, and promoting innovative problem-solving. This approach significantly contributes to improved organizational outcomes and a positive school culture.

Table 6: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Relationship between Principals' Transactional Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-value	P-value	Remarks
Transactional Leadership Style	0.789a	0.623	0.620	6.329	412.207	0.000b	Sig.

Field Work, 2025

The results of the simple regression analysis in Table 6 revealed that the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was not upheld. This indicated a significant relationship between transactional leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The R² value of 0.623 showed that transactional leadership style accounted for 62.3% of the variation in school administrative effectiveness. This demonstrated the effectiveness of transactional leadership practices, such as reward-based motivation, performance monitoring and adherence to set standards, in enhancing administrative outcomes. These findings emphasized that principals who apply

transactional leadership strategies foster accountability, discipline and efficiency, which contribute to improved school administrative performance. While this leadership style is effective in maintaining order and achieving short-term goals, it may require a complementary approach for sustained, holistic administrative growth.

Table 7: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Relationship between Principals' Democratic Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-value	P-value	Remarks
Transformational Leadership Style	0.845a	0.714	0.711	7.125	530.462	0.000b	Sig.

Field Work, 2025

The results of the simple regression analysis in Table 7 revealed that the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was not upheld. This indicated a significant relationship between principals' democratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The R² value of 0.714 demonstrated that democratic leadership style accounted for 71.4% of the variation in school administrative effectiveness. This highlighted the substantial impact of democratic leadership practices, such as collaborative decision-making, active communication and staff empowerment, on improving administrative efficiency and effectiveness. The findings emphasized that principals who adopt a democratic leadership approach create a more inclusive and cooperative environment, fostering teamwork, staff morale and innovation. This ultimately leads to enhanced school administrative effectiveness, contributing to the attainment of organizational goals and a positive school climate.

Table 8: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis of Relationship between Principals' Democratic Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-value	P-value	Remarks
Autocratic Leadership Style	0.671a	0.450	0.446	9.872	202.371	0.000b	Sig.

Field Work, 2025

The results of the simple regression analysis in Table 8 revealed that the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was not upheld. This indicated a significant relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The R² value of 0.450 showed that autocratic leadership style accounted for 45.0% of the variation in school administrative effectiveness. This demonstrated that while autocratic leadership may contribute to achieving administrative goals through strict control, directive approaches and decision-making autonomy, its impact is relatively moderate compared to other leadership styles. The findings suggested that principals employing an autocratic leadership style can maintain order and compliance but may face challenges in fostering collaboration, staff motivation and innovation. To enhance administrative effectiveness, a balanced approach that integrates democratic practices alongside autocratic measures may be more beneficial.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The findings of this study revealed a very strong positive relationship between principals' transformational leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.876 indicated that as principals increasingly adopt transformational leadership practices, there is a corresponding improvement in school administrative effectiveness. Transformational leaders who inspire a shared vision, foster collaboration,

stimulate intellectual growth and provide individualized support significantly contribute to enhancing key administrative outcomes such as staff performance, resource management, policy implementation and goal attainment. The strong correlation ($r = 0.876$) emphasized the pivotal role of transformational leadership in promoting efficiency and excellence in school administration.

These findings aligned with the work of Akinwale and Obasanjo (2023), who highlighted that transformational leadership plays a vital role in enhancing school administrative practices by creating a conducive environment for collaboration and staff development, thus improving overall administrative effectiveness. Similarly, Nwoke and Ijeoma (2024) also supported these findings, emphasizing that transformational leadership helps principals build a culture of trust and motivation among staff, which leads to improved school administration, better decision-making and effective implementation of educational policies.

On the contrary, some studies have contradicted the positive findings regarding the influence of transformational leadership on school administrative effectiveness. For instance, Sulaimon and Durojaiye (2022) found that transformational leadership had a limited impact on school administration in schools that are rigid in their organizational structure and where decision-making power is centralized. They argued that in such environments, transactional leadership practices, which focus on direct supervision and task-oriented rewards, may be more effective than transformational leadership. Similarly, Fagbohun and Adedayo (2023) questioned the effectiveness of transformational leadership in Nigerian schools, suggesting that principals who exhibit transformational qualities may struggle in resource-constrained environments, where strict adherence to administrative procedures is crucial.

The contrasting findings can be attributed to contextual differences. While transformational leadership showed strong results in schools with more autonomy and support for innovation, its impact may be less significant in schools where rigid structures and limited resources hinder the full implementation of transformational practices. This highlighted the importance of considering the specific challenges and conditions of each school system when evaluating the effectiveness of leadership styles.

Relationship between Principals' Transactional Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between principals' transactional leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results indicated that as principals employ more transactional leadership practices, such as monitoring performance and rewarding compliance, there is a corresponding improvement in administrative outcomes. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.752 highlighted that transactional leadership significantly enhances key areas of school administration, such as resource management, policy implementation, and staff performance. This finding aligned with Oluwaseun and Adedayo (2023), who found that transactional leadership, fosters efficiency in administrative tasks by focusing on clear expectations, rewards and performance monitoring. Similarly, Ibrahim and Adeyemo (2023) supported these findings, emphasizing that transactional leadership improves school administrative effectiveness by maintaining order, discipline and ensuring that procedures are followed.

However, some studies challenged the effectiveness of transactional leadership in improving school administrative effectiveness. Sulaimon and Ajayi (2022) argued that while transactional leadership might ensure short-term compliance, it often lacks the long-term motivation necessary for sustainable school development. They suggested that this leadership style may be less effective in schools requiring innovation and creativity. Additionally, Bamidele and Olamide (2023) found that transactional leadership could hinder the development of a collaborative school culture, which is essential for overall school effectiveness, especially in the context of more democratic school leadership approaches. These conflicting perspectives underscore the importance of considering the school environment and the specific needs of the institution when determining the most effective leadership style.

Relationship between Principals' Democratic Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between principals' democratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results indicated that as principals adopt a more democratic leadership approach, characterized by shared decision-making, collaboration and open communication, there is a corresponding improvement in school administrative outcomes. This finding is supported by Okoro and Eze (2023), who found that democratic leadership fosters an inclusive school culture, leading to improved administrative processes, staff satisfaction

and overall school effectiveness. Similarly, Adedeji and Olatunji (2023) highlighted that principals who involve teachers and staff in decision-making processes enhance organizational commitment and streamline administrative functions, contributing to the achievement of school goals.

However, some studies suggested that the effectiveness of democratic leadership in improving school administration may be overstated. Micheal and Adebayo (2022) argued that democratic leadership could lead to slower decision-making processes, as extensive consultations and discussions may delay timely actions, which could affect administrative effectiveness. Additionally, Olubusola and Obinna (2023) cautioned that while democratic leadership promotes inclusivity, it may not always be effective in schools where a more directive leadership style is needed to manage challenging situations or in crisis contexts. These differing perspectives underline the importance of context and the potential trade-offs involved in choosing the most suitable leadership style for improving school administration.

Relationship between Principals' Autocratic Leadership Style and School Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

The findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results indicated that as principals adopt an autocratic leadership style, characterized by a top-down approach to decision-making and strict control, there is a corresponding improvement in school administrative effectiveness. This finding is supported by Oluwaseun and Durojaiye (2023), who argued that autocratic leadership can lead to increased efficiency in administrative tasks due to its clear directive and centralized decision-making structure. Similarly, Nwachukwu and Okeke (2022) highlighted that in environments where quick decisions are necessary, autocratic leadership can enhance administrative performance by minimizing delays and confusion.

However, some studies suggested that the benefits of autocratic leadership in improving school administration may be overstated. Adebayo and Yemi (2023) argued that while autocratic leadership might improve short-term efficiency, it may negatively affect long-term staff motivation and creativity, which are crucial for sustainable administrative success. Furthermore, Chikelue (2024) contended that the lack of staff involvement in decision-making could result in resistance and poor organizational climate, ultimately hindering the effectiveness of the administration in the long run. These varying perspectives highlighted the potential limitations of autocratic leadership, suggesting that its effectiveness may depend on the context and the nature of the tasks at hand.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings revealed significant relationships between the various leadership styles, transformational, transactional, democratic and autocratic and the effectiveness of school administration. Principals who adopted transformational leadership demonstrated a positive relationship with administrative effectiveness, as their ability to inspire, motivate and promote collaboration significantly contributed to improved school outcomes. Similarly, autocratic leadership was found to enhance efficiency in school administration, particularly in situations requiring swift decision-making and clear direction. However, while autocratic leadership may drive short-term administrative effectiveness, its potential negative correlation with staff morale and creativity suggested the need for a balanced leadership approach. Transactional leadership, although initially expected to drive administrative performance through reward and punishment systems, showed less significant influence in this context, indicating the importance of leadership styles that go beyond routine management and administrative control. On the other hand, democratic leadership, characterized by inclusive decision-making and staff empowerment, exhibited a more moderate impact on school administration, highlighting the potential for increased collaboration but also the challenges of achieving efficient outcomes. The study therefore concluded that principals' leadership styles significantly influence school administrative effectiveness, emphasizing the need for a flexible, context-driven approach that combines transformational, transactional and democratic elements to optimize outcomes in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should strengthen their transformational leadership practices by promoting a shared vision, encouraging staff collaboration and providing individualized support. This can be achieved through regular leadership training and professional development programs to enhance principals' abilities to inspire and motivate both staff and students. Such practices will go a long way to foster

a motivated and cohesive school community, improve staff performance and ultimately enhance the overall academic success and administrative effectiveness of the school.

2. Additionally, principals should incorporate transactional leadership strategies, focusing on rewarding high-performing staff and addressing underperformance with clear expectations and consequences. Implementing a structured reward and recognition system will improve staff accountability and increase operational efficiency, directly improving administrative effectiveness and student outcomes.
3. Again, principals should also emphasize democratic leadership by encouraging open communication, involving staff in decision-making and fostering an inclusive environment. Conducting regular staff meetings, surveys and feedback sessions will ensure that all voices are heard and contribute to decision-making processes. This will create a more inclusive and collaborative school culture, increase staff job satisfaction, and enhance overall school effectiveness.
4. Finally, while participatory leadership should be the norm, principals should be ready to apply autocratic leadership during crises or situations requiring immediate action, such as emergencies or when quick decision-making is necessary. By establishing a clear framework for using autocratic leadership in such circumstances, schools will be able to manage crises efficiently, maintain order, and ensure smooth operations while safeguarding staff and students.

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